Graduate Entry to into Nursing and Midwifery
Context

Recruitment for many health professionals has been going through considerable upheaval in recent years and for the first time graduates/diplomates have been leaving courses and reporting it difficult to find a job. However, the situation has started to improve and long term forecasting is very positive for health professionals, with a consensus that recent short term problems were as a result of issues to do with workforce planning as well as many trusts moving to Foundation status.

Given the renewed government focus on nursing careers, the prescribing powers for nurses and the fact that hospitals will look to specialise, the forecast for the nursing job market is good. Areas such as health visiting, school nursing, first contact nursing, walk-in centres, telephone triage and nurse practitioner roles are likely to be growth areas.

The short term may prove challenging for some midwives but with government policy still aiming for an expansion of maternity services and more providers entering the market, there should be, in the medium to long term, a greater variety of midwife posts available with exciting career prospects.

Detailed information about all careers in the health sector is available via

- [www.prospects.ac.uk/health_social_care_sector.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/health_social_care_sector.htm)
- [www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_health.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_health.htm)
- [https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobfamily/Pages/medicineandnursing.aspx](https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobfamily/Pages/medicineandnursing.aspx)
- [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/nursing](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/nursing)
- [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/midwifery](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/midwifery)

Methods of training

If you are interested in entering the nursing profession, the first decision that you need to make is which branch of nursing to follow – adult, mental health, learning disability or child. For further information on each area of nursing, refer to the publications and websites listed at the end of this handout. Adult branch nursing offers the most general training and at the present time it is possible after completing this to undertake further training via a shortened course, to gain second registration in another branch. However – with the present financial situation within the NHS there are restrictions on the training available.

There are a variety of alternative training routes for nursing, depending upon the degree subject that you have studied and the area of nursing you wish to enter. For graduates with a relevant degree e.g. Psychology, Sociology, Biological Sciences there are a number of accelerated two year postgraduate courses. Some universities are becoming more flexible in their interpretation of what constitutes a ‘relevant’ degree. For example, a music graduate may go directly onto postgraduate programme, based on demonstrating that through the performance element of a music degree it is necessary to receive criticism, reflect on performance and develop practice - all very similar to the style of learning in a clinical setting.

The courses on offer can change from year to year. Some courses recruit through UCAS, some recruit through direct application via their website. You should refer to the Course Finder [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/courses/?area=49998&qualification=51623&hours=&uni=&region=&DoSearch=Find+courses](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/courses/?area=49998&qualification=51623&hours=&uni=&region=&DoSearch=Find+courses) section of the NHS Careers website for updated information and the UCAS website ([www.UCAS.com](http://www.UCAS.com)) for lists of approved Nursing and Midwifery Council courses.
For those graduates with a non-relevant degree, currently the choice is to take a 3 - 4 year degree course.

Universities currently offering two-year accelerated entry into nursing courses for graduates include (Note some courses are 2.5 to 3 years specifically for graduates):

- Buckingham New University
- City University (2.5 years)
- University of Essex
- Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire
- University of Hull
- King’s College London (University of London)
- Kingston University, London
- Middlesex University, London
- London South Bank University (3 years)
- University of Greenwich, London
- Napier University, Edinburgh (2.5 years)
- Northumbria University, Newcastle
- The University of Nottingham
- Robert Gordon University - Aberdeen
- University of Salford (3 years)
- Sheffield Hallam University
- The University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University of West London
- University of West of Scotland

A degree in midwifery is essential for entry to the profession. The three or four-year degree programme is open to graduates and diplomates from all degree and HND courses, but life sciences may be preferred. Registered nurses can do a 12-18 month shortened course. There are no accelerated graduate courses in midwifery for graduates in other disciplines.

You should refer to the Course Finder section of the NHS Careers website for updated information www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/courses/?area=49998&qualification=51623&hours=&uni=&region=&DoSearch=Find+courses and the UCAS website (www.ucas.com) for lists of approved courses.
Issues around career progression

Opportunities to work abroad are manifold although individuals interested in this should do their homework as some countries do not recognise all of the branches of nursing. For example the adult branch tends to be the favoured one for working in the US. The RCN and RCM can give you detailed advice about working abroad.

Nursing and midwifery are undergoing considerable change and the general view held is that these health professionals will work in many different environments not just the NHS. Responsibility levels are also increasing for nurses and midwives.

For more information about the current job market and possible career progression in nursing and midwifery see the NHS website www.whatcanidowithmydegree.nhs.uk

Entry requirements

The minimum requirements for degree programmes are usually five GCSEs at grade C or above (typically including English, maths and a science) and two or three A-levels/Highers (or equivalent), typically including a science/health-related subject. Check with individual institutions directly.

For the shortened/accelerated postgraduate courses, candidates should ideally possess a health related or social sciences degree. If this has been gained outside the UK it must be recognised as of equivalent standing.

In addition to academic qualifications, it is important that applicants can demonstrate a variety of skills and personal qualities including empathy, flexibility, emotional resilience, good communications skills, organisational ability and teamwork. Although pre-entry experience is not essential, any work, or voluntary work that has been undertaken in a caring setting, ideally with the relevant client group, will strengthen your application. It is a good idea to visit hospitals and talk to nurses and midwives directly about their roles.

There are numerous opportunities for volunteering in a health sector environment. You can browse opportunities on the volunteering pages of the University website. These are all with organisations that have been checked out by the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/volunteering

Many hospitals have their own volunteering programme and examples of charities where you could gain good experience are St John’s Ambulance, WRVS, Alzheimer’s Society, MIND, The National Childbirth Trust and the Stroke Association. Getting experience will also help you work out if this is the kind of career you would like.

Acceptance on a course will be subject to satisfactory health clearance and criminal disclosure checks. Some medical conditions may exclude entry.

The application procedure

Applications for undergraduate honours degrees in nursing and midwifery in England, Wales, Scotland or the University of Ulster are made through the www.ucas.com. Some shortened postgraduate degrees have direct entry via the Institution’s website. Check out the Course Finder section of the NHS Careers website for updated information about all accelerated post graduate nursing degrees
For post graduate diploma and certain degree courses in Scotland, contact www.nes.scot.nhs.uk. In Northern Ireland, Queens University requires direct application to the degree. Timing of application may vary from course to course as some courses start in January. However, the general closing dates for courses via UCAS is the 15th January.

**Selection process**

All short-listed applicants for nursing or midwifery will be invited to interview and the offer of a place is dependent upon how well the candidate can convey their suitability for nursing / midwifery. Questioning in the selection interview is likely to focus upon the relevance of the skills and experience gained through undergraduate study and work experience and of particular interest will be analytical ability and critical thinking.

**Funding**

Nursing and midwifery courses are funded by the NHS. Students on the accelerated postgraduate programme have their tuition fees paid and receive a non-means-tested grant of £1000. Students receiving non-means-tested bursaries are not usually eligible for student loans, however it is worth checking with Student Finance England [http://www.sfengland.slc.co.uk](http://www.sfengland.slc.co.uk) for your individual circumstances. Students on degree courses have their tuition fee contribution paid for them by the NHS and receive a means-tested bursary to help towards living costs. Students in receipt of a means-tested bursary are usually eligible for student loans. To work out how much you are eligible for, use the Student Bursary Calculator (www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/3576.aspx) tool or contact the relevant funding body in your area if living outside of England. For further information on finance, see [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students) and also speak to course providers.

**Websites and useful resources**

- Information on NHS bursaries for nursing and midwifery students in England [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students)
- Student Finance Northern Ireland [http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=54,1265897&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL](http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=54,1265897&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)
- Royal College of Midwives [www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk)
- Royal College of Nursing [www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)
- UCAS [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)
- Nursing and Midwifery Council
• What can I do with my degree?
  www.whatcanidowithmydegree.nhs.uk
• NHS jobs
  www.jobs.nhs.uk
• Work experience – via NHS Careers site
  www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/workexperience.shtml
• Advice line – Health Learning and Skills Advice line – call 08000 150 850 or look at
  www.skillsforhealth.org.uk
• Department of health – keep up to date with changes in the NHS
  www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

• Careers Service CareersLink - For health care assistant vacancies and
  vacancies from nursing agencies
  www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink/

Books in the Careers Resource Centre

Include:

• Becoming a Midwife (Routledge)
• Careers & jobs in Nursing (Kogan Page)
• Nurses & Midwives job seekers guide (The University of Liverpool)

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/library
This publication is available in alternative formats on request. A larger font is available online. Please ask at the Careers Information desk or email us.

You are advised to check material facts as although every effort has been made to ensure that information given is up-to-date we are aware that information is subject to change. The website links are used to provide further information and are not intended to signify that the University endorses such websites and/or their content.

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