



Nursing and Midwifery Council

Major Modification Report for pre-registration nursing qualifications:

Pre-registration nursing - Adult

Pre-registration nursing - Mental Health

University of Surrey

June 2026

QA Link reference number: 020824090116-M

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Key institutional and programme details

AEI Institution Identifier [UKPRN]	10007160
Address of main programme delivery	University of Surrey School of Health Sciences Kate Granger Building Priestley Road Guildford, Surrey GU2 7YH England
Satellite site details	Existing satellite sites: N/A New satellite sites: N/A
Partnership site details	N/A
Endorsement details	N/A
Name of new employer partners for apprenticeships	ProCare Community Services/Royal Surrey Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Royal Surrey Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust
Event type	Major modification
Proposed programme start date	15 September 2026
Date of activity	10 June 2026
Visitor team	Registrant visitors: Mr Mathew Alexander Nute Mr Ian Tuveri-Ellis Lay Visitor: Mrs Karen Chetwynd

Name of current programmes under scrutiny					
NMC programme title	AEI programme titles	Academic level	Apprenticeship	Full-time	Part-time
Pre-registration nursing - Adult	BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies (Registered Nurse Adult Nursing)	England, Wales, Northern Ireland ☒ Level 6		☒	☐
Pre-registration nursing - Mental Health	BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies (Registered Nurse Mental Health Nursing)	England, Wales, Northern Ireland ☒ Level 6		☒	☐

Titles of additional programmes following modification					
NMC programme title	New AEI programme titles	Academic level	Apprenticeship	Full-time	Part-time
Pre-registration nursing - Adult	BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies Registered Nurse (Adult Nursing) integrated Degree Apprenticeship	England, Wales, Northern Ireland ☒ Level 6	☒	☒	☐
Pre-registration nursing - Mental Health	BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies Registered Nurse (Mental Health Nursing) integrated Degree Apprenticeship	England, Wales, Northern Ireland ☒ Level 6	☒	☒	☐

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 programmes (SPRNP) (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.

The conjoint visit with the University of Surrey's approval panel took place on 10 June 2026.

Context

The University of Surrey (UoS) sought approval for a major modification to introduce registered nurse degree apprenticeship (RNDA) programmes in adult and mental health fields of nursing practice alongside its existing direct entry pre-registration nursing programmes. The proposed RNDA programmes utilise the existing curriculum structure, programme learning outcomes and assessment strategy, with modifications to support apprenticeship delivery in accordance with the SFNME and the SSSA. The modification also includes an increase in simulated practice learning (SPL) from 200 to 300 hours. The proposed RNDA programmes have been developed in response to workforce priorities identified by local EPs, providing an alternative route into registered nursing utilising apprenticeship funding while supporting workforce development across the local health and care system. The modification applies to new cohorts enrolling on the apprenticeship

programmes and does not affect students currently enrolled on the existing direct entry pre-registration nursing programmes.

The proposed modification was informed through engagement with EPs, PLPs, students, PSCs, and academic and practice stakeholders involved in UoS's existing pre-registration nursing programmes. Stakeholders contributed to the development of the proposed RNDA programmes through consultation on programme documentation, curriculum development, and practice learning arrangements. EPs also contributed to the development of the RNDA programmes to support local workforce requirements and implementation planning.

During the onsite visit, the visitor team met with the programme team, senior university representatives, EPs, practice assessors (PAs), practice supervisors (PSs), academic assessors (AAs), students, and PSCs.

No significant stakeholder absences were identified during the onsite visit.

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor team to the NMC, following consideration of the UoS 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 team reviewed a comprehensive range of evidence to inform this report, including university policies, programme specifications, module records, programme handbooks, mapping documents, and practice assessment documents (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 BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies Registered Nurse Integrated Degree Apprenticeship is offered for both adult and mental health fields of nursing practice. The programme award is a BSc (Hons) nursing studies and is delivered full time over 36 months. The programme comprises 360 credits, with 120 credits delivered at Levels 4, 5 and 6. The programme comprises a total of 4,862.5 hours: – 2,350 theory hours where students complete 35 hours per week – 2,512.5 practice learning hours where students complete 37.5 hours per week. Delivery is structured through alternating university learning and practice learning blocks across all three years, enabling students to progressively integrate academic learning, SPL, and workplace learning. Reading weeks contribute to theory hours and may include teaching or assessment activities. Elective practice learning opportunities are undertaken towards the end of year 2. Apprenticeship knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) are integrated throughout the curriculum alongside the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses (SoPRN) (NMC 2018, updated 2024), with progression evidenced through academic assessment and practice assessment. Each of years 1, 2 and 3 comprises one 120-credit, year-long module. Year 1 develops the foundations of professional nursing practice and apprenticeship learning. Students are introduced to professional values, accountability, communication and relationship management, biosciences, social sciences, psychology, health promotion, and evidence-informed nursing practice. Learning is delivered through classroom teaching, simulation centre activities, e-learning and independent study, with shared learning alongside nursing, midwifery, and paramedic students to promote interdisciplinary working. Field-specific learning develops professional identity within adult and mental health nursing practice. Following an initial university-based period, students commence practice learning through primary care experiences before progressing to a range of practice learning experiences. Year 2 develops increasing field-specific knowledge, skills, and clinical decision-making to support the management of more complex health needs. The curriculum introduces leadership, management, teamwork, and quality improvement alongside increasing responsibility within practice learning. University-based learning prepares students for Level 5 study before extended practice learning experiences, with subsequent university blocks consolidating field-specific knowledge, clinical reasoning, and evidence-informed care across increasingly complex practice settings. Students also complete an elective practice learning experience towards the end of the academic year.
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	Year 3 prepares students for autonomous registered nurse practice through the consolidation of professional knowledge, clinical judgement, and leadership. Students are expected to demonstrate increasing independence, coordinate and lead care, manage complexity, and meet all requirements for entry to the NMC register. A substantial evidence-informed project enables students to investigate an area of professional practice and develop recommendations to improve the quality and safety of care. The curriculum is structured to progressively integrate theory, SPL and practice learning throughout the programme. Five graduate attributes are embedded across all three years - employability, digital capabilities, global and cultural capabilities, sustainability, resourcefulness and resilience.
Overview of practice learning requirements	The BSc (Hons) nursing studies registered nurse integrated degree apprenticeship programme includes 2,512.5 hours of practice learning, of which 300 hours are delivered through SPL. Practice learning is organised through alternating university and practice learning blocks, with students completing 37.5 hours per week during practice learning blocks. Year 1 comprises 665 practice learning hours, of which 555 hours are delivered through practice learning experiences and 110 hours are delivered through SPL. Students receive an introduction to practice through primary care and a range of approved practice learning environments, developing fundamental nursing skills and professional behaviours. Year 2 comprises 855 practice learning hours, of which 810 hours are delivered through practice learning experiences and 45 hours are delivered through SPL. Students experience increasing exposure to field-specific practice, management of more complex care needs and completion of an elective practice learning opportunity. Year 3 comprises 992.5 practice learning hours, of which 847.5 hours are delivered through practice learning experiences and 145 hours are delivered through SPL. Students will consolidate autonomous practice, leadership, coordination of care and achievement of entry to registration proficiencies. Students normally undertake two practice learning experiences in each part of the programme, providing exposure to a breadth of approved practice learning environments across primary, community, secondary, mental health, and specialist services. Students may undertake a maximum of one supernumerary practice learning experience within their employing organisation during the programme, with all other practice learning experiences allocated through UoS's approved practice learning processes. Practice learning is delivered in accordance with the SSSA. Apprentices are supervised by appropriately prepared PSs, assessed by a nominated PA, and supported by an AA. Achievement of practice learning outcomes and proficiencies is recorded within the electronic practice assessment document (ePAD), including the ongoing achievement record (OAR), with progression monitored through regular tripartite progress reviews involving the student, EP and UoS.

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 their intended field of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing 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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The programme specification, context documentation and admissions processes demonstrate that UoS has established clear admission and selection requirements for the RNDA programmes, incorporating both the existing direct entry pre-registration nursing entry requirements and the additional apprenticeship eligibility criteria. These documents confirm the academic, English language, literacy, digital capability, and apprenticeship requirements that applicants must meet prior to entry. The visitor team was assured that programme-specific entry requirements and applicant suitability are communicated through UoS and EP recruitment processes, with joint oversight of eligibility, admissions, and verification, ensuring applicants are suitable for their intended field of nursing practice.

The apprenticeship specification and admissions processes demonstrate that values-based recruitment is embedded within programme selection. The programme team provided assurance during the visit that applicants undertake a structured multiple mini-interview process, where applicants must successfully complete a nursing-specific station before progressing to additional scenario-based stations that assess attributes aligned to the Code (NMC, 2018), including equality, insight and reflection. Discussion during the visit also confirmed that PSCs, PLPs and EPs contribute to the selection process, providing assurance that applicants demonstrate the values and behaviours required to learn in accordance with the Code.

The programme specification and apprenticeship documentation confirm that applicants must demonstrate appropriate capability in numeracy, English language, literacy, and digital literacy prior to entry. Discussion with the programme team provided assurance that numeracy capability is developed progressively throughout the programme through staged learning, assessment and targeted support where required, enabling students to achieve the 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.	Met
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The programme handbook, programme specification and apprenticeship documentation demonstrate that processes are in place to ensure students meet the health and character requirements at admission, throughout the programme and on completion. Prior to entry, students are required to provide satisfactory enhanced disclosure and barring service

(DBS) and occupational health (OH) clearance through their employing organisation, which is verified by UoS before students commence the programme. Applicants are also required to complete the relevant declarations relating to health, character, and criminal convictions.

The programme documentation demonstrates that health and character are monitored throughout the programme through annual health and criminal record self-declarations, ongoing student responsibilities to disclose any changes, and established monitoring arrangements between UoS and EPs. Discussion with the programme team provided assurance that EPs retain responsibility for maintaining OH and DBS clearance, with UoS oversight through onboarding processes, regular tripartite reviews and established information sharing arrangements.

The visitor team was assured that, on completion of the programme, UoS confirms students' health and character in support of the student's own declaration to the NMC, following verification that all required health and character processes have been satisfactorily completed.

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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The context document, apprenticeship specification and programme documentation demonstrate that students are informed at admission and throughout the programme of their responsibility to immediately declare any police charges, cautions, convictions, conditional discharges, or determinations made by other regulators, professional bodies or educational establishments that may affect their fitness to practise (FtP). These requirements are reinforced through programme conditions, annual declarations and ongoing UoS processes, ensuring students understand their continuing professional responsibilities.

The visitor team was assured that declarations are managed through established UoS governance processes, including the DBS panel, professionalism group and, where appropriate, FtP procedures. Discussion during the visit confirmed that clear escalation, information sharing, and decision-making arrangements are in place between the UoS and EPs, ensuring declarations are considered promptly, fairly, and lawfully, in accordance with legislative, regulatory and NMC requirements.

1.4 ensure the registered nurse responsible for directing the educational programme or their designated registered nurse substitute is able to provide supporting declarations of health and character for students who have completed a pre-registration nursing programme.	Met
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The programme handbook, apprenticeship specification and assessment processes demonstrate that clear governance arrangements are in place to enable the registered nurse (RN) responsible for directing the programme, or their designated RN substitute, to provide the supporting declaration of health and character on programme completion. The lead for undergraduate pre-registration programmes, as chair of the board of examiners, holds responsibility for the final declaration, with the programme director for nursing identified as the nominated RN substitute.

Discussion with the programme team provided assurance that the supporting declaration is informed by evidence collated throughout the programme, including academic achievement, practice learning, professional behaviour, and apprenticeship requirements.

Information is reviewed through the AA process, ePAD, apprenticeship management systems and the board of examiners, providing a clear audit trail to support decision making prior to programme completion.

The visitor team was assured that any health, character or professional concerns arising during the programme are documented, reviewed and resolved through established UoS processes before the supporting declaration is made, ensuring the RN responsible for the programme, or their designated substitute, is able to make an informed declaration.

1.5 permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and programme outcomes, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the programme.	Met
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The context document, apprenticeship specification, recognition of prior learning (RPL) policy and RPL application process demonstrate that applicants may be granted RPL where previous certificated or experiential learning can be mapped to the SoPRN and the programme outcomes. The programme permits RPL for up to a maximum of 50% of the programme, in accordance with NMC requirements. The programme currently permits RPL of 120 credits at Level 4, enabling eligible applicants to enter at the start of year 2 following confirmation that the Level 4 learning outcomes and required practice learning have been achieved.

Applications from registered nursing associates and eligible healthcare support workers or assistant practitioners with an appropriate foundation degree are considered on an individual basis, with prior learning mapped against the programme learning outcomes and the SoPRN to determine the level of credit that may be awarded. The current approved RPL route permits recognition of 120 credits at Level 4 and up to 60 credits at Level 5. Although each year of the programme comprises 120 credits, UoS regulations permit RPL for half of a 120-credit module, enabling up to 60 credits at Level 5 to be awarded where prior certificated learning and practice experience are successfully mapped to the programme learning outcomes and the SoPRN. All applications are individually assessed through UoS's RPL process to ensure prior learning and practice experience are appropriately mapped to the programme learning outcomes and the SoPRN. For apprentices undertaking the RNDA, RPL arrangements also comply with the apprenticeship requirement that the minimum programme duration is one year.

UoS operates an institution-wide RPL process supported by a standardised application process and school-level RPL panel. Applications are scrutinised by the admissions team and academic panel to ensure prior learning is appropriately mapped to the SoPRN and programme outcomes before being presented to the external examiner (EE) for review, providing independent oversight, and supporting consistency and academic integrity in RPL decision making.

1.6 for NMC registered nurses, permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and programme outcomes that may be more than 50% of the programme.	Met
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This standard is not in scope for this modification. Under the current Skills England apprenticeship funding rules, individuals who are already registered nurses are not eligible to access apprenticeship funding to achieve a second field of nursing registration. They are considered to have already met the KSBs and occupational duties specified within the RNDA standard.

1.7 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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The module descriptors, apprenticeship specification and programme documentation demonstrate that numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy are embedded throughout the programme and progressively developed through the integrated programme assessment strategy, module learning outcomes and practice learning. These capabilities are mapped to the programme outcomes and are developed across all years of the programme through learning, assessment, and practice experiences.

The programme documentation demonstrates that students are supported to develop these skills through their AA, module teams, and structured academic support. Additional support is available through UoS's academic skills provision and specialist disability and neurodiversity services to enable students to develop the academic and professional capabilities required to meet the programme outcomes.

Discussion during the visit provided assurance that students' numeracy and digital capabilities are further developed through staged medicines management learning and assessment activities, alongside the use of digital learning platforms and the ePAD, supporting students to apply these skills safely and effectively throughout the programme.

The visitors conclude that the AEI has met Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression.
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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.	Subject to condition
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The programme specification, module descriptors, programme handbook, and apprenticeship specification demonstrate that the RNDA programmes are based on the UoS direct entry pre-registration nursing curriculum, but in addition incorporate the requirements of the RNDA framework. The programme provides a structured three-year route that integrates theory, SPL, and practice learning experiences to enable students to achieve the programme learning outcomes.

The programme documentation demonstrates established academic and practice learning partnerships to support delivery of the existing pre-registration nursing programmes. However, documentary evidence alone did not provide sufficient assurance that workforce planning demonstrated sufficient staffing capacity, facilities, and resources to support the proposed RNDA programmes and anticipated growth while maintaining safe and effective learning opportunities and practice learning experiences (SFNME R2.15). This was triangulated during the onsite visit, where students described existing cohort sizes and perceived academic staff to be increasingly stretched in meeting students' learning and support needs. Students questioned how equivalent levels of academic support would be maintained as apprentice numbers increased. While the programme team described planned workforce growth and ongoing recruitment, the visitor team was not sufficiently assured that staffing capacity had been demonstrably aligned to the proposed expansion of the programme. Discussions with the programme team confirmed that workforce planning arrangements continue to evolve in response to anticipated growth. This resulted in **condition (C1)** to ensure sufficient workforce and resource capacity is in place to support programme delivery and future growth.

The programme identifies a broad range of practice learning environments across both fields of nursing, supported through established partnership arrangements. However, the documentation did not provide sufficient assurance that practice learning capacity would remain sufficient to provide students with access to the learning opportunities, supervision, assessment and resources required to achieve the programme outcomes without detriment to existing students or practice learning quality (SFNME R3.1). While documentation described established partnership arrangements and ongoing engagement with EPs, it did not provide evidence of current practice learning capacity, projected placement availability, or workforce planning demonstrating that sufficient learning opportunities would be available to accommodate the proposed RNDA student numbers alongside existing pre-registration nursing and nursing associate cohorts. This was triangulated during the onsite visit, where students described existing pressures in securing some practice learning experiences, particularly within mental health and leadership practice learning environments. Students also expressed concern that introducing RNDA programme student numbers, alongside nursing associate students entering the programme through RPL into year two, would place additional pressure on practice learning capacity. Students reported concerns about the availability of practice learning opportunities under current arrangements and perceived that the addition of RNDA students would further reduce access to practice learning opportunities. They were particularly concerned that RNDA programme students might be prioritised for practice learning opportunities because they were employed by the organisations within the practice learning circuit, potentially further limiting opportunities for existing students. While the programme team described ongoing work with EPs to expand practice learning

opportunities, the visitor team was not sufficiently assured that practice learning capacity had been demonstrated to support the proposed programme growth without compromising the quality or availability of practice learning experiences. This resulted in **condition (C2)** to ensure sufficient capacity is available to support the RNDA programmes.

The programme demonstrates established involvement of PSCs, students and PLPs within UoS's direct entry pre-registration nursing provision. However, the programme documentation did not demonstrate how PSCs and other stakeholders with experience relevant specifically to apprenticeships had been systemically consulted regarding the introduction and implementation of the proposed RNDA programmes, including consideration of the impact of delivering the apprenticeship route alongside the existing programme (SFNME R1.12; SFNME R5.5). During the onsite visit, the programme team described established mechanisms for stakeholder engagement across the UoS existing pre-registration nursing programmes. However, discussions with PSCs indicated that they were not familiar with the proposed RNDA curriculum or how they would contribute to its design, delivery, evaluation, or assessment, although they expressed a willingness to support the RNDA programmes. Students were unable to describe how PSCs contributed to their assessments, and the visitor team was not provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate how PSC feedback would consistently contribute to the assessment of students' communication, interpersonal skills and professional behaviours throughout the RNDA programmes (SFNME R5.14). The documentary evidence and clarification provided during the onsite visit did not provide sufficient assurance that PSCs, students and PLPs had been systematically involved in the co-production and evaluation of the proposed RNDA programmes or that stakeholder involvement would be embedded throughout recruitment, programme design, delivery, assessment, monitoring and evaluation. This resulted in **condition (C3)**.

The visitor team also identified opportunities to further strengthen the strategic governance and evaluation of PSC involvement as the apprenticeship provision develops. The programme demonstrates established and valued involvement of PSCs across the School's pre-registration nursing provision. Following implementation of **condition (C3)**, the visitor team identified an opportunity to further strengthen these arrangements through the development of a formal strategy for PSC involvement. Such a strategy would support consistent preparation, governance, support, and evaluation of PSC involvement across recruitment, programme design, delivery, assessment, and programme evaluation (SFNME R1.12), promoting a sustainable and transparent approach as the UoS apprenticeship provision develops. This resulted in **area for future monitoring (AFM1)**.

The programme team demonstrated a clear commitment to developing UoS's first degree apprenticeship programme. However, the programme documentation did not provide sufficient assurance that apprenticeship-specific governance, quality assurance and operational arrangements had been fully established prior to implementation. The visitor team therefore sought clarification regarding UoS's arrangements for managing apprenticeship-specific requirements. During the onsite visit, the programme team demonstrated an understanding of the overarching requirements for apprenticeship delivery. However, discussion identified limited evidence of a sufficiently developed operational understanding of several apprenticeship-specific processes, including the management of breaks in learning, funding-related implications, preparation for end-point assessment (EPA), and the mapping and assessment of KSBs. While UoS had begun to strengthen its apprenticeship expertise through dedicated appointments and planned developments, these arrangements were not yet sufficiently embedded to provide assurance that the programme could be implemented consistently and compliantly. This was reflected in a number of apprenticeship-specific documents, where inconsistencies and omissions required clarification or amendment during the modification process. The

visitor team was not assured that governance and quality assurance arrangements had been sufficiently established to enable the programme team to proactively identify and act upon areas for improvement, or to regularly monitor and evaluate apprenticeship delivery and outcomes against NMC standards and the requirements of Skills England and the apprenticeship funding rules. The visitor team concluded that the evidence did not provide sufficient assurance that apprenticeship governance, quality assurance and operational arrangements had been fully established to support implementation of UoS's first degree apprenticeship programme in compliance with all relevant legal, regulatory, professional and educational requirements (SFNME R2.1, SFNME R2.18). This resulted in **condition (C5)**.

The curriculum demonstrates an integrated structure of theory and practice learning. During the modification visit, the visitor team sought clarification regarding the alignment of employment contracts with programme delivery and apprenticeship requirements. While the programme team and EPs described arrangements to support students throughout the RNDA programmes, clarification identified ambiguity regarding planned variations in contracted weekly hours and how these would consistently align with apprenticeship funding requirements and scheduled theory and practice learning. The visitor team considered that further clarification of employment contract arrangements would strengthen assurance that students on the RNDA programme can effectively organise and manage the sequencing of their employment, theory learning and practice learning throughout the programme (SFNME R5.7). This resulted in **recommendation (R1)**.

The programme includes appropriate arrangements to support students to achieve supernumerary status during practice learning, supported by programme documentation and clarification provided during the onsite visit. The programme team and EPs described clear processes for escalating concerns where protected learning time or supernumerary status may be compromised. As this represents UoS's first degree apprenticeship programme, the visitor team considered that strengthening the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of these arrangements as apprenticeship provision develops would provide additional assurance that supernumerary status and protected learning time are consistently maintained across practice learning environments. This enhancement would support UoS's ability to identify emerging themes, evaluate the effectiveness of existing processes, and assure that students are able to engage fully in their practice learning experiences (SFNME R3.7). This resulted in **recommendation (R2)**.

UoS demonstrates a comprehensive range of learning, wellbeing, and student support services, supported by established processes for identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments across its pre-registration nursing programmes. During the onsite visit, the programme team described how students on the RNDA programmes would access these existing arrangements, including OH services, disability support, and individualised adjustments to support learning in theory and practice. The visitor team identified an opportunity to further strengthen these established arrangements by developing apprenticeship-specific mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the equitable implementation of support and reasonable adjustments across academic and practice learning environments (SFNME R3.11). This would provide additional assurance that students consistently experience inclusive learning opportunities and that agreed adjustments to learning and assessment in theory and practice are implemented consistently in accordance with equality and human rights legislation (SFNME R5.9) These matters resulted in an **area for future monitoring (AFM2)**.

2.2 comply with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	Subject to condition
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The programme handbook, apprenticeship specification, practice learning handbook, scope of practice guidance and practice learning resources demonstrate that the proposed RNDA programmes are designed to align with the SSSA. Programme documentation defines the roles and responsibilities of AAs, PAs, and PSs, together with the governance arrangements intended to support student supervision and assessment within practice learning environments.

The visitor team reviewed the apprenticeship-specific guidance and supporting information developed for PAs and PSs and sought clarification regarding how practice learning environments would be prepared to receive RNDA programme students, how apprenticeship-specific expectations would be communicated to EPs, PAs and PSs, and how practice learning staff would be prepared to support the apprenticeship-specific requirements of supervision and assessment.

During the onsite visit, the programme team described planned communication with EPs, apprenticeship-specific guidance, support from the academic lead for apprenticeships and ongoing liaison with practice learning environments to support implementation of the SSSA. However, students described inconsistent experiences across practice learning environments, reporting that PSs and PAs were not always familiar with programme expectations because they supported students from multiple AEIs with differing requirements. Students explained that they were frequently required to explain programme requirements and assessment processes to PSs and PAs, as practice staff were not always familiar with the expectations of their programme, resulting in inconsistent learning objectives, variable feedback and uncertainty regarding expectations within practice learning environments. While the programme team described intended arrangements, the visitor team was not provided with sufficient evidence that practice learning environments, PAs and PSs had been consistently prepared to support the apprenticeship-specific learning needs of RNDA students or that robust mechanisms had been established to monitor the quality and consistency of supervision, feedback, assessment and completion of the ePAD across practice learning environments. The visitor team was therefore not assured that the programme fully demonstrated compliance with the SSSA. This resulted in **condition (C4)**.

2.3 ensure that programme learning outcomes reflect the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and each of the four fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	Met
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The programme specification, module descriptors and programme mapping documentation demonstrate that the programme learning outcomes reflect the SoPRN and the requirements of the adult and mental health fields of nursing practice. Programme learning outcomes are progressively developed across the three-year curriculum through integrated theory, SPL, and practice learning experiences.

Programme mapping demonstrates how the SoPRN, including Annexe A and Annexe B proficiencies, are incorporated across the curriculum and assessed through programme modules and the OAR, ensuring students are supported to achieve the required proficiencies by the end of the programme.

The curriculum integrates shared and field-specific learning throughout the three-year programme. Shared learning develops the generic knowledge, skills and professional behaviours required of all RNs, while field-specific learning progressively prepares students

to achieve the programme learning outcomes and the SoPRN for their chosen field of adult or mental health nursing.

2.4 design and deliver a programme that supports students and provides exposure across all four fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	Met
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The curriculum is designed to progressively develop students' understanding of nursing across the four fields of practice through an integrated approach to theory, simulated practice learning and practice learning experiences. Early shared learning develops an understanding of the health and care needs of people across the lifespan and across all four fields of nursing practice. As the programme progresses, field-specific learning increases in depth and complexity, enabling students to develop the KSBs required for registration in their chosen field of adult or mental health nursing.

Programme documentation demonstrates that cross-field learning is embedded throughout the curriculum through shared learning activities, interprofessional learning opportunities and practice learning experiences, ensuring students are exposed to all four fields of nursing practice throughout the programme.

The visitor team found that the removal of field-related learning logs had not reduced opportunities for students to demonstrate cross-field learning. Programme documentation and discussion with the programme team during the visit confirmed that these outcomes are now evidenced through the ePAD, providing a more integrated approach to recording achievement across theory, SPL, and practice learning experiences.

2.5 state routes within their pre-registration nursing programme that allows students to enter the register in one or more of the specific fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing.	Met
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The programme specifications and apprenticeship programme handbook clearly identify the available pre-registration nursing routes leading to registration in either the adult or mental health field of nursing practice. Programme documentation provides a clear description of the student journey from admission through to completion, enabling students and EPs to understand the requirements and outcomes of their chosen field of practice.

The programme specifications distinguish the adult and mental health routes through field-specific programme information, while practice learning matrices demonstrate how students undertake practice learning experiences that support the development of proficiencies within their chosen field. The assessment strategy enables students to demonstrate achievement of proficiencies from a field-specific context required for registration.

2.6 set out the general and professional content necessary to meet the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and programme outcomes.	Met
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The programme specifications, module descriptors and curriculum mapping documentation clearly set out the general and professional content required to enable students to achieve the SoPRN and the programme learning outcomes. The curriculum integrates biological, behavioural, and social sciences with nursing knowledge, professional values, and evidence-based practice to support the development of safe and effective RNs.

The module descriptors demonstrate a coherent progression of learning across the programmes, enabling students to build KSBs through integrated theory, SPL, and practice learning experiences. Curriculum mapping confirms that programme content aligns with the SoPRN, including Annexe A communication and relationship management skills and Annexe B nursing procedures, with increasing complexity across the programme.

The curriculum supports students to apply general and field-specific knowledge in a range of learning environments, ensuring they are appropriately prepared to meet the programme outcomes and the requirements for registration.

2.7 set out the content necessary to meet the programme outcomes for each field of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	Met
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The programme specification, apprenticeship programme handbook, year-long module descriptors, programme mapping documentation and assessment strategy set out the content required to achieve the programme outcomes for the adult and mental health RNDAs programmes. The curriculum integrates shared and field-specific learning, ensuring students progressively develop the KSBs required for their chosen field of nursing practice.

Field-specific content is embedded throughout the three-year curriculum and increases in depth and complexity as students' progress through the programme. Theory, SPL, practice learning experiences, and integrated assessment activities enable students to achieve and demonstrate the SoPRN within the context of adult or mental health nursing practice. Programme mapping confirms alignment between curriculum content, programme learning outcomes and the SoPRN.

During the onsite visit, the programme team provided assurance that assessments, although designed using a programmatic approach, are applied within the context of each student's chosen field of nursing practice, enabling field-specific programme outcomes to be achieved. The programme handbook also provides clear information regarding the expectations and requirements associated with each field of practice.

2.8 ensure that field-specific content in relation to the law, safeguarding, consent, pharmacology and medicines administration and optimisation is included for entry to the register in one or more fields of nursing practice.	Met
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The module descriptors, assessment strategy and programme mapping documentation demonstrate that field-specific content relating to the law, safeguarding, consent, pharmacology, medicines administration and medicines optimisation is embedded throughout the adult and mental health RNDAs programmes. This content is progressively developed across the programme, enabling students to apply legal, ethical, and professional principles within their chosen field of nursing practice.

Programme documentation demonstrates that pharmacology and medicines management are integrated across the three-year curriculum through staged medicines management learning, structured numeracy learning and medicines management assessments. The assessment strategy provides students with opportunities to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and professional judgement required for the safe administration and optimisation of medicines within their field of practice.

The visitor team was assured that curriculum content and assessment are aligned with the SoPRN, enabling students to develop the knowledge and skills required to deliver safe, effective, and person-centred care on entry to the register.

2.9 ensure the curriculum provides an equal balance of 50% theory and 50% practice learning using a range of learning and teaching strategies.	Met
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The programme flow and module descriptors demonstrate that the curricula are structured to provide an equal balance of theory and practice learning throughout the RNDA programmes. The programme integrates academic study with practice learning in a planned and progressive manner, enabling students to apply and consolidate learning across a range of settings.

The curricula employ a diverse range of learning and teaching strategies to support student learning, including lectures, seminars, simulation, enquiry-based learning, interprofessional learning, directed and independent study, digital learning resources, and practice learning experiences. These approaches are designed to promote active participation, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and the application of evidence-based practice.

The programme adopts an integrated programmatic assessment approach in which learning, teaching and assessment are purposefully aligned with programme outcomes. This supports students to progressively develop KSBs through authentic learning experiences that integrate theory, simulated practice learning and practice learning throughout the programme.

2.10 ensure technology and simulation opportunities are used effectively and proportionately across the curriculum to support supervision, learning and assessment.	Met
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The programme documentation demonstrates that technology and simulation are embedded throughout the curriculum as pedagogical approaches that support supervision, learning and assessment. Students access a range of digital learning platforms, technology-enhanced learning resources, and computer-assisted learning activities to support independent study, communication, formative learning, and assessment. Technology also supports communication between students, academic staff and PLPs, facilitates access to learning resources and assessment documentation, and enables timely feedback to support students' progression. These approaches are complemented by simulation, which contextualises theoretical knowledge, clinical skills and professional decision making within authentic clinical scenarios, enabling students to apply learning in a safe environment before and alongside practice learning experiences.

Simulation activities are designed to progressively develop students' clinical reasoning, communication, team working, and professional judgement through increasingly complex and authentic scenarios. Learning activities are aligned to programme learning outcomes and support the development of Annexe A communication and relationship management skills and Annexe B nursing procedures across the adult and mental health fields of nursing practice.

The visitor team noted UoS's intention to introduce artificial intelligence (AI) generated simulation activities within the programme. As implementation is at an early stage, there was insufficient evidence to fully evaluate the pedagogical contribution of these activities to the curriculum or their educational effectiveness in supporting students' learning. This resulted in an **area for future monitoring (AFM3)** to provide ongoing assurance regarding the implementation and evaluation of AI-generated simulation activities as a pedagogical approach within the programme.

2.11 ensure that programmes delivered in Wales comply with legislation which supports use of the Welsh language.

N/A

The programme is not delivered in Wales, and therefore this Standard is out of scope in relation to this modification.

2.12 ensure that all pre-registration nursing programmes meet the equivalent of minimum length of three (academic) years for full time programmes, which consist of a minimum of 4,600 hours.
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Met

The programme specifications and programme flow document demonstrate that the RNDA programmes are delivered over the equivalent of three academic years. The programme comprises a total of 4,862.5 hours, including 2,350 theory hours and 2,512.5 practice learning hours.

2.13 ensure programmes leading to registration in two fields of nursing practice are of suitable length to ensure proficiency in both fields of nursing.

N/A

The programme does not lead to registration in two fields of nursing practice, and therefore this Standard is out of scope in relation to this modification.

2.14 ensure programmes leading to nursing registration and registration in another profession are of suitable length and nursing proficiencies and outcomes are achieved in a nursing context.

N/A

The programme does not lead to nursing registration and registration in another profession, and therefore this Standard is out of scope in relation to this modification.

The visitors conclude that the AEI needs to meet conditions (C1), (C2), (C3), (C4), and (C5) in order to provide assurance that Standard 2: Curriculum has been met.

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 registered nurses to deliver safe and effective care to a diverse range of people across the four fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	Subject to condition
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The practice learning matrices demonstrate that the RNDA provides a planned and progressive range of practice learning opportunities that enable students to develop and achieve the SoPRN. Practice learning experiences expose students to a diverse range of people, health conditions, and care settings, including opportunities to gain insight into the four fields of nursing practice, supporting the delivery of safe, effective, and person-centred care.

Practice learning opportunities are complemented by SPL activities that support students to develop and consolidate clinical skills, clinical reasoning and professional decision making in preparation for, and alongside, practice learning experiences.

The visitor team sought clarification that the practice learning matrices and associated practice learning opportunities related specifically to the proposed RNDA programmes rather than the existing direct entry nursing programmes. The programme team confirmed that the practice learning matrices had been developed for the RNDA programmes, providing assurance that students will access planned and progressive practice learning experiences that support achievement of the SoPRN and programme outcomes.

However, the visitor team was not assured that sufficient practice learning capacity existed to support the proposed RNDA programmes without detriment to existing students. Evidence gathered during the onsite visit identified existing pressures within practice learning provision, particularly within mental health practice learning environments and in accessing leadership-focused practice learning experiences, together with uncertainty regarding the impact of future apprenticeship growth and students entering the programme through RPL. Therefore, the visitor team was not assured that the proposed practice learning opportunities could be sustained as student numbers increased. This resulted in **condition (C2)**.

3.2 ensure that students experience the variety of practice expected of registered nurses to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages.	Met
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The practice learning matrices demonstrate that students experience a planned and progressive range of practice learning experiences across primary, community, acute and independent sector settings. Practice learning is sequenced to enable students to care for people across the lifespan with a diverse range of physical and mental health needs and increasing complexity throughout the programme.

Programme documentation demonstrates that practice learning experiences are mapped to the ePAD and the SoPRN, ensuring students experience the breadth of practice required to achieve the programme outcomes and prepare for registration.

The visitor team sought clarification regarding how students with pre-existing knowledge and skills gained through employment would continue to experience the full range of practice learning required by the programme. The programme team provided assurance that students complete the same planned practice learning experiences as other pre-registration nursing students and are required to achieve the programme proficiencies within their role

as student nurses, ensuring exposure to the full range of practice learning experiences required for registration.

3.3 provide practice learning opportunities that allow students to meet the communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures, as set out in Standards of proficiency for registered nurses, within their selected fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	Subject to condition
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The practice learning matrices demonstrate that students will have planned practice learning opportunities to develop and achieve the communication and relationship management skills (Annexe A) and nursing procedures (Annexe B) required within their chosen field of nursing practice. These opportunities are progressively structured throughout the programme and are supported by simulated practice learning activities that enable students to develop and consolidate skills before and alongside practice learning experiences.

The programme team confirmed that the practice learning matrices had been developed specifically for the RNDA programmes, providing assurance that students will have appropriate opportunities to achieve the required communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures.

However, as outlined under Standard 4.2, the visitor team was not assured that students would consistently experience practice learning opportunities that supported achievement of the communication and relationship management skills (Annexe A) and nursing procedures (Annexe B). Evidence gathered during the onsite visit identified existing pressures on practice learning capacity, together with inconsistent understanding among PSs and PAs of programme expectations, resulting in students having to explain learning objectives and assessment requirements within practice learning environments. The visitor team was therefore not assured that all RNDA students would have equitable opportunities to develop and demonstrate the required skills throughout practice learning. This resulted in **condition (C2)** and **condition (C4)**.

3.4 provide no less than 2,300 practice learning hours, of which a maximum of 600 hours can be in simulated practice learning.	Met
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The programme flow identifies how practice learning hours are distributed across the three-year programme, ensuring students undertake sufficient practice learning to achieve the SoPRN. Programme documentation demonstrates that each part of the programme includes two planned practice learning experiences. These are sequenced to provide progressive learning opportunities across a range of practice settings and contribute to the total of 2,512.5 practice learning hours required to achieve the SoPRN.

The programme incorporates SPL in a planned and proportionate way to complement practice learning experiences. Simulation is integrated throughout the curriculum to support the development and consolidation of communication, relationship management, and nursing procedures before and alongside practice learning, while ensuring that the majority of practice learning hours are achieved within practice learning environments.

The RNDA programmes will include 300 hours of SPL in the adult and mental health field of nursing practice, both of which are within the permitted maximum of 600 SPL hours. Programme documentation, together with clarification provided by the programme team during the onsite visit, demonstrates that the SPL complies with the SSSA. This includes

the use of appropriate simulated learning environments, contextualised learning experiences, and clearly defined roles for PSs, PAs, and AAs.

The visitor team sought clarification regarding how mental health students develop Annexe B nursing procedures that may be encountered less frequently within mental health practice learning. The programme team confirmed that the curriculum incorporates SPL, interdisciplinary learning, and planned practice learning experiences to support students' development of these proficiencies. This provided assurance that technology and simulation are used effectively and proportionately to support achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

The visitor team also noted UoS's intention to introduce AI-generated simulated learning activities as part of future SPL provision. As implementation is at an early stage, there was insufficient evidence to fully evaluate how these activities will contribute to SPL hours, how they will be supervised and assessed in accordance with the SSSA, and how governance arrangements will assure their quality, consistency and educational effectiveness. This resulted in an **area for future monitoring (AFM3)**.

3.5 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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Programme documentation demonstrates a comprehensive and coordinated approach to identifying and supporting students' individual needs and personal circumstances throughout the programmes. Students are encouraged to disclose disabilities and additional support needs during the application process and are signposted to specialist disability and neurodiversity services. Applicants requiring support are offered early engagement with disability advisors prior to programme commencement to facilitate timely planning and implementation of reasonable adjustments.

The programme team demonstrated that practice learning allocations take account of students' individual circumstances, including practice learning experience preferences, travel considerations, and personal commitments where possible. Students are able to raise concerns regarding practice learning experience allocation through established processes, and OH recommendations are shared appropriately with EPs to facilitate reasonable adjustments within practice learning environments.

The context documentation shows further enhancement of UoS's approach through the introduction of updated disability and neurodivergence procedures, a structured disability referral and support pathway, and revised guidance relating to proficiency, FtP and reasonable adjustments. The programme team discussed the introduction of student informed resources, including an 'All About Me' profile, to support discussions between students and practice learning staff regarding individual learning needs and appropriate adjustments. These arrangements provide a structured approach to implementing and reviewing reasonable adjustments across practice learning experiences.

The visitor team also considered the arrangements for students accessing disability, wellbeing, and student support services alongside other student groups. While UoS demonstrated established processes for identifying and coordinating support needs, further assurance would be strengthened by continuing to develop arrangements that ensure students who are not eligible for disabled students' allowance and other student funding mechanisms can access equivalent support, reasonable adjustments and inclusive learning opportunities. This resulted in an **area for future monitoring (AFM2)**.

3.6 ensure students experience the range of hours expected of registered nurses.	Met
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Programme documentation demonstrates that students are required to experience the range of working patterns expected of RNs throughout practice learning experiences. The apprenticeship programme handbook and practice learning handbook clearly set out expectations for students to undertake a variety of shifts, including days, nights, weekends, bank holidays and twilight shifts, enabling them to gain experience of providing care across a 24-hour, seven-day service.

The practice learning handbook confirms that students are expected to undertake a standard 37.5-hour practice learning week, with shift patterns planned to reflect the realities of contemporary nursing practice while supporting achievement of programme outcomes. These arrangements ensure students experience the range of hours expected of RNs and are appropriately prepared for professional practice.

3.7 ensure that students are supernumerary.	Met
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Practice learning documentation clearly demonstrates that all practice learning undertaken within the RNDA programmes is supernumerary. The apprenticeship programme handbook, practice learning handbook and programme specifications consistently state that students are supernumerary throughout practice learning and that all practice learning hours are recorded within the ePAD as supernumerary hours. These arrangements provide clear expectations for students, EPs and PLPs regarding the protected learning status of students while undertaking practice learning.

The visitor team explored how supernumerary status is maintained within practice learning environments. The programme team described established arrangements, including practice learning audits, oversight by the practice education team, protected learning time, and escalation processes where concerns arise. These arrangements provide mechanisms for monitoring and supporting supernumerary status across practice learning environments.

However, evidence gathered during the onsite visit indicated that, on occasion, students had experienced situations where supernumerary status was not consistently maintained. The programme team described clear escalation processes where protected supernumerary learning time was not upheld and demonstrated awareness of the mechanisms for escalating concerns with employer partners and, where appropriate, to the NMC. EPs also described processes to protect students' learning time. While these arrangements provide assurance that escalation mechanisms are in place, the visitor team considered that further assurance would be strengthened through enhanced monitoring and evaluation of how supernumerary status is maintained in practice, how concerns are identified and escalated, and how the effectiveness of actions taken is reviewed as apprenticeship student numbers increase. This resulted in **recommendation (R2)** and these findings are shared with Standard 2.1.

The visitors conclude that the AEI needs to meet **conditions (C2)** and **(C4)** in order to provide assurance that Standard 3: Practice learning has been met.

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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Programme documentation demonstrates that the RNDA programmes are delivered through an integrated approach to academic and practice learning that aligns with the SFNME. The programme specifications confirm that EPs are required to work in partnership with UoS and provide assurance that the requirements of the SFNME standards are met, including appropriate governance arrangements, supernumerary practice learning, student supervision, and assessment.

The programme specifications and apprenticeship programme handbook demonstrate that students are supported through established academic and practice-based processes. Students are allocated PSs, PAs, and AAs throughout the programme, and are supported by personal academic tutors, and complete individual learning plans (ILPs) during programme induction. Progress is monitored through regular individual learner progress reviews, which provide oversight of academic progression, practice learning, supernumerary practice learning hours and apprenticeship requirements, including off the job learning.

The programme documentation further demonstrates that academic modules, programme assessments, and practice assessment processes are shared with the direct entry pre-registration nursing programmes. Practice learning is assessed across each part of the programme using the ePAD, with opportunities for formative and summative assessment mapped to the SoPRN. The programme team confirmed that arrangements are in place to support students requiring reasonable adjustments, with disability support processes and OH recommendations informing support within both academic and practice learning environments.

4.2 ensure that support, supervision, learning, and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	Subject to condition
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Practice learning documentation demonstrates that students are supervised and assessed in accordance with the SSSA. The practice learning handbook, scope of practice guidance and practice learning matrices describe the arrangements for supervision and assessment throughout the programme, including the respective roles of PSs, PAs, and AAs. These documents demonstrate systems and processes to coordinate learning within practice learning environments, provide continuity of supervision and assessment across each part of the programme, and support assessment of practice using the ePAD mapped to the SoPRN.

The visitor team sought clarification regarding how practice learning staff are prepared to support RNDA programme students. The programme team confirmed that students are supernumerary throughout practice learning and are supported through the same supervision and assessment processes as students on the approved pre-registration nursing programme. The programme team also confirmed that PSs and PAs receive preparation and ongoing support to undertake their roles, with PAs expected to assess students against the programme proficiencies and outcomes.

However, the visitor team was not assured that these arrangements were implemented consistently across all practice learning environments. Evidence gathered during the onsite visit identified variability in students' experiences of supervision and assessment, indicating

that the systems, processes, and resources to support practice learning were not consistently embedded across practice learning settings (SSSA Standard 1.4). While recognising that practice learning environments support students from AELs, insufficient assurance was provided regarding UoS's arrangements to prepare, communicate with and support PSs and PAs, or to maintain continuity of supervision and assessment throughout practice learning (SSSA Standard 2.5). Students also described inconsistent opportunities to agree learning objectives and variability in the provision of feedback within the ePAD by PSs, limiting assurance that students' progress was consistently monitored and documented (SSSA Standard 3.3). In addition, evidence indicated that PAs did not consistently demonstrate a clear understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes they were required to assess, reducing assurance that assessment decisions were applied consistently across practice learning environments (SSSA Standard 8.4). This resulted in **condition (C4)**.

4.3 ensure they inform the NMC of the name of the registered nurse responsible for directing the education programme.	Met
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The programme specifications identify the leadership arrangements for the RNDA programmes. UoS has formally identified the RN programme director and field leads responsible for directing the education programmes and has notified the NMC accordingly. Staff validation documentation confirmed that these individuals hold current NMC registration appropriate to their roles. This clarification provided assurance that UoS has appropriate arrangements in place to identify and notify the NMC of the RN responsible for directing the education programmes.

4.4 provide students with constructive feedback throughout the programme to support their development.	Met
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Programme documentation demonstrates that students receive constructive and developmental feedback throughout both the academic and practice components of the programme. The module descriptors and assessment strategy identify a range of formative and summative assessments designed to support learning, with feedback provided through academic assessments, practice learning, SPL, peer learning, and PSC engagement. The integrated programmatic assessment approach enables feedback from individual assessments to inform students' ongoing development and progression towards the programme outcomes.

The programme specification demonstrates that all students complete an ILP during induction, supported by their personal academic tutor. The ILP enables students to identify their strengths, development needs, and learning goals in relation to the SoPRN and apprenticeship occupational duties. These learning goals are reviewed through regular tripartite individual learner progress reviews, providing structured opportunities to monitor progress, review feedback and agree ongoing development objectives.

Students confirmed that they are supported throughout the programme by personal academic tutors, PSs, and AAs, with the assessment schedule identifying opportunities for formative and summative feedback across theory, SPL, and practice learning. The programme team confirmed that feedback will be further strengthened through regular tripartite reviews involving the student, EP and UoS, where progress against the individual learning plan, apprenticeship KSBs, programme outcomes, and practice learning will be reviewed, feedback shared and development objectives agreed. The programme team confirmed that these arrangements provide students with timely, individualised, and constructive feedback that supports their academic, professional and practice development throughout the programme.

4.5 ensure throughout the programme that students meet the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and programme outcomes for their fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	Met
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Programme documentation demonstrates that the RNDA programmes are designed to ensure students progressively achieve the SoPRN and the programme outcomes for their chosen field of nursing practice. The programme specification provides comprehensive mapping of the NMC platforms, occupational duties, and apprenticeship KSBs to the programme modules, demonstrating constructive alignment between programme learning, assessment, and professional outcomes.

The module descriptors demonstrate how programme learning outcomes are delivered and assessed across the adult and mental health fields, while proficiency mapping documents identify where the SoPRN are introduced, developed, and assessed throughout the programme. Practice learning documentation demonstrates that achievement of practice proficiencies is recorded and assessed through the ePAD, which is mapped to the proficiencies and supports progression across each part of the programme.

The programme documentation demonstrates a coherent and integrated approach to ensuring students progressively develop and demonstrate both the KSBs and SoPRN required to meet the programme outcomes and achieve registration as a nurse in their chosen field of practice.

4.6 ensure that all programmes include a health numeracy assessment related to nursing proficiencies and calculation of medicines which must be passed with a score of 100%.	Met
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The programme documentation demonstrates that students will undertake a medicines management and health numeracy assessment. Module descriptors identify a staged approach to the development of medicines calculation and health numeracy skills throughout the programme, supported by structured numeracy learning and progressively increasing expectations of proficiency.

Programme documentation confirms that the final medicines management assessment requires a score of 100%, ensuring students demonstrate safe and accurate medicines calculation required for safe and effective nursing practice before successful completion of the programme. Medicines management proficiencies are also assessed within practice learning through the ePAD, with medicines-related competencies assessed on a pass/fail basis against the SoPRN.

4.7 ensure that students meet all communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures within their fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	Met
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Practice learning documentation demonstrates that students are required to achieve all communication and relationship management skills (Annexe A) and nursing procedures (Annexe B) within their chosen field of nursing practice before successful completion of the programme.

The nursing skills passport, practice learning matrices and ePAD demonstrate a structured and progressive approach to the development, assessment and achievement of communication, relationship management, and nursing procedure proficiencies across each part of the programme. Practice learning documentation identifies where these

proficiencies are expected to be achieved and assessed within adult and mental health practice learning experiences, ensuring students progressively demonstrate the required skills before registration.

The practice learning handbook further demonstrates that achievement of proficiencies is monitored throughout practice learning. Where communication and relationship management skills or nursing procedures are not achieved, structured action plans are implemented and carried forward into subsequent practice learning experiences to support continued development and reassessment. These arrangements provide assurance that students are supported to achieve all required communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures before completion of the programme.

4.8 assess students to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a registered nurse.	Met
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Programme documentation demonstrates that students are assessed throughout practice learning using an ePAD, with one ePAD completed for each part of the programme. Practice assessment is undertaken on a pass/fail basis and is mapped to the SoPRN, providing a structured approach to evidencing achievement of the required proficiencies throughout the programme.

The ePAD is supported by an OAR, providing a longitudinal record of students' progression and achievement across all parts of the programme. The programme specification and practice learning documentation demonstrate that PAs and AAs work together to review students' progress at defined progression points and confirm achievement of the required proficiencies before progression through, and completion of, the programme.

Practice learning documentation demonstrates that the assessment of practice is aligned with the programme learning outcomes and the SoPRN, with achievement of communication and relationship management skills, nursing procedures and proficiencies achieved in a field-specific context, recorded within the ePAD. Where students do not meet the required proficiencies, appropriate action planning and reassessment arrangements are implemented to support progression, providing assurance that only students who have demonstrated achievement of all required proficiencies are confirmed as ready for professional practice and registration.

4.9 ensure that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice.	Met
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Programme documentation demonstrates that the assessment strategy provides equal weighting to theory and practice throughout the programme. The module descriptors confirm that each part of the programme comprises 120 academic credits, with an equal balance of assessment across theoretical and practice learning components, ensuring that students are required to demonstrate achievement in both academic and practice learning outcomes necessary for progression and successful completion of the programme.

The assessment table and module descriptors demonstrate how theory and practice assessments are integrated across each part of the programme through the programme's integrated programmatic assessment approach. The apprenticeship programme handbook further explains the assessment structure and progression requirements, providing students with clear information regarding the balanced assessment of academic learning and practice proficiency.

4.10 ensure that all proficiencies are recorded in an ongoing record of achievement which must demonstrate the achievement of proficiencies and skills set out in standards of proficiency for registered nurses.

Met

Programme documentation demonstrates that students' achievement of the SoPRN is systematically recorded throughout the programme using the ePAD, the OAR and the nursing skills passport. These documents provide a comprehensive and longitudinal record of students' progression, evidencing the achievement of professional values, communication and relationship management skills, nursing procedures, and proficiencies across each part of the programme.

The OAR provides a cumulative record of students' development and achievement, enabling PAs and AAs to review progression, identify areas requiring further development and make informed progression decisions. The ePAD records the formative and summative assessment of practice proficiencies, while the nursing skills passport provides additional evidence of achievement of the required clinical skills throughout the programme.

The visitor team concluded that these arrangements provide a robust and auditable record of students' achievement of the required proficiencies and skills, supporting progression through the programme and confirmation of readiness for professional registration.

The visitors conclude that the AEI needs to meet condition (C4) in order to provide assurance that Standard 4: Supervision and assessment has been met.
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5: Qualification to be awarded

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

5.1 ensure that the minimum award for a pre-registration nursing programme is a bachelor's degree.	Met
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The programme specifications clearly identify the award for both the adult and mental health RNDA programmes as a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing. This is consistently reflected within the apprenticeship programme handbook and module descriptors, which set out the programme structure, learning outcomes and requirements for successful completion of the programme.

5.2 notify students during and before completion of the programme that they have five years 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 specified in our standards.	Met
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The apprenticeship programme handbook provides clear information regarding the requirements for registration with the NMC following successful completion of the programme. The handbook explains the registration process, associated timelines and the support available to students during the application process.

Programme documentation explicitly informs students that they must register their qualification with the NMC within five years of completing the programme. It also explains that failure to register within this timeframe will require completion of additional education and training, or the acquisition of further experience, in accordance with NMC requirements before registration can be achieved.

The visitors conclude that the AEI has met Standard 5: Qualification to be awarded.

Conditions and recommendations

Conditions

Following the quality assurance process, the visitors have identified a number of conditions.

All conditions must be met in full before the programme can be recommended to the NMC for final approval.

The agreed deadline for the completion of these conditions, to align with the intended delivery date, is 31 July 2026.

Conditions				
No.	Condition details	Specific standard not met	NMC	AEI
C1	UoS must provide a three-year workforce and resource development plan demonstrating how sufficient staffing capacity to support projected growth in apprenticeship numbers meets teaching and practice learning requirements, and ensures ongoing compliance with the SSSA.	SPRNP Standard 2.1* [*SFNME R2.15]	☒	
Response to condition: UoS submitted a revised three-year workforce and resource development plan, together with supporting governance documentation, including the apprenticeship steering group terms of reference. The additional evidence outlined a phased approach to the implementation and growth of the RNDA programmes, identifying planned academic, clinical, and professional services appointments aligned to projected apprentice numbers. The submission also detailed annual workforce planning and workload review processes, together with arrangements to monitor staffing capacity, practice learning capacity, and compliance with the SSSA as apprentice numbers increase. The visitor team reviewed the additional evidence and was assured that the phased workforce and resource development plan provides sufficient assurance that staffing capacity will be aligned to projected programme growth and that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to monitor workforce requirements throughout implementation. The visitor team recognised that these arrangements relate to the implementation of UoS's first RNDA programme and that their ongoing effectiveness will become established through programme delivery and therefore, following the UoS response to this condition, an additional area for future monitoring (AFM4) has been identified. Having reviewed the AEI's response, the visitor team now considers that for this condition, the requirements of the condition have been met and Standard 2.1 is now met.				

No.	Condition details	Specific standards not met	NMC	AEI
C2	UoS must provide evidence that sufficient practice learning capacity exists to support the	SPRNP Standards	☒	

	proposed apprenticeship programme, including within mental health and leadership practice learning environments, and demonstrate how existing practice learning capacity concerns and the progression of nursing associate students into year 2 through RPL will be managed without detriment to practice learning opportunities, supervision, assessment, staffing resources, or current students.	2.1*,3.1 and 3.3 [*SFNME R3.1]		
Response to condition: UoS submitted revised practice learning capacity documentation, including updated practice learning capacity mapping, EP assurances, and supporting evidence detailing current and projected practice learning experience capacity across both fields of nursing practice. The submission included evidence of practice learning capacity within mental health and leadership-focused practice learning experiences, together with workforce and supervision arrangements to support the proposed apprenticeship cohort. UoS also provided evidence demonstrating how practice learning capacity will be monitored as apprentice numbers increase, including arrangements to review practice learning experience availability, supervision and assessment capacity, and the progression of nursing associate students entering year 2 through RPL. The additional evidence confirmed that practice learning capacity will be reviewed prior to further programme growth to ensure sufficient opportunities are maintained without detriment to existing students, practice learning quality, supervision, assessment, or staffing resources. Having reviewed the AEI's response, the visitor team now considers that for this condition, the requirements of the condition have been met and Standards 2.1, 3.1 and 3.3 are now met.				

No.	Condition details	Specific standard not met	NMC	AEI
C3	UoS must provide assurance that the co-design and co-production of the apprenticeship programme with PSCs, students, EPs, and other stakeholders is systematically embedded across programme recruitment, design, delivery, assessment, monitoring, and evaluation. This must include evidence of meaningful stakeholder involvement in programme development and clear governance arrangements to support ongoing engagement and influence.	SPRNP Standard 2.1* [*SFNME R1.12, R5.5 and R5.14]	☒	☒
Response to condition: UoS submitted additional evidence demonstrating a systematic approach to the co-design and co-production of the apprenticeship programme. This included a stakeholder engagement matrix, a co-production strategy and action plan, governance documentation, and evidence of stakeholder involvement within apprenticeship steering and operational groups. The submission demonstrated how PSCs, students, EPs, and other stakeholders will contribute to programme recruitment, design, delivery, assessment, monitoring, and evaluation.				

The additional evidence also clarified the governance arrangements supporting ongoing stakeholder engagement, including defined roles, responsibilities, and reporting mechanisms to ensure stakeholder feedback informs programme development and continuous enhancement. The visitor team was assured that stakeholder involvement has been systematically embedded within the apprenticeship programme and that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to support meaningful and ongoing stakeholder influence.

Having reviewed the AEI's response, the visitor team now considers that for this condition, the requirements of the condition have been met and Standard 2.1 is now met.

No.	Condition details	Specific standard not met	NMC	AEI
C4	UoS must demonstrate how practice learning environments will be prepared to support apprenticeship students and ensure that PSs and PAs understand their roles and responsibilities for student supervision and assessment. This must include arrangements for communication, preparation, and ongoing support for practice learning staff, together with evidence of how UoS will monitor the quality and consistency of supervision, feedback, and assessment, including completion of the PAD.	SPRNP Standards 2.2, 3.3 and 4.2 [*SSSA 1.4, 2.5, 3.3 and 8.4]	☒	

Response to condition:

UoS submitted additional evidence demonstrating the arrangements that will prepare practice learning environments to support RNDAs students. This included revised practice learning documentation, apprenticeship-specific guidance and training materials for PSs, PAs, and AAs, together with evidence of communication and support arrangements for EPs and practice learning staff.

The submission also included evidence of practice learning experience readiness processes, educational audit arrangements, and governance mechanisms to support the ongoing preparation of practice learning environments. The visitor team was provided with evidence that the quality and consistency of supervision, feedback, assessment, and completion of the PAD will be monitored through established quality assurance processes, with clear escalation and governance arrangements to identify and address areas requiring improvement.

Having reviewed the AEI's response, the visitor team now considers that for this condition, the requirements of the condition have been met and Standards 2.2, 3.3 and 4.2 are now met.

No.	Condition details	Specific standard not met	NMC	AEI
C5	UoS must provide assurance that appropriate governance, quality assurance, and operational arrangements are in place to support the delivery of apprenticeship	SPRNP Standard 2.1*	☒	☒

	programmes. This must include apprenticeship-specific programme documentation and handbooks, removal of references to RPL for RNs, and evidence of institutional readiness to meet the requirements of Skills England apprenticeship standards, Office for Students (OfS) regulatory requirements, and other relevant regulatory and quality assurance frameworks. UoS must also demonstrate clear processes for programme oversight, monitoring, and reporting, including the management of apprenticeship documentation, KSB mapping and assessment, EPA preparation, and ongoing compliance with apprenticeship and higher education regulatory requirements.	[*SFNME R2.1 and R2.18]		
Response to condition: UoS submitted revised apprenticeship-specific programme documentation, including the programme specification, apprenticeship handbook, governance framework, operational terms of reference, APTEM guidance and supporting quality assurance documentation. The submission also confirmed the removal of references to registered nurses entering the programme through RPL. The additional evidence demonstrated clear institutional governance and operational arrangements to support apprenticeship delivery, including oversight of programme documentation, KSB mapping and assessment, gateway and EPA processes, programme monitoring, risk management, and regulatory compliance. The visitor team was also provided with evidence that the programme aligns with the requirements of Skills England, the Office for Students (OfS), the NMC and UoS's quality assurance framework, with established processes for ongoing programme oversight, reporting, and continuous enhancement. The visitor team recognised that these governance and quality assurance arrangements have been established in preparation for implementation of UoS's first degree apprenticeship programme. As these arrangements will become fully established through programme delivery, the visitor team identified an area for future monitoring (AFM4) relating to SFNME R2.18. Having reviewed the AEI's response, the visitor team now considers that for this condition, the requirements of the condition have been met and Standard 2.1 is now met.				

Recommendations for enhancement

Recommendations				
No.	Recommendation details	Specific standard(s)	NMC	AEI
R1	UoS is recommended to work with EPs to clarify the employment contract requirements for students and ensure these align with apprenticeship funding rules and programme requirements. This should include consideration of planned variations in weekly hours across the programme to ensure students maintain the minimum 30 hours per week required for a full-time apprenticeship and to avoid any shortfall in contracted hours or ambiguity regarding time worked, so that students can effectively plan their learning.	SPRNP Standard 2.1* [*SFNME R5.7]	☒	
R2	UoS is recommended to enhance assurance regarding how students are supported to achieve and maintain supernumerary status throughout practice learning experiences. This should include evidence of how UoS works with EPs to monitor compliance, identify and address compromised supernumerary status, evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to mitigate recurring concerns, and ensure these arrangements remain effective as apprenticeship student numbers increase.	SPRNP Standards 2.1* and 3.7 [*SFNME R3.7]	☒	☒

The AEI is not required to address recommendations for programme enhancement prior to NMC approval being granted; however, all AEIs are required to consider the visitors' recommendations and be prepared to provide evidence that demonstrates this consideration, upon request.

Areas for future monitoring

Areas for future monitoring			
No.	Details of areas which will require future monitoring	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ joint
AFM1	UoS is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of its PSC strategy following implementation, including the extent to which PSCs influence programme recruitment, delivery, assessment, evaluation, and continuous enhancement.	SPRNP Standard 2.1* [*SFNME R1.12 and R5.15]	NMC Only
AFM2	UoS is recommended to strengthen assurance surrounding apprenticeship students and their equitable access to learning, wellbeing, disability, and student support services when participating in shared learning with other student groups. This should include clear arrangements for identifying, coordinating, and monitoring support needs, and	SPRNP Standards 2.1* and 3.5 [*SFNME R3.11 and R5.9]	NMC Only

	consideration of how students who are not eligible for the same external funding and support mechanisms as other students can access appropriate support, reasonable adjustments, and inclusive learning opportunities to ensure parity of student experience and outcomes.		
AFM3	UoS is recommended to strengthen assurance regarding the use of SimConverse within the programme by clearly defining how AI-generated SPL activities contribute to SPL hours, how these activities are supervised and assessed in line with the SSSA, and the governance arrangements in place to monitor their quality, consistency, and educational effectiveness.	SPRNP Standards 2.10 and 3.4	NMC Only
AFM4	UoS is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of the apprenticeship-specific governance and quality assurance arrangements following implementation of the RNDA programme. This should include evaluation of programme performance and outcomes against NMC standards, Skills England requirements and other relevant quality assurance frameworks to ensure that the arrangements established in response to condition C5 remain effective as the programme becomes established and apprentice numbers increase.	SPRNP Standard 2.1* [*SFNME R2.18]	NMC only

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor team to the NMC, following consideration of the AEI's response to any conditions set, 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 team:

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 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 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: The visitor team did not review evidence relating to EE nomination and allocation arrangements as these were not affected by the proposed modification. The programme continues to operate within the existing approved credit volume, and the proposed student numbers remain within the current EE allocation parameters. The existing EE arrangements will therefore continue to apply, and additional evidence was not required as part of this modification.		
List additional evidence that was reviewed: N/A		
Additional comments: N/A		

During the event, the visitors engaged with the following:

	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:		
N/A		
Additional comments:		
N/A		

FINAL REPORT			
	Name	Position	Date
Author/s	Mr Mathew Alex Nute	Registrant Visitor	27.07.2026
	Mr Ian Tuveri-Ellis	Registrant Visitor	27.07.2026
	Mrs Karen Chetwynd	Lay Visitor	27.07.2026
QAA Officer	Claire Langman	QAA Officer	03.08.2026

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