

Nursing Associate FAQs for Trainee Nursing Associates/Mentors



What is a Nursing Associate?

The Nursing Associate is a new nursing role developed to support the Registered Nurse, the role presently is only in England.

The role was developed as it was recognised that there was a gap in care delivery between the Graduate Registered Nurse and the Health Care Support Worker (HCSW/HCA)

The first Trainee Nursing Associates (TNAs) began training in January 2017.

The programme consists of a two-year training programme which incorporates the theory for the TNAs to take back to clinical practice. The training enables TNAs to come together as a diverse group of adult learners from a variety of different Health, Social and Voluntary care organisations including Mental Health, Acute Trusts, Community Settings, Nursing Homes, Hospices and GP Practices. Nursing Associates will be registered and regulated by the Nursing & Midwifery Council.

The Aims of the role are to

- support the career progression of HCSWs/HCAs.
- Increase the capacity and capability of the nursing workforce by ensuring that the right person with the right level of skills and education is delivering the right care to the patient.

What qualifications do I need to apply for the Nursing Associate programme?

Anyone can become a Nursing Associate, provided they meet the minimum entry requirements for their chosen University (***Please confirm with your chosen university as they may differ from one organisation to another***), their employer believes they are capable of the academic learning required and they possess the values/behaviours required to become a Nursing Associate.

The minimum entry requirements are

- **Level 2 Functional Skills in English and Maths or GCE/GCSE English and Maths (Grade C or Above)**
- A commitment to complete a Foundation Degree programme
- Intermediate IT skills
- Up to date Disclosure & Barring Service Check
- To undergo a values-based interview which will be conducted jointly by employer and education provider to ensure shared entry criteria are met.

Will I have to apply to undertake the TNA programme?

Yes, it was agreed that all TNAs will undergo the same recruitment processes, it was agreed that all interviews would be in conjunction with the education provider to ensure fairness and equity to all applicants regardless of their employing organisations size

Will I stay in my own work area whilst undertaking the training?

This will depend on your employing organisation and how they deliver the programme, as it is a work-based programme and being delivered as an apprenticeship.

How will I be assessed during the NA programme?

All trainee Nursing Associates must meet the core requirements of the programme, which are:

- To work ideally full time (37.5hrs), (***due to apprenticeship rules no element of the programme can be undertaken in the learner's own time***)
- To undertake the 3000 practice hours, over 2 years, including 675 alternative placement hours (equivalent of 1 study day and 1 placement day per week. Placements can be undertaken in blocks and are the ***employer responsibility to arrange***)
- To gain experiences in placements in each of the three health and care settings (at home, near home and in hospital) undertaking 2 substantial placements in the 2 alternative areas from their primary employment area.
- To gain exposure and experience across all fields of nursing (Adult, Child, Mental Health & Learning Disabilities) and across all the lifespan
- The Trainee will need a NMC registered practitioner as a mentor to support them throughout the training
- Prepare the trainees to enter a profession that will be regulated by the NMC

The NA Role is at Foundation Degree level and there will be opportunities for further development including to Registered Nurse should individuals so wish.

Throughout the 2-year programme you will be assessed in both your clinical placements and in the university.

Will I need a mentor in my primary workplace alongside when I am on placement?

Yes, a named mentor will be needed to oversee your clinical work and contribute to your supervision reports. They will assist in identifying how you progress, as well as providing additional support if required. They will also need to be involved in organisation of your placements.

Will I work shifts during my training?

During clinical placements you will be expected to work the shift pattern in place within that clinical area.

When will I be able to take my holidays?

Your holidays will not be restricted during the two-year programme, although most Universities will ideally expect you to not to miss any formal teaching days if possible.

What happens if I need to step off the programme?

This may be an option if required but would have to be negotiated your employer and the university if the need arose

Will there be an opportunity to join another Nursing Associate programme in the future if I needed to step off?

As this is an ongoing programme there should be the opportunity but as above this would need to be discussed with both your employer and the university.

Can I apply if I work part time?

At present due to the 3000 practice hours required, Trainee Nursing Associates need to ideally work full time (37.5 hours per week). This will enable you to complete the requirements of the programme in the 2-year timeframe.

You could check with the University if they are taking applications from part time staff and what the minimum number of hours would be. ***(Please remember you are not able to undertake any element of the programme in your own time if it is delivered as an apprenticeship)***

Is there a minimum/maximum age to apply for the programme?

There is no minimum or maximum age for study, however most employers would usually require trainees to be at least 18 years of age to support within the clinical workplace.

I work in healthcare, but I am not in a clinical role. Can I apply?

Yes, you can apply if you have the required qualifications and the support of your organisation, to undertake the programme you must be in a clinical role. Alternatively, you will need to search for any Trainee Nursing Associate vacancies with other organisations and apply for a role.

Can I apply if I have already completed a degree level qualification?

This would need to be discussed with the Education provider.

Who will pay for the cost of my training?

At present the programme is delivered via an apprenticeship route, which is work based and employer led.

For larger organisations they pay into a digital levy account and this means the programme is funded via your employer via this apprenticeship levy account.

For smaller organisations that do not pay into this digital levy account, they get 90% of the training funded. The total cost of the programme is £15k per trainee and so smaller organisations would pay the additional 10% (£1,500). Most Universities enable this to be done on a monthly instalment basis

What Qualification will I receive?

A Regulated Level 5 Foundation Degree

Once I have qualified at the end of the programme will I automatically transfer into a Nursing Associate post?

This is the aim, it is envisaged that employers supporting the role will have identified a need for the role within their workforce plans. However, as with all roles you can apply for any advertised Nursing Associate post.

Will the Nursing Associate role be regulated?

Yes, the Nursing Associate role will be registered and regulated by NMC.

As a Nursing Associate will need to pay the annual NMC fee, work within the NMC Code of Conduct for Nurse, Midwives & Nursing Associates & undertake revalidation every 3 years, the process that all nurses, midwives & Nursing Associates need to follow to maintain their registration with the NMC, this will include demonstrating evidence of elements of practice including practice hours/CPD/reflective practice/feedback.

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf>

Can I use a Nursing Associate qualification to access pre-registration nurse training?

Yes. As a Nursing Associate your foundation degree will be accredited for prior learning and experience (APL/APEL) up to 50% (depending on the programme) of pre-registration nurse training programmes. If you wish you will have an opportunity to access an undergraduate pre-registration nursing programme which will result in a degree and nurse registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. This may also include nurse apprenticeship degree programmes which are currently under development.

Quotes from present TNAs/Mentors/Employers/Educators

'This is what I was always meant to be – I just did not know it' (TNA age 48)

'Could sell it to other PMs – need to Grow our own' (Practice manager)

'Much more aware of my own individual responsibility& accountability when delivering care' (TNA)

'We changed H's uniform, name and door plate straight away to highlight her change in role' (Mentor)

'You can see them bursting out of the bubble they have been trapped in as a HCSW/HCA' (University Programme Lead)

Want to know more?

Please get in touch – details below

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