



Nursing and Midwifery Council Quality Assurance Review

Major Modification Report for:

**Pre-registration nursing associate qualification
leading to:**

Nursing Associate

University of Sheffield

October 2025

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Key institutional and programme details

Name and location of Approved Education Institution (AEI)	University of Sheffield Western Bank Sheffield S10 2TN				
AEI/EI Institution Identifier [UKPRN]	10007157				
Name and location of programme delivery partner(s) if not the AEI/EI noted above	Not applicable				
Name of new employer partners for apprenticeships	There are no new employer partners				
Approval type	Major modification				
Name of programme					
NMC programme title	AEI/EI programme title (in full)	Academic level(s)	Apprentice-ship	Full-time	Part-time
Nursing Associate	Nursing Associate (apprentice)	England <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed programme start date	21 September 2026				
Standard(s) under assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes Note that the AEI has taken an institutional approach to Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment and therefore compliance with Part 2 has been confirmed through a previous review.				
Date of visit	16 October 2025 (online event)				
Visitor team	Registrant Visitor: Mrs Jenny Pinfield Lay Visitor: Ms Alison Blackburn				

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(s). 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.

For programme approvals, all standards within Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes are reported upon. For major modifications, only those Part 3 standards impacted by the modification are reported upon. The visitor team confirms with the AEI/EI which Part 3 standards are in scope for a major modification.

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

The conjoint event with the University of Sheffield's approval panel took place online on 16 October 2025.

Context for the review

The University of Sheffield (UoS) requested a major modification to the nursing associate apprenticeship programme to align with overarching UoS changes for degree programmes. The modification involves changes to the overall programme structure, programme and module learning outcomes and assessments.

The modification was informed by feedback from apprentices who expressed a preference for modules that covered both the acute and long-term impact of a specific condition as a whole package. The modified programme is designed to support apprentices in seeing conditions holistically. Different focus groups with employer partners (EPs), apprentices (including those near to completion), and people who use services and carers (PSCs) were held as part of the modification planning process.

During the online event, the visitor team met with representatives from the programme development and senior management teams, EPs, PSCs and current nursing associate apprentices.

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor team to the NMC, following consideration of UoS's 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 findings of the 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** of the visitor team following the event and prior to the consideration of UoS's 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

Conditions				
No.	Condition details	Specific standard(s) not met	NMC only/ Joint	AEI/EI only
C1	Ensure that 50% of the programme hours support theoretical learning and that the arrangements for this are explicitly documented, recorded and communicated to apprentices and EPs.	2.7, 3.4	NMC only	
Date for all conditions to be met to meet intended delivery date		01 December 2025		

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

Recommendations for enhancement

Recommendations				
No.	Recommendation	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint	AEI/EI only
R1	Strengthen the ongoing engagement of PSCs in the recruitment and selection process for the nursing associate programme.	2.1 [SFNME, 2.7]	NMC only	
R2	Review the number and purpose of reflections required within practice learning to ensure they are clearly aligned to demonstrating achievement of the relevant proficiencies and proportionate to their intended educational function.	2.1*, 4.7 [*SFNME 5.13]	Joint	
R3	Consider adopting a more refined exit award title that accurately reflects the area of study undertaken.			AEI only

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

Statements of good practice

Statements of good practice relating to the NMC standards			
No.	Details	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint
GP1	The feedback and consistently implemented support that apprentices receive for their development, including from clinical educators who visit apprentices regularly in the practice learning setting.	4.4	Joint

Response to conditions

The visitor team reviewed in full the response(s) and evidence from UoS to the conditions set. The findings of the visitor team with regard to responses to individual conditions are recorded below.

Response to NMC and Joint NMC/AEI/EI conditions

Response to conditions		
No.	Condition details	Findings
C1	Ensure that 50% of the programme hours support theoretical learning and that the arrangements for this are explicitly documented, recorded and communicated to apprentices and EPs.	<p>In responding to C1, UoS submitted an updated programme handbook, information relating to expectations of nursing associates and guidance for clinical educators.</p> <p>The programme handbook (page 29) explains how the 950 hours of protected learning time in the base area is split equally between theory and practice. This equates to 475 hours of theory and 475 hours of practice over the two years. This equates to six hours per week to complete academic work, independent study and preparation for assessments and is overseen by the module teaching team, with any work completed uploaded to the virtual learning environment. The module lead will have determined the number of hours required to complete the range of academic activities. This is further explained in the information relating to expectations of nursing associates, with guidance for practice supervisors and practice assessors. The guidance on the tracking system for clinical educators confirms that the hours of academic work allocated each week are set by module leads and that clinical educators are responsible for recording the theory hours on the tracker each month. Where the hours are not being used for academic study, this is identified and followed up in the 12-weekly tripartite reviews with the apprentice, employer and UoS representative.</p> <p>The visitor team therefore considers that for Condition C1, UoS has fully addressed the requirements of the condition and Standards 2.7 and 3.4 are met.</p>

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 UoS's 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

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:		Met	Not Met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
1.1	<p>Confirm on entry to the programme that students:</p> <p>1.1.1 meet the entry criteria for the programme as set out by the AEI and are suitable for nursing associate practice</p> <p>1.1.2 demonstrate values in accordance with the Code</p> <p>1.1.3 have capability to learn behaviours in accordance with the Code</p> <p>1.1.4 have capability to develop numeracy skills required to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>1.1.5 can demonstrate proficiency in English language</p> <p>1.1.6 have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>1.1.7 have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recognition of prior learning metrics

UoS permits recognition of prior learning (RPL) of up to 50% of the programme requirements. The RPL claim requires evidence of prior theoretical learning that can be mapped to 120 credits at Level 4. RPL can also be awarded for practice learning hours mapped to the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates (SoPNA, NMC, 2018) and includes 425 hours of protected learning from the base area and 337.5 alternative practice learning hours. A mapping document is used to facilitate RPL claims.

Findings

1. The visitor team considered the evidence submitted for Standards 1.1-1.6, including recruitment information, interview tasks and declaration forms, the programme handbook, and the policy for RPL. The visitor team requested further information to ascertain which standards were specifically impacted by the modification. Through consideration of the evidence, the presentation by the programme development team and discussions during the event, the visitor team confirmed that Standards 1.1-1.5 are not impacted by the modification.
2. In considering Standard 1.6, the visitor team confirmed that following the modification, apprentices will complete a new 'Academic Skills and Digital Literacy' module. Apprentices will also complete a 'Pharmacology and Medicines Management for Nursing Associates' module, which includes an online exam. The assessment strategy for the nursing associate programme identifies an appropriate range of assessments for apprentices to complete that promote numeracy, literacy and digital and technological literacy. The practice assessment document (PAD) and ongoing achievement record (OAR) are hosted on a digital platform, supporting the development of digital and technological literacy. The PAD and OAR have clear links to outcomes related to numeracy to facilitate achievement of programme outcomes and SoPNA (NMC, 2018). Apprentices confirmed that throughout their studies, they have access to support from the programme team and specific educators employed by UoS to support apprenticeships.
3. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that UoS has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression to enable the NMC standards to be met.

2: Curriculum

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, 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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Comply with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Ensure that programme learning outcomes reflect the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Set out the general and professional content necessary to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and programme outcomes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.8	Ensure technology and simulation opportunities are used effectively and proportionately across the curriculum to support supervision, learning and assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.9	Ensure nursing associate programmes which form part of an integrated programme meet the nursing associate requirements and nursing associate proficiencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Curriculum requirements

The programme is 3,000 hours (the total hours the apprentice is employed during the period of the apprenticeship) of which 2,300 hours are protected learning for the NMC programme.

The 2,300 hours include 675 hours for theory, 675 hours for external practice learning and 950 hours for the base practice learning area. Documentation indicates that the 950 hours

are 50% theory and 50% practice. A condition has been set to make it clear that there is a balance of theory and practice.

Findings

4. The visitor team considered a range of documentary evidence relating to the curriculum including UoS's assessment arrangements, programme information and mapping documents. The visitor team also triangulated documentary evidence through meetings with key stakeholders including the programme development team and senior manager representatives, EPs, PSCs and apprentices on the current programme.
5. In considering Standard 2.1, the visitor team reviewed documents including the programme specification and regulations, UoS's assessment strategy, and the mapping of programme learning outcomes to the SoPNA (NMC, 2018). The visitor team also reviewed notes from focus group meetings, including examples of those held with PSCs, and minutes of meetings with EPs. Discussions with key EPs confirmed some degree of involvement in programme developments. EPs are happy to continue to be kept informed and value changes to the module theoretical content. Apprentices confirmed that they completed feedback surveys. PSC representatives confirmed that they attended meetings with UoS and felt consulted regarding the changes being made. The programme development team and PSC representatives confirmed that PSCs share their experiences and play a role in the programme, for example in the communication assessment. EPs confirmed their involvement in the recruitment of apprentices to the programme. The visitor team saw evidence of how PSC involvement was included in recruitment and selection across the UoS provision, and this was confirmed at the visit. The visitor team heard and saw evidence that for the nursing associate programme PSCs had been engaged in the historical development of the recruitment and selection process. The visitor team saw evidence of the UoS strategy for the engagement of PSCs in wider approved NMC provision and identified that if this was applied to the nursing associate programme this would strengthen the ongoing engagement of PSCs with recruitment and selection for this programme. UoS recognised this and informed the visitor team there were intentions to strengthen this engagement moving forward with plans to introduce a PSC representative on the interview panel and for them to add a values-based question of their choosing. The PSC representatives at the meetings during the review advised that they would be keen to participate in this recruitment process. The visitor team therefore identified a **recommendation (R1)**, linked to Standard 2.1, and the Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education (SFNME) (NMC 2018, updated 2023) 2.7, for UoS to strengthen engagement with PSCs in the recruitment and selection on the nursing associate programme in line with the evidence presented for their wider provision.
6. In considering the SFNME requirements, the visitor team also reviewed the use of apprentices' self-reflections in the assessment of the SoPNA and identified that the current volume of reflections may not proportionately contribute to demonstrating proficiency and may place additional workload demands on apprentices. The visitor team therefore identified a **recommendation (R2)**, also linked to Standard 2.1, for UoS to review the number and purpose of reflections required within practice learning to ensure they are clearly aligned to demonstrating achievement of the relevant proficiencies and proportionate to their intended educational function.
7. In considering Standard 2.2, the visitor team reviewed programme documentation along with job descriptions for teaching and support staff, and information relating to

the roles of academic assessor (AA), practice supervisor (PS) and practice assessor (PA). Evidence provided demonstrates how the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment (SSSA) (NMC 2018, updated 2023) are embedded institutionally across UoS's pre-registration programmes, and how quality assurance processes support practice learning and EP partnerships. The process for preparing AAs, PSs and PAs is not impacted by this modification. At the visit, the programme development team confirmed that AA allocation will change under the modified programme from allocation per unit to allocation for each part of the programme. UoS maintains centralised spreadsheets to record AA workload and allocation. AAs are documented in the PAD, which apprentices use to identify their allocated AA. UoS confirmed that staff employed to specifically support apprenticeships act as AAs as long as they are appropriately prepared and undertaking their Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching.

8. In considering Standard 2.3, the visitor team reviewed programme documentation and the learning outcomes. The new modules are mapped to the SoPNA and the programme learning outcomes are aligned to the associated NMC platforms. Practice learning is assessed using the already approved PAD, which is also mapped to the SoPNA.
9. In considering Standard 2.4, the visitor team reviewed the programme handbook, planner, module specifications, assessment strategy and practice learning documentation. The modified programme provides learning and practice experience across the lifespan and in a range of settings, including community, primary care and acute environments. UoS provided an exemplar of practice learning experiences illustrating how apprentices will gain exposure to different groups of PSCs and pathways. Requirements for alternative practice learning experiences and reflection are clearly articulated, supporting apprentices to understand the breadth of experience they are expected to achieve.
10. In considering Standard 2.5, the visitor team reviewed programme and mapping documentation, minutes from EP meetings and notes from focus groups. Evidence confirms that the modified programme will continue to include the required general and professional content. The programme specification sets out the role and expectations of nursing associate apprentices, along with the programme aims and learning outcomes. Mapping clearly demonstrates how SoPNA and programme outcomes are achieved across the curriculum. The programme handbook provides the programme philosophy and outlines practice learning arrangements, including base and alternative practice learning experiences. During the event, the programme development team demonstrated how the modified content will support apprentices to apply theory to practice.
11. In considering Standard 2.6, the visitor team reviewed the programme regulations, specification and mapping documents. The modified programme is two years in length and is consonant with the award of a Foundation degree. The programme totals 3,000 hours, including 2,300 protected programme hours. The modified structure continues to provide 120 credits of theory modules at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5, with practice learning captured through zero-credit practice modules in each year. Overall, the visitor team gained assurance that the programme hours and length remain sufficient to enable apprentices to meet the SoPNA.
12. In considering Standard 2.7, the visitor team reviewed programme and module documentation, mapping information and guidance relating to protected learning hours. The programme documentation indicates an intention for a 50% theory and 50% practice balance within the required 2,300 protected programme hours.

However, the visitor team was unable to confirm how this balance is achieved. Of the 2,300 hours, 675 hours are clearly identified as taught theory and 675 hours are clearly identified as practice through alternative practice learning experiences. This means that a further 475 hours are required to meet the required minimum 1,150 theory hours, and 475 hours to meet the required minimum 1,150 practice hours. These additional hours must be drawn from the 950 protected learning time (PLT) hours in the base area. While UoS stated that PLT hours are intended to be split between theory and practice, the programme documentation does not clearly define, record, or monitor how these hours are allocated. Apprentices and EPs described PLT activities predominantly as practice learning, and apprentices reported completing theoretical work in their own time. As a result, the visitor team could not gain assurance that at least 475 of the 950 PLT hours are protected and available for theoretical learning, nor that the required minimum 1,150 hours of theory learning is consistently achievable. Therefore, this results in a **condition (C1)**, for UoS to ensure that 50% of the programme hours support theoretical learning and that the arrangements for this are explicitly documented, recorded and communicated to apprentices and EPs.

13. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that UoS has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 2: Curriculum to enable the NMC standards to be met subject to meeting **condition (C1)**.

3: Practice learning

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Ensure that students experience the variety of practice expected of nursing associates to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.4	<p>Ensure that nursing associate students have protected learning time in line with one of the following two options:</p> <p>3.4.1 Option A: nursing associate students are supernumerary when they are learning in practice</p> <p>3.4.2 Option B: nursing associate students, via work-placed learning routes:</p> <p>3.4.2.1 are released for a minimum of 20 per cent of the programme for academic study</p> <p>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</p> <p>3.4.2.3 for the remainder of the required programme hours, protected learning time must be assured.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Practice learning requirements

Apprentices will undertake 950 hours of protected learning in their base area. This is equivalent to 127 days of protected learning time over the two-year programme (32 days per module whilst in the base area (475 hours per year; 237.5 hours per module). The remaining hours in the base area are not protected time for learning: 3,000 programme hours – 2,300 hours protected time = 700 hours unprotected time.

A further 675 hours protected learning are allocated to alternative practice learning experiences in a range of cross-field settings, with 90 days over the two years taking place either as block weeks or one day per week. This is equivalent to 7.5 hours per day on alternative practice learning (337.5 hours per year; 22.5 days per unit).

A condition has been set in relation to protected learning time.

Findings

14. The visitor team considered a range of documentary evidence relating to practice learning including programme documentation and plans. The visitor team also triangulated documentary evidence through meetings at the event with key stakeholders including programme development team representatives, EPs, and current apprentices. Through consideration of the evidence, the presentation by the programme development team and discussions during the event, the visitor team confirmed that Standards 3.1-3.3 are not impacted by the modification.
15. In considering Standard 3.4, the visitor team reviewed the programme regulations, specification, handbook, assessment strategy and practice learning documentation. The nursing associate apprenticeship route uses Option B, and the programme documentation confirms 675 hours of taught theory and 675 hours of alternative (external) practice learning experiences, which meet the minimum 20% requirements for academic study and external practice learning experiences. Apprentices also undertake 950 PLT hours in their base area. However, the visitor team could not confirm how these 950 PLT hours are allocated between theory and practice, or how protected theory time within PLT is planned, recorded or monitored. The programme development team indicated that completion of reflections during PLT evidences theory learning. However, the reflections reviewed were primarily used to support practice assessment and did not demonstrate structured theoretical learning or ensure access to the minimum 1,150 hours of theory learning required. Apprentices and EPs also described PLT activities predominantly as practice learning, with theoretical study often completed in apprentices' own time. As a result, the visitor team could not gain assurance that apprentices have protected and accessible theory learning time within PLT, or that the programme provides the required balance of theory and practice hours under Option B. Therefore, this results in **condition (C1)** for UoS to ensure that 50% of the programme hours support theoretical learning and that the arrangements for this are explicitly documented, recorded and communicated to apprentices and EPs.
16. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that UoS has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 3: Practice learning to enable the NMC standards to be met subject to meeting **condition (C1)**.

4: Supervision and assessment

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, 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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Ensure they inform the NMC of the name of the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the education programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Provide students with constructive feedback throughout the programme to support their development.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5	Ensure throughout the programme that students meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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%.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7	Assess students to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a nursing associate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8	Ensure that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

17. The visitor team considered a range of documentary evidence relating to supervision and assessment, including programme and module information, role descriptions and staff CVs. The visitor team also triangulated documentary evidence through meetings at the event with key stakeholders including the programme development team and senior manager representatives, EPs and current apprentices. Through consideration of the evidence, the presentation by the programme development team and discussions during the event, the visitor team confirmed that Standards 4.3 and 4.9 are not impacted by the modification.
18. In considering Standard 4.1, the visitor team reviewed the programme regulations, specification, handbook and practice learning documentation. The nursing associate apprenticeship programme is delivered within UoS's institutional framework for support, supervision and assessment, which aligns with the NMC SFNME (NMC 2018, updated 2023). Roles and responsibilities for AAs, PSs and PAs are clearly defined, and tripartite meetings between apprentices, EPs and UoS staff are used to review progress and support learning in practice. Apprentices must successfully

complete the zero-credit practice modules each year to demonstrate progression in practice. Evidence from meetings with apprentices, EPs and the programme development team confirmed that support and supervision arrangements are in place and that processes to monitor progression and address concerns are used consistently across the programme.

19. In considering Standard 4.2, the visitor team reviewed role descriptions, planning and training guidance, and assessment tracking documents. The programme sits within UoS's institutional implementation of the SSSA (NMC 2018, updated 2023) as outlined under Standard 2.2. The arrangements for the preparation and allocation of PSs, PAs and AAs are clear, and processes are in place to monitor supervision and assessment through the PAD. The visitor team was assured that apprentices must meet all required elements of the PAD to progress between parts of the programme, and that these arrangements will apply consistently to the modified programme.
20. In considering Standard 4.4, the visitor team reviewed the assessment strategy and arrangements for providing feedback to apprentices. UoS has a structured and comprehensive approach to assessment, supported by clear policies and aligned with the NMC Standards. Assessments are designed to evaluate apprentices' knowledge, skills, behaviours, values and attitudes to enable achievement of the SoPNA (NMC, 2018). The arrangements for feedback are unchanged by this modification. Evidence from programme documentation and discussions during the event demonstrated that feedback from AAs and PAs is timely, constructive and contributes to apprentices' development. Tripartite reviews held every eight to 12 weeks, provide a shared opportunity for EPs to comment on apprentices' progress in practice and to receive updates on academic progress, supporting a rounded view of achievement. Apprentices spoke positively about the feedback and support received, particularly from the UoS programme team who regularly visit practice settings to provide guidance and ensure arrangements are functioning effectively. The visitor team therefore identified the consistent and proactive support provided by the programme team, and the integrated feedback process across academic and practice settings, as a feature of **good practice (GP1)**.
21. In considering Standard 4.5, the visitor team reviewed module documentation and associated mapping. Documentary evidence confirms that the modified programme is appropriately mapped to the SoPNA. All modules are mandatory, and apprentices must successfully complete the zero-credit practice modules to progress and complete the programme. Practice learning is assessed through the PAD, which provides structured assessment and documentation of progression in practice.
22. In considering Standard 4.6, the visitor team reviewed the assessment strategy, medicines management guidance, student numeracy preparation materials and information on progression requirements. The programme includes a medicines calculation assessment requiring 100% accuracy. A digital medicines calculation platform is used to support preparation for this assessment. The nursing associate apprenticeship regulations confirm that all assessments, including numeracy and medicines management assessments, must be passed for apprentices to progress and complete the programme.
23. In considering Standard 4.7, the visitor team reviewed the assessment strategy, programme specification and mapping documentation. The programme assesses proficiency through a combination of theoretical assessments and assessment of practice learning using the PAD, which is mapped to the SoPNA. Apprentices must successfully complete both theoretical and practice assessment requirements to confirm proficiency for professional practice. During the event, apprentices and EPs

described completing a high volume of reflections in both base and alternative practice learning experiences. These reflections support ongoing development and are reviewed by PAs and PSs but are not summatively assessed by UoS. As outlined in Standard 2.1, the visitor team identified **recommendation (R2)** for UoS to review the number and purpose of reflections required within practice learning to ensure they are clearly aligned to demonstrating achievement of relevant proficiencies and proportionate to their intended educational function.

24. In considering Standard 4.8, the visitor team reviewed programme and assessment documentation, including the major amendment form and assessment strategy. The modified programme includes assessment of theory and assessment of practice learning through the PAD, delivered through mandatory zero-credit practice modules in each year. Apprentices must pass both the theoretical assessments and the PAD to progress and complete the programme.
25. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that UoS 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

26. Arrangements for the award of qualifications for programmes have not changed as a result of the modification. As part of the modification, UoS is changing the award title from Nursing Associate (apprentice) to Foundation Degree Nursing Associate (Apprenticeship).

QAA3018 – R14951 – December 25

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050
Web: www.qaa.ac.uk/nmc