

Education QA Monitoring Visit Report Summary

Approved Education Institution	University of Bedfordshire
Programme(s) monitored	<p>BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nursing BSc (Hons) Children and Young People's Nursing BSc (Hons) Midwifery FdSc Nursing Associate</p> <p>BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing [apprenticeship route] BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nursing [apprenticeship route] BSc (Hons) Children and Young People's Nursing [apprenticeship route] BSc (Hons) Midwifery [apprenticeship route] FdSc Nursing Associate [apprenticeship route]</p> <p>MSc Adult Nursing MSc Mental Health Nursing MSc Midwifery</p> <p>MSc Adult Nursing [apprenticeship route] MSc Mental Health Nursing [apprenticeship route] MSc Midwifery [apprenticeship route]</p>
Date of monitoring visit	16-19 January 2024
Date of report publication	08 July 2024

Introduction

This document is a summary explaining our Quality Assurance (QA) process for monitoring education institutions and their practice learning partners. We also explain why we commissioned a monitoring visit of the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) by independent visitors, its findings, and the action plan we have since put in place. For the full independent report please [click here](#). Throughout this period, we have welcomed the cooperation of the University of Bedfordshire and the NHSE WTE team in the East of England.

UoB are an approved education institution (AEI) in the East of England region, approved to deliver pre-registration nursing, nursing associate, pre-registration midwifery and post-registration programme provision.

The NMC

As the professional regulator of nurses and midwives in the UK, and nursing associates in England, we work to ensure these professionals have the knowledge and skills to deliver consistent, quality care that keeps people safe.

We set the education standards professionals must achieve to practise in the United Kingdom. When they have shown both clinical excellence and a commitment to kindness, compassion and respect, we welcome them onto our register of more than 788,000 professionals.

Once registered, nurses, midwives and nursing associates must uphold the standards and behaviours set out in our The Code so that people can have confidence that they will consistently receive quality, safe care wherever they're treated. We promote lifelong learning through revalidation, encouraging professionals to reflect on their practice and how The Code applies in their day-to-day work.

Our role in the quality assurance of education

We set the standards of education and training that enable students to achieve our standards of proficiency before joining the register. We approve education institutions to deliver nursing, nursing associate or midwifery programmes. As part of our ongoing educational quality assurance (QA), we monitor all of our approved education institutions (AEIs) and their practice learning partners (PLPs) to ensure they continue to meet our standards.

Our QA framework and accompanying [QA handbook](#) provide detail on the QA process and the evidence education institutions need to demonstrate to satisfy us that they meet our standards for education and training.

Where we have concerns that an approved education institution may not be meeting our standards, we may seek an independent QA visitors' report by way of a monitoring visit or an extraordinary review, and we may even decide to withdraw approval of the programme and/or an institution. Internally we have a QA Board which provides oversight of our ongoing education QA activity, and our Professional Practice directorate provides regular updates to our Council in relation to our QA activities.

Background

On the completion of a period of new programme monitoring for UoB's nursing associate programme, the NMC education quality assurance team did not gain assurance that the programme was complying with all of the NMC Standards for Education and Training. A full review of their programme approval and modification documentation, new programme monitoring meeting records and subsequent action plans was undertaken. This included a thematic review of previous approval reports for all pre-registration provision.

Key themes emerged from the initial refusal, and subsequent approval reports across nursing, midwifery and nursing Associate. Specific concerns were identified in the following areas:

- The involvement of people who use services and their carers throughout the programme.
- The supernumerary status of direct entry students and the provision of protected learning time for apprentices.
- The appropriate management of any new employer partners you're engaging with for apprenticeship programmes.

Following this review the NMC's Quality Assurance (QA) board agreed that a full monitoring visit across nursing, nursing associate and midwifery provision should be undertaken to gain assurance that the standards for education and training were being met.

The monitoring review process

The NMC provided the independent QA visit team with a monitoring review plan, which identified the NMC requirements for monitoring, under the five themes of the Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education (SFNME) (NMC, 2018 updated 2023):

1. Learning culture
2. Educational governance and quality
3. Student empowerment
4. Educators and assessors
5. Curricula and assessment

The review plan indicated specific requirements within the Standards framework for the QA visitors to scrutinise and triangulate evidence from findings during the visit.

The QA monitoring visit team included a lead QA visitor, three lay visitors and three registrant visitors with due regard for the programmes under review. The QA visit team used the review plan to direct their focus for triangulating the evidence in academic and practice learning settings.

The QA visit team concluded their findings verbally to UoB on the final day of the visit (19 January 2024) and then provided a full a report, mapped against the NMC standards and requirements.

Findings

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education (SFNME) (NMC, 2018)		
Theme	Risk Indicator	Outcome
1. Learning culture	1.1 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners are unable to evidence that the learning culture prioritises the safety of people, including carers, students and educators, and enables the values of The Code (NMC, 2018) to be upheld.	Standard 1.1 is met
	1.2 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners are unable to evidence that education and training is valued in all learning environments.	Standard 1.2 is not met
2. Educational governance and quality	2.1 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners are unable to evidence there are effective governance systems that ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory, professional and educational requirements, differentiating where appropriate between the devolved legislatures of the UK with clear lines of accountability for meeting those requirements and responding when standards are not met, in all learning environments.	Standard 2.1 is not met
	2.2 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners is unable to ensure all learning environments optimise safety and quality, taking account of the diverse needs of, and working in partnership with, service users, students and all other stakeholders.	Standard 2.2 is not met

3. Student empowerment	3.1 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners is unable to ensure all students are provided with a variety of learning opportunities and appropriate resources which enable them to achieve proficiencies and programme outcomes and be capable of demonstrating the professional behaviours in The Code (NMC, 2018).	Standard 3.1 is not met
	3.2 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners is unable to ensure all students are empowered and supported to become resilient, caring, reflective and lifelong learners who are capable of working in inter-professional and inter-agency teams.	Standard 3.2 is met
4. Educators and assessors	4.1 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners is unable to ensure theory and practice learning and assessment are facilitated effectively and objectively by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals with necessary expertise for their educational and assessor roles.	Standard 4.1 is not met
5. Curricula and assessment	5.1 The AEI, together with their practice learning partners is unable to ensure that curricula and assessments are designed, developed, delivered and evaluated to ensure that students achieve the proficiencies and outcomes for their approved programme.	Standard 5.1 is met

Standard is met	Standard is not met
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Next steps and action planning

In February 2024, the monitoring visit report was shared with UoB for observations and factual accuracy checking. Following this period of observations, factual accuracy amendments were made to the final report in March 2024.

In response to the risks identified, an action plan was developed and refined by UoB, supported by the lead QA visitor. The agreed action plan was then submitted to the NMC.

On the 22 May 2024, the QA Board met and discussed the findings of the monitoring visit and to review UoB's action plan. Due to the visit resulting in the identification of fourteen unmet requirements across five standards, the decision was made at the QA Board to

escalate UoB's nursing, midwifery and nursing associate programmes to the level of a critical concern for education.

The NMC QA Team will now meet with UoB on a six weekly basis to discuss the action plan and seek evidence of their progress against each of the NMC Standards. Progress will be formally overseen by the QA Board, to ensure appropriate, robust and timely action is being taken to address the concerns.