



Nursing and Midwifery Council Quality Assurance Review

Major Modification Report for:

Pre-registration nursing associate qualification leading to:

Nursing Associate

University of Hertfordshire

January 2025

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Key institutional and programme details

Name and location of Approved Education Institution (AEI)	University of Hertfordshire Hatfield AL10 9AB					
AEI/EI Institution Identifier [UKPRN]		10007	147			
Name and location of academic delivery partner(s) if not the AEI/EI noted above						
Name of employer partners for apprenticeships		Addiso CM20	on House - Haque 1DS	Practice Addiso	on House	Surgery
		Bancro	oft Medical Centre	e, Bancroft Cour	t SG5 1LH	4
		Bridge	Cottage Surgery	, 41 High Street	AL6 9EF	
		Bridgewater Surgeries Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust; Community Services, Adult; various postcodes in North and West London Community Adult				
		Dolphin House Surgery, 6-7 East Street SG12 9HJ				
		Garden City Practice, WGC East & North Herts CCG AL8 6QW				
		Grange Street Surgery, 2 Grange Street AL3 5NF				
		Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust; Saffron Ground, Stevenage Mental Health SG1 3LJ				
		Isabel	Hospice, Hatfield	Adult Palliative	Care AL1	0 9AX
		Lister	Hospital, Coreys I	Mill Lane SG1 4	AB	
		Manor	Street Surgery, N	/lanor Street HP	4 2DL	
		Prince	ss Alexandra Hos	spital, Hamstel F	Road CM2	0 1QX
		Stanho	ope Surgery, Stan	hope Road EN	3 7DJ	
		Stanm	ore Medical Grou	p, 5 Stanmore F	Road SG1	3QA
Approval type		Major	modification			
	N	ame of	programme			
NMC Programme Title	AEI/EI Program Title (in					
Nursing Associate	FdSc He Care Pra Nursing Associat	ictice	England, ⊠ Level 5		×	

Nursing Associate	Nursing Associate Higher Apprenticeship Programme (FdSc Health Care Practice)	England, ⊠ Level 5		×	
Proposed programme start date	1 September 2025				
Standard(s) under assessment	 □ Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment ⋈ Part 3: Standards for nursing associates 				
Date of visit	30 January 2025				
Visitor team	Registrant Visitors: Professor Kudzai Mafuba (attended virtual visit) Mr John Freeman (attended virtual visit) Mrs Kate Collison Lay Visitor: Mr Syed Mohyuddin				

Executive summary

Quality Assurance Reviews (QARs) are undertaken for the specific purpose of making recommendations to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in relation to the approval (or otherwise) of the above-named programme(s) or in relation to the approval (or otherwise) of major modifications to the above-named programme. Reviews follow the Gateway approach to programme approvals and major modifications, as outlined in QAA Guidance for Approved Education Institutions and Education Institutions on NMC Quality Assurance Reviews.

Reviews involve a period of desk-based analysis with the opportunity for NMC visitors to request further information, evidence or clarification and a conjoint visit with the Approved Education Institution (AEI) or Education Institution (EI) programme approval panel. All evidence submitted by the AEI or EI is reviewed by the visitors.

Visits enable both the NMC visitors and the AEI or EI programme approval panel to gather further evidence and clarifications to inform their judgements and make recommendations about the AEI or EI ability to meet the NMC standards. Visits will normally include meetings with a range of stakeholders such as students, people who use services and carers, employers, practice learning partners, the programme team and senior managers.

Following a review, a draft report is shared with the AEI or EI for the purposes of confirming factual accuracy before the report is finalised.

The conjoint visit with the AEI approval panel took place on 30 January 2025.

Context for the review

The University of Hertfordshire (UH) is approved to run the NMC Pre-registration Nursing Associate programme. The programme is undergoing periodic review. This is a requirement of UH to ensure that the portfolio of study remains relevant to both the School and to prospective students, that the curriculum content is appropriate, and that learning and teaching is up-to-date and well-resourced. This programme offers a direct entry and Higher Apprenticeship route. The review will focus on the direct entry (non-apprenticeship) route which will be changed from part-time to full-time delivery mode. Further to this, the review will consider changes to module content and structure for both the direct entry and Higher Apprenticeship route, and will be reviewed to ensure currency in relation to stakeholder need and effective use of resources. The visitor team will ensure innovations in education and practice are included where appropriate. This may need some changes to the design and structure of the curriculum

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor team to the NMC, following consideration of the AEI response to any conditions required by the approval panel, is as follows:

Programme is recommended to the NMC for approval. The programme meets all standards and requirements and enables students to achieve stated NMC standards of proficiency and learning outcomes for theory and practice.

The detailed findings of the NMC visitor team's review are explained in more detail in the following sections. This includes a summary of any conditions of approval and confirmation of whether these have been satisfactorily addressed.

Conditions and recommendations

The **provisional judgement** (following the visit and prior to the consideration of the AEI/EI response to any conditions) was as follows:

Programme is recommended to the NMC for approval after conditions are met to ensure the programme meets all standards and requirements and enables students to achieve stated NMC standards of proficiency and learning outcomes for theory and practice.

Conditions

Cond	Conditions						
No.	Condition details	Specific standard not met	NMC only/ Joint	AEI/EI only			
C1	Ensure that the use of simulation does not count towards practice learning hours.	2.8	NMC				
Date for all conditions to be met to meet intended delivery date		14 /	April 2025				

Joint conditions relate to both NMC standards and the AEI/EI's programme approval outcomes. All conditions must be met for a programme to be recommended to the NMC for final approval.

Recommendations for enhancement

Reco	Recommendations					
No.	Recommendation	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint	AEI/EI only		
R1	To review the engagement of PSCs in the development and delivery of the programme, including admission process, teaching and assessment.	2.1 (SFNME 1.12)	NMC			
R2	To review the capacity of ELTs for the current delivery of apprenticeships.			AEI only		
R3	Create more transparency of KSBs and how they inform learning at a module and session level.			AEI only		

Recommendations are to be addressed and reported in the annual self-assessment report.

Statements of good practice

State	Statements of good practice relating to the NMC standards						
No.	Details	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint				
GP1	A strong collaborative partnership with practitioners and employers in the delivery and enhancement of the programme.	2.1	NMC only				
GP2	The Nursing Associate programme is embedded and contributes to the University of Hertfordshire and practice community.	2.1	NMC only				

Response to conditions

Respo	Response to conditions					
No.	Condition details	Findings				
C1	Ensure that the use of simulation does not count towards practice learning hours.	In response to the condition C1, the University of Hertfordshire provided revised programme documentation, specifically the programme specification and three module specifications where simulation was proposed.				
		The documentation was reviewed by the visitor team and the amendments that have been made assured the visitor team that references to the use of simulation as counting towards practice learning hours have been removed. The revised documentation confirms that simulation will no longer count towards practice learning hours and therefore Condition C1 has been addressed.				

The visitor team considers that all conditions listed above have been satisfactorily addressed resulting in the team being able to confirm that all required NMC standards are met.

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor team to the NMC, following consideration of the University of Hertfordshire response to any conditions set, is therefore as follows:

All conditions relating to this programme have been addressed and **the programme is recommended to the NMC for approval**. The programme meets all standards and requirements and enables students to achieve stated NMC standards of proficiency and learning outcomes for theory and practice.

Explanation of findings for Part 3

1: Selection, admission and progression

	ed education institutions, together with practice learning s, must:	Met	Not Met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
1.1	Confirm on entry to the programme that students:				
	1.1.1 meet the entry criteria for the programme as set out by the AEI and are suitable for nursing associate practice				
	1.1.2 demonstrate values in accordance with the Code				
	1.1.3 have capability to learn behaviours in accordance with the Code				
	1.1.4 have capability to develop numeracy skills required to meet programme outcomes				
	1.1.5 can demonstrate proficiency in English language				
	1.1.6 have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes				
	1.1.7 have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes.				
1.2	Ensure students' health and character are sufficient to enable safe and effective practice on entering the programme, throughout the programme and when submitting the supporting declaration of health and character in line with the NMC's health and character decision making guidance. This includes satisfactory occupational health assessment and criminal record checks.				
1.3	Ensure students are fully informed of the requirement to declare immediately any police charges, cautions, convictions or conditional discharges, or determinations that their fitness to practise is impaired made by other regulators, professional bodies and educational establishments, and ensure that any declarations are dealt with promptly, fairly and lawfully.				
1.4	Ensure that the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the educational programme or their designated registered nurse substitute or designated registered nursing associate substitute, are able to provide supporting declarations of health and character for students who have completed a pre-registration nursing associate programme				
1.5	Permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and programme outcomes, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the programme. This maximum limit of 50 percent does not apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing associate				

	programmes who are currently a NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice.		
1.6	Support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy and digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes.		

Recognition of prior learning metrics

The programme will normally be reduced in length for students with relevant qualifications and or experience who are successfully awarded Accredited Prior Learning (APL) credits against the current programme outcomes using the APL process. The reduction in the length of the programme will be to a maximum of 50% of the programme. The maximum limit of 50% does not apply to applicants who are currently NMC-registered nurses without restriction on their practice. The limit is 75% APL as per UH regulations.

- 1. The visitor team considered a range of evidence including programme specifications, programme handbooks and accredited prior learning (APL) guidance. The visitor team also held meetings with those involved in the selection processes both UH staff, people who use services and carers (PSCs) and students. When considering Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression, the visitor team noted that modifications were proposed in respect of Standard 1.5 only.
- 2. In considering Standard 1.5, the visitor team noted that the process for awarding RPL remains unchanged. However, in the light of changes being made to the pre-registration nursing programme, taking place under a separate review, the mapping documents have been adjusted to reflect the changes to modules in the undergraduate pre-registration nursing programmes.
- 3. The arrangements in place to meet Standards 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6 are unchanged and following a review of the extant documentary evidence for these standards, the visitor team agreed with the programme team assertion that the current modifications do not impact these standards.
- 4. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that the UH has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression to enable the NMC standards to be met.

2: Curriculum

	ed education institutions, together with practice learning s, must:	Met	Not Met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
2.1	Ensure that programmes comply with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.				
2.2	Comply with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.				\boxtimes
2.3	Ensure that programme learning outcomes reflect the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.				
2.4	Design and deliver a programme that supports students and provides an appropriate breadth of experience for a non-field specific nursing associate programme, across the lifespan and in a variety of settings.				
2.5	Set out the general and professional content necessary to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and programme outcomes.	\boxtimes			
2.6	Ensure that the programme hours and programme length are: 2.6.1 sufficient to allow the students to be able to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates, 2.6.2 no less than 50 percent of the minimum programme hours required of nursing degree programmes 2.6.3 consonant with the award of a Foundation degree (typically 2 years).				
2.7	Ensure the curriculum provides an equal balance of 50 percent theory and 50 percent practice learning using a range of learning and teaching strategies.				
2.8	Ensure technology and simulation opportunities are used effectively and proportionately across the curriculum to support supervision, learning and assessment.				
2.9	Ensure nursing associate programmes which form part of an integrated programme meet the nursing associate requirements and nursing associate proficiencies.				

Curriculum requirements

The FdSc Health Practice Nursing Associate and FdSc Healthcare Practice Nursing Associate Higher Apprenticeship both consist of 2,300 hours of curriculum time with 1,150 of those hours allocated to practice learning and 1,150 to theory. The ratio of theory to practice is 50:50.

Programmes are delivered over two years full-time.

- 5. The visitor team considered a range of evidence including the modification overview document, programme specifications, programme handbooks and definitive module descriptors (DMDs). The visitor team also held meetings with those involved in the design and delivery of the curriculum including both UH staff, PSCs, students, practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors.
- 6. Modifications have been made that impact on Standards 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.8.
- 7. In considering Standard 2.1, the visitor team noted the strong coproduction working in identifying the factors influencing the modifications made to the curriculum as part of the UH periodic review. The visitor team was supplied with evidence detailing feedback received from stakeholders to inform the proposed changes. Feedback ranged from teaching and learning, assessment, digital competence, and student support. Employer feedback highlighted the need to adjust the timing of first-year placement preparation sessions in the first-year practice module these have been rescheduled to take place earlier.
- 8. In relation to assessment, student feedback indicated that the method of assessment (narrated PowerPoint) for the first-year communication module was not appropriate or relevant. In the modified programme the assessment format for the communication module was changed to a presentation in order to evaluate learners' ability to communicate verbally.
- 9. In relation to digital competence, changes have been made to further harness technology. There are plans to embed the JISC Digital Discovery tool in the programme to enhance and record digital learning.
- 10. A new role of Employee Liaison Tutor (ELT) is being introduced to provide a consistent approach to Progress Review Meetings (PRMs) and to offer ongoing support to apprentice learners and employers.
- 11. At the visit, the programme team further explained the feedback received from stakeholders as the basis for the proposed modifications. The team explained the feedback received resulted in the enhancement of anatomy and physiology module, integration of Inter-professional Education (IPE) into practice modules, introduction of Simulated Practice Learning, and introduction of more field-specific learning to make the programme more appropriate to all fields of nursing practice.
- 12. Students met by the visitor team at the visit confirmed that they had opportunity to feed back, for example on the need for more anatomy and physiology. Some PSCs at the visit confirmed involvement with recruitment and selection of students, providing feedback to students during Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), and involvement in the delivery of the communication module. Employer partners (EPs) and practice learning partners (PLPs) attending the visit confirmed giving feedback on the need to increase anatomy and physiology on the programme. They confirmed involvement in the programme through regular monthly meetings with the UH. They also confirmed their involvement in the programme modification process.
- 13. Meetings held at the visit clearly demonstrated the participation of students, EPs, PLPs, and the wider practitioner community in the co-production of the programme. There were many examples of stakeholder involvement and not just at the level of

providing feedback but in making proactive and positive contributions to discussions on modifications to be made and their delivery. It was also clear to the visitor team that the programme team had positively received these contributions. In acknowledging this, the visitor team identified the strong collaborative partnership with practitioners and employers in the delivery and enhancement of the programme as a feature of **good practice (GP1)**. The visitor team also identified that the Nursing Associate Programme is embedded and makes a valuable contribution to the University of Hertfordshire and practice community and that this is also a feature of **good practice (GP2)**.

- 14. However, it was clear from meetings held during the visit that the engagement of PSCs in the development and delivery of the programme, including the admission process, teaching, and assessment was occurring but that this was happening at a lower level of engagement than other stakeholders and has the potential to be enhanced. It was clear that the programme team acknowledges this as a worthwhile enhancement to pursue and that it can only benefit the programme overall in terms of veracity and integrity. The visitor team therefore **recommends (R1)** the programme team to review the engagement of PSCs in the development and delivery of the programme, including admission processes, teaching, and assessment.
- 15. In considering Standard 2.3, the visitor team noted that the impact of the identified modifications was minimal. Programme specifications have been updated to reflect changes to modules and continue to appropriately reflect the standards of proficiency.
- 16. Considering Standard 2.4, the visitor team noted from programme handbooks and definitive module descriptors that the programme provides exposure across all four fields of nursing practice, that is - adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing. The module content also prepares students for practice in a range of settings.
- 17. Changes made to the modified programme include increasing the number of credits allocated to the Anatomy and Physiology module from 15 to 30 credits. There is also greater emphasis on the professional aspects of practice within the practice modules. The Promoting Health and Wellbeing, and Health and Wellbeing for Nursing Associates modules have been merged into one 30-credit module to eliminate repetition.
- 18. The assessment strategy has been revised to include some element of topic choice in some modules, and a range of assessment methods, including posters, presentations, OSCEs, risk assessments and professional discussions are provided.
- 19. Following the initial review of evidence by the visitor team, the programme team provided more clarity on the rationale and benefits of the changes made to the delivery of IPE in the programme. The learning outcomes from the IPE module have been redistributed into the first-year practice module, first-year communication module, and second year being an accountable professional module.
- 20. The programme team explained some of the benefits of incorporating IPE into practice and these include students having opportunities to learn earlier about the roles of other healthcare professionals, and links to the proficiency in the ePAD to assess students on their understanding of the roles of the different providers of healthcare and their ability to work collaboratively in interdisciplinary teams across all sectors of health and social care. The programme team explained the benefits of incorporating IPE into the first-year communication module and these include

students learning to identify challenges to professional communication and learn tools to address these challenges and fostering confidence and competence in communicating with other professionals. The programme team explained the benefits of incorporating IPE into the second year Being an Accountable Professional module. These include students having the opportunity to explore challenges and strategies for effective collaboration, such as managing conflict, escalating concerns, and communicating within ethical and legal frameworks.

- 21. At the visit, the programme team further explained to the visitor team that changes to IPE were primarily the elimination of repetition in module delivery and to embed IPE in real-world practice, fostering collaboration and practical application of skills. The programme team also explained that this change followed stakeholder feedback and analysis of its alignment with the NMC standards of proficiency for NAs. The programme team explained that the previous IPE module was mapped to 13 proficiencies, all but one of which were already covered in other modules, thereby causing repetition and confusion. Students at the approval visit supported the proposed change.
- 22. In considering Standard 2.5, mapping of module learning outcomes to the NMC Standards of proficiency for nursing associates has been updated to reflect the proposed changes to the modules. The mapping of practice assessment documents remains unchanged.
- 23. In considering Standard 2.6, none of the modifications proposed impact on the time available for the nursing associate students to be able to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates. The total programme hours are 2,300, which is 50% of that required for nursing degree programmes. The programmes are both Foundation Degrees and take place over a two-year full-time period.
- 24. In considering Standard 2.8, the visitor team considered how technology and simulation opportunities are used effectively and proportionately across the curriculum to support supervision, learning and assessment. The placement planner provided outlines the six placement blocks, each consisting of 30 hours per week. In year one, placements are structured as eight weeks, six weeks, and six weeks, totalling 600 hours. In year two, the placements are six weeks, six weeks, and six weeks, totalling 540 hours. It was proposed that an additional 10 hours of SPL will be delivered on top of these placement hours, bringing the total practice hours for the programme to 1,150. However, the use of SPL is not featured in the standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes and therefore this has resulted in condition (C1).
- 25. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that UH has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 2: Curriculum to enable the NMC standards to be met apart from Standard 2.8 resulting in **condition (C1)**.

3: Practice learning

	red education institutions, together with practice learning rs, must:	Met	Not met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
3.1	Provide practice learning opportunities that allow students to develop and meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates to deliver safe and effective care to a diverse range of people across the lifespan and in a variety of settings.				
3.2	Ensure that students experience the variety of practice expected of nursing associates to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages.				
3.3	Take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.				
3.4	Ensure that nursing associate students have protected learning time in line with one of the following two options: 3.4.1 Option A: nursing associate students are supernumerary when they are learning in practice 3.4.2 Option B: nursing associate students, via work-placed learning routes: 3.4.2.1 are released for a minimum of 20 per cent of the programme for academic study 3.4.2.2 are released for a minimum of 20 per cent of the programme time, which is assured protected learning time in external practice placements, enabling them to develop the breadth of experience required for a generic role, and 3.4.2.3 for the remainder of the required programme hours, protected learning time must be assured.				

Practice learning requirements

In year one there is a total of 600 hours attributed to practice learning hours. In year two, there is a total of 550 hours attributed to practice learning hours

This brings the total practice hours for the programme to 1,150.

Findings

26. The The visitor team considered a range of evidence including the modification overview document, programme specifications, programme handbooks and definitive module descriptors (DMDs). The team also held meetings with those involved in the delivery of practice learning experiences including, PSCs, students, practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors.

- 27. None of the arrangements for meeting Standard 3: Practice learning has been modified. The visitor team reviewed the existing evidence and was satisfied that none of the standards was impacted by the modifications implemented in this periodic review.
- 28. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that UH has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 3: Practice learning to enable the NMC standards to be met.

4: Supervision and assessment

	red education institutions, together with practice learning s, must:	Met	Not met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
4.1	Ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.				
4.2	Ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.				
4.3	Ensure they inform the NMC of the name of the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the education programme.				
4.4	Provide students with constructive feedback throughout the programme to support their development.				
4.5	Ensure throughout the programme that students meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.				\boxtimes
4.6	Ensure that all programmes include a health numeracy assessment related to nursing associate proficiencies and calculation of medicines which must be passed with a score of 100%.				
4.7	Assess students to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a nursing associate.				\boxtimes
4.8	Ensure that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice.				\boxtimes
4.9	Ensure that all proficiencies are recorded in an ongoing record of achievement which must demonstrate the achievement of proficiencies and skills as set out in Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.				

- 29. The visitor team considered a range of evidence including the modification overview document, programme specifications, programme handbooks and definitive module descriptors (DMDs). The team also held meetings with those involved in the delivery of practice learning experiences including PSCs, students, practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors.
- 30. Having reviewed the evidence, the visitor team considered that none of the standards under Standard 4: Supervision and assessment have been impacted by the modifications made in the periodic review. The visitor team considers that UH has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 4: Supervision and assessment to enable the NMC standards to be met.

5: Qualification to be awarded

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:		Met	Not met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
5.1	Ensure that the minimum award for a nursing associate programme is a Foundation Degree of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (England), which is typically two years in length.				
5.2	Notify students during the programme that they have five years in which to register their award with the NMC. In the event of a student failing to register their qualification within five years they will have to undertake additional education and training or gain such experience as is specified in our standards to register their award.				

- 31. The visitor team reviewed a range of evidence including programme specifications, the modification overview document and relevant university regulations and is satisfied that none of the modifications made in this review have impacted the standards under Standard 5: Qualification to be awarded.
- 32. The visitor team therefore considers that UH has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 5: Qualification to be awarded to enable the NMC standards to be met.

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