



Nursing and Midwifery Council

Major Modification Report for pre-registration nursing associate qualification:

Nursing Associate

Oxford Brookes University

April 2026

QA Link reference number: 191125142955-M

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Key institutional and programme details

AEI Institution Identifier [UKPRN]	10004930
Address of main programme delivery	Oxford School of Nursing and Midwifery FHLS Oxford Brookes Jack Straws Lane Headington Oxford OX3 0FL
Satellite site details	Existing satellite sites: Oxford Brookes University Swindon Campus Welton Road Westlea Swindon SN5 7XQ New satellite sites: N/A
Partnership site details	N/A
Endorsement details	N/A
Name of new employer partners for apprenticeships	There are no new employer partners
Event type	Major modification
Proposed programme start date	14 September 2026
Date of activity	Desk-based: April 2026
Visitor team	Registrant Visitor: Dr Zanib Bi-Mohammed

Name of current programme(s) under scrutiny					
NMC programme title	AEI programme title (in full)	Academic level(s)	Apprenticeship	Full-time	Part-time
Nursing Associate	FdSc Nursing Associate	England ☒ Level 5		☒	
Nursing Associate	FdSc Nursing Associate (apprenticeship)	England ☒ Level 5	☒	☒	

Titles of amended and/or additional programme(s) following modification
There have been no amendments or additions to programme titles.

Exit awards that lead to NMC registration
There are no exit awards for this qualification that lead to NMC registration.

Introduction

Quality assurance (QA) activity is undertaken for the specific purpose of making recommendations to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in relation to the approval or modification of the above-named programme(s). QA activity follows processes outlined in the relevant handbooks. These handbooks provide guidance for Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) on quality assurance activities that the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) performs as the quality assurance service provider (QASP) for the NMC. These can be found [here](#).

QA activity involves desk-based analysis of the AEI's self-evaluation narrative and documentary evidence which will inform the decision of the visitor/s on whether each of the NMC programme standards in Part 3 have been met. To facilitate decision making, NMC visitors are able to request further information, evidence or clarification. All narrative and evidence submitted by the AEI is reviewed by the visitor/s, with the event then providing the opportunity for triangulation of evidence. A list of all evidence reviewed which has supported decision making is provided within this report.

QA activity will take into consideration the input of a range of stakeholders such as students, people who use services and carers (PSCs), employer partners (EPs), practice learning partners (PLPs), the programme team and senior managers.

The AEI has already been through quality assurance gateway processes that have provided assurance that all Part 1: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education (SFNME) (NMC 2018, updated 2023) and Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment (SSSA) (NMC 2018, updated 2023) have been met.

Part 3 is contextualised for the programme under scrutiny and provides the AEI with an opportunity to provide evidence of how Part 1 and Part 2 continue to be met. Part 1 and Part 2 will therefore be referred to as appropriate.

For programme approvals, all standards within Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes (NMC 2018, updated 2023) are reported upon. For major modifications, only those Part 3 standards impacted by the modification are reported upon.

A draft report is shared with the AEI for the purposes of confirming factual accuracy before the report is finalised. All decisions at the event are provisional until ratified by the NMC. No students or apprentices should be enrolled onto any of the programmes under consideration until the AEI receives written confirmation of approval from the NMC.

This desk-based review took place in April 2026.

Context

The curriculum review of the nursing associate programme at Oxford Brookes University (OBU) has been undertaken alongside the introduction of the registered nurse degree apprenticeship. This has provided an opportunity to further strengthen progression routes into the nursing profession.

The review has also enabled closer alignment between the nursing associate and pre-registration nursing curricula. This has improved consistency across programmes at both academic and professional levels and ensures a more coherent framework for student progression. It also enhances access to nursing education, supports widening participation, and offers alternative pathways to professional registration. In doing so, it responds to evolving workforce needs across health and social care settings.

The proposed programme modifications encompass revisions to module titles, the alignment of learning outcomes, and credit allocations. In addition, three new modules were developed using existing learning outcomes following a comprehensive review of the curriculum content. This review aimed to reduce duplication, improve overall coherence, and support a more progressive and integrated learning journey; importantly, the requirements for practice learning remain unchanged. Practice-based modules will continue to be delivered in accordance with established standards, and the use of the practice assessment document (PAD) will be maintained to ensure consistency in the assessment of proficiency.

The review has been undertaken in close collaboration with PLPs and EPs, who have contributed to identifying barriers to applicant recruitment to apprenticeship programmes and shaping delivery models that are both accessible and sustainable. The co-design approach has ensured that the modified programme meets regulatory and professional body requirements while addressing the practical needs of students, PLPs and EPs. Furthermore, engagement with PSC representatives and students has provided valuable insights that have directly informed the development of the proposed changes.

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

The modified programme is recommended 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

This report addresses only those standards identified as within scope.

The visitor reviewed a comprehensive range of evidence to inform this report, including university policies, programme specifications, module records, programme handbooks, mapping documents, and PADs. A full list of the evidence considered by the visitors is at the back of this report.

The accompanying table sets out a concise summary of the curriculum and practice learning requirements for the programmes under scrutiny.

Overview of course structure and curriculum	The programme documentation confirms that the nursing associate programme is delivered jointly to apprentices and non-apprentice students over a two-year period. The programme includes 1,200 hours of theory learning and 1,200 hours of practice learning, providing an appropriate balance between academic study and practice-based experience to support the development of safe and competent practitioners. The curriculum is delivered across Levels 4 and 5 to provide a clear and progressive learning pathway. At Level 4, students complete three 30-credit modules and two 15-credit modules. At Level 5, students undertake four 30-credit modules, enabling further consolidation and extension of knowledge and skills in preparation for professional practice. The programme structure supports both apprentice and non-apprentice routes. Apprentices attend OBU for one day per week, with the remainder of their employed hours spent in practice learning through a combination of off-the-job placements and on-the-job learning. Non-apprentice students attend OBU for one day per week and complete additional self-directed asynchronous learning activities. This ensures that students undertake a minimum of 24 hours of theory learning each week. Students also complete 24 hours per week in an allocated practice placement. Throughout the programme, practice learning is embedded within the curriculum, with a total of 60 credits dedicated to practice learning experiences, distributed evenly across the two years. This enables students to progressively develop and demonstrate the required knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours for safe and effective practice as a nursing associate. The programme maintains an equitable balance between theory and practice assessment to ensure integrated development across both domains.
Overview of practice learning requirements	This modification does not affect the arrangements for practice learning. Students and apprentices on the Nursing Associate programme will continue to complete a total of 1,200 practice learning hours across Years 1 and 2. This ensures they gain sufficient exposure to a broad range of practice learning experiences.

1: Selection, admission and progression

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

1.6 support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy and digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression was not in scope for this major modification and therefore remains unchanged.

2: Curriculum

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

2.1 ensure that programmes comply with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

2.2 comply with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

2.3 ensure that programme learning outcomes reflect the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

2.5 set out the general and professional content necessary to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and programme outcomes.	Met
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The visitor reviewed a comprehensive range of programme documentation, including programme handbooks, programme specifications, and curriculum mapping materials, and confirmed that the programme contains the requisite general and professional content to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates (SoPNA) (NMC 2018, updated 2024). Progression within practice learning is clearly articulated through the PAD. The PAD provides a structured mechanism for demonstrating the achievement of required proficiencies across the programme.

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).	Met
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The visitor reviewed a comprehensive range of programme documentation, including programme handbooks, programme specifications, curriculum mapping materials, and module descriptors and confirmed that the proposed module amendments to the nursing associate programme were minor in nature and did not impact the award of the foundation degree and continues to be delivered over two years. The documentation demonstrated that the programme continues to maintain the required balance of theory and practice learning. The programme comprises a total of 2,400 hours, which ensures that it remains at no less than 50% of the minimum required programme hours for nursing degree programmes. Furthermore, the nursing associate curriculum mapping clearly identified

the practice modules within where the PAD is assessed. This provided clear evidence of a coherent programme design. It demonstrated how the individual modules work together to address the required theory and practice learning outcomes, with appropriate indicative content included to ensure alignment with the SoPNA.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

2.8 ensure technology and simulation opportunities are used effectively and proportionately across the curriculum to support supervision, learning and assessment.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

2.9 ensure nursing associate programmes which form part of an integrated programme meet the nursing associate requirements and nursing associate proficiencies.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

The visitor concluded that the AEI has met Standard 2: Curriculum.
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3: Practice learning

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

3.2 ensure that students experience the variety of practice expected of nursing associates to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

3.3 take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

Standard 3: Practice learning was not in scope for this major modification and therefore remains unchanged.

4: Supervision and assessment

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

4.1 ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

4.2 ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

4.3 ensure they inform the NMC of the name of the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the education programme.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

4.4 provide students with constructive feedback throughout the programme to support their development.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

4.5 ensure throughout the programme that students meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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%.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

4.7 assess students to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a nursing associate.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

4.8 ensure that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

Standard 4: Supervision and assessment was not in scope for this major modification and therefore remains unchanged.

5: Qualification to be awarded

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

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.	Met
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Not in scope in relation to this major modification.

Standard 5: Qualification to be awarded was not in scope for this major modification and therefore remains unchanged.

Conditions and recommendations

Conditions

No conditions have been set.

Recommendations for enhancement

No recommendations for enhancement have been identified.

Areas for future monitoring

No areas for future monitoring have been identified.

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor to the NMC, is therefore as follows:

The modified programme is recommended 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.

Evidence list

The following documentation or narrative was provided by the AEI as evidence for scrutiny by the visitor:

Key Documentation	Yes	No
Appropriate AEI policies, procedures and guidance (for example, EDI strategy; RPL policy/procedure; raising and escalating concerns processes; fitness to practise policy; whistleblowing etc)	☒	
Programme proposal overview document, including rationale and co-production	☒	
Curricula vitae (CVs) for relevant staff to confirm NMC registration where required and to demonstrate adequate resources for safe and effective programme delivery	☒	
Agreements with PLPs and EPs that they will support the programme and support supernumerary status/protected learning time for students in accordance with requirements of programme standards		☒
Evidence of PSC involvement in programme design, delivery and evaluation	☒	
External examiner appointments and arrangements		☒
Programme specification(s)	☒	
Programme planner (indicating where theory and practice hours are achieved)	☒	
Programme handbook(s)	☒	
Module descriptors	☒	
Mapping of programme learning outcomes against module learning outcomes	☒	
Mapping against Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes	☒	
Mapping of programme outcomes against NMC Standards of proficiency	☒	
Student-facing supporting documentation/VLE site		☒
Practice learning environment information for students		☒
Practice learning allocation information		☒
Practice assessment documentation (PAD)		☒
Ongoing record of achievement (ORA)		☒
Practice learning handbook/information for practice supervisors and practice assessors specific to the programme		☒
Academic assessor focused information specific to the programme		☒
If you stated No, above, please provide the reason and mitigation: Limited number of standards in scope for review for the curriculum modification and desk based review.		
List additional evidence: N/A		
Additional comments: N/A		

During the event the agenda included the following meetings:

	Yes	No
Senior managers of the AEI with responsibility for resources for the programme		☒
Senior managers from associated PLPs and EPs with responsibility for resources for the practice learning experiences within the programme		☒
Programme delivery team		☒
Academic assessors		☒
Practice staff representatives (practice leads/practice supervisors/practice assessors)		☒
Representatives for PSCs		☒
Student representatives		☒
If you stated No, above, please provide the reason and mitigation: This was a desk-based modification review.		
Additional comments: N/A		

FINAL REPORT			
	Name	Position	Date
Author	Dr Zanib Bi-Mohammed	Registrant Visitor	29 April 2026
QAA Officer	Jonathan Hall	QAA Officer	29 April 2026

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