

Return to Nursing or Midwifery Practice - FAQs

Get back into Nursing. We are the NHS and we would like you back!

Why should I return?

Now is a great time to return!

Our programme will support you and enable you to renew your registration with your professional body and re-join practice with the competence and confidence. Not to forget that there are also jobs available here at the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust.

We know that you already have the skills and experience that can make a big difference to patients, clients, carers and their families so we are keen to have you back.

Do I need to retrain?

If your registration has lapsed, you will have to complete the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) approved Return to Practice programme which takes between three and 12 months to complete.

We have a fully funded course with the University of the West of England (UWE) which is in Bristol. Copy and paste this link to find out more about the course:
<https://courses.uwe.ac.uk/UZTYCX203/return-to-practice>.

You will need to complete 450 practice hours as NMC standard to return to practice. If you have been out of clinical practice but your registration is still active, you can apply for a post and establish if you can be supported by a preceptorship programme.

The programme will support you to update your skills and knowledge and ensure that you are ready for the job. Our nursing job opportunities are advertised on the NHS Jobs website www.jobs.nhs.uk

Who can apply for the course?

Adult Nurses, Children's Nurses and Midwives can apply to be supported in the RUH.

Will my course be funded?

Yes, Health Education England (HEE) will pay your course fees, clinical placement fee

and a £1,000 stipendiary to help towards travel, childcare and book costs. Unfortunately, HEE is unable to fund: overseas nurses who haven't previously been registered with the NMC.

Is there any other financial support available?

Yes. A £1,000 stipendiary is provided to support you to return to practice and will help towards travel, childcare and book costs etc. Your return to practice lead will be able to provide further details at your interview.

Will the course lead directly to a job?

On completing the Return to Practice programme you can apply for a permanent position in the RUH. Our nursing job opportunities are advertised on the NHS Jobs website www.jobs.nhs.uk All NHS organisations advertise their vacancies on www.jobs.nhs.uk

Can I work flexibly?

Yes – we cover so many services and employers that we aim to offer a job that works for and meets the need of our service. We suggest you discuss this at or before your interview.

Is there anything I can do to prepare?

Universities offer a reading list of key documents that you might be interested in studying to help you update your knowledge of current policy. Universities also offer study skills courses to help you prepare for studying on a university course. This would be discussed at interview with the return to practice lead. As part of the Bath Swindon and Wiltshire System offer open days - (virtual at this time email v.ongley@nhs.net for details) so you can ask any questions before you apply for the programme. Or contact RUH Practice Education Facilitator Abi Awofadeju via email: a.awofadeju1@nhs.net

How long will the course be?

The Return to Practice programme can take three to 12 months to complete, and is a combination of classroom and placement-based learning. The hours you spend on placement will vary, depending on how long you have been off the register. This will be negotiated with you when you apply.

How long is the course?

UWE: 6 consecutive weeks with live online sessions on Mondays and Fridays between 09:00 and 12:30. You will also be expected to undertake several hours of self-managed study outside of university and your placement.

Will there be an exam/ how will I be assessed?

There is, but don't worry you will be well supported and most students succeed.

The theory part of the module is assessed via an essay/ assignment. You will also prepare for and sit a numeracy, medicine calculation test.

The practice part of the programme will be assessed and documented by your mentoring practice via an Ongoing Achievement Record and you will be developing a practice portfolio which will be reviewed by your mentor.

I've been in the temporary register – can I use any of my hours towards my return to practice hours?

Any hours you have practiced on the temporary register will count as practice hours needed for readmission to the register. However, if you bring forward the hours you worked while on the temporary register to the Return to Practice programme, the clinical competencies will need to be entered and signed retrospectively by registrants you had worked with.

Do I have to register with the NMC before commencing the course?

No, but you will need to provide evidence that you have been on the NMC register and that your registration has lapsed. The quickest way to obtain this information is to register with the NMC Online service and print a copy of your lapsed registration status to bring to your interview.

Can I undertake the course as an EN?

Yes, the NMC stresses that all enrolled nurses are registered on the NMC Register and are entitled to call themselves registered nurses. There is no distinction between registered nurses on the one hand and second level registered nurses on the other - they are all registered nurses.

Do you need a degree to undertake the course?

No, however as nursing is now only studied at degree level, the NMC require the Return to Practice course to be undertaken at degree level. You will be given support in identifying your study skills needs when you start the course.

Will I have to attend an interview?

Yes - but this is likely to be held virtually at this time. The interview process will consist of a few questions. You will then follow the standard path through the placement provider's recruitment process (occupational health etc.) and request for the DBS check.

At this stage, you will also be discussing and agreeing the amount of practice hours you need to complete.

I have been out of practice for a while is the return to practice course is open to all, regardless of how long you have been out of practice?

The course will update you on any new developments in nursing and you will have support and mentoring throughout.

Will I get an employment contract?

Once you have been informed, you were successful at the interview, and the DBS and the HR process has been completed, you should be signing an honorary contract or a temporary agreement with the placement provider. Please note that your role in this contract should be Return to Practice student (not HCA or similar). This is because the Return to Practice NMC standards apply to the programme which considers you to be a student. As such, you are not reimbursed for the hours worked and you are also working under supervision.

Will I be supported upon returning?

Re-registered practitioners will be supported by a preceptorship programme on their return to the workforce and the programme can be tailored to your requirements.

I get a pension. Can I return part-time?

Return to Practice programmes and Return to Practice general practice nursing programmes are usually delivered part-time. In respect of employment, we recommend reading the factsheet on the NHS Pensions website www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-pensions.

NHS employment opportunities are advertised on the NHS Jobs website www.jobs.nhs.uk

What is abatement?

Abatement is the process by which your NHS pension is reduced pound-for-pound if

your earnings on re-employment in the NHS, plus the enhanced element of your NHS pension, exceed your pre-retirement NHS pensionable earnings. It may apply if you return to NHS employment.

I don't live in England. Can I apply?

Funding from Health Education England for the Return to Practice programme is available for nurses who currently reside and work in England. Nurses from outside England are welcome to apply for the programme, but funding isn't available.

Are there any other ways to return?

Another route back into nursing and midwifery is a test run by the Nursing and Midwifery Council www.nmc.org.uk/registration/toc-review/ which is called the Test of Competence (ToC).

It was launched in 2020, and involves an online multiple-choice test and an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). Like the Return to Practice course, this route is now funded by the NHS. If you decide to undertake the ToC, preparation is key so it is highly recommended that you are supported by an employer who can facilitate your return to practice.

If you are interested in this route, email returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk they will be able to refer you to someone in your local area who can advise you. More information on the test, including preparation materials and how to apply is available on the NMC website www.nmc.org.uk

Can I return to practice during the COVID pandemic?

Yes – we need your skills more than ever!

Your health and wellbeing is our priority however so employers will undertake a risk assessment to ensure that placements are best able to support your learning need and protect your health and wellbeing. The theoretical parts of the course will also be delivered virtually to reduce risk.

Can I apply for the Return to Practice programme if I am on the NMC register but have restrictions on practice or a caution order and my registration has lapsed?

The first requirement for securing a place on the Return to Practice programme is that you were an NMC registrant in the past and your registration has lapsed. If you had restrictions on your practice, we suggest that you contact NMC and discuss your situation regarding returning to practice.

If after the restrictions were issued you stopped working as a registered nurse this usually means that you did not have the time and opportunity to fulfil the NMC requirements and action plans as often imposed by the panel. We cannot make the decision whether you would be eligible to return to practice under specific circumstances and that decision would need to be made by NMC who may require you to work under same restrictions until all action plans have been completed or indefinitely.

The placement provider would also need to be aware of this and decide if they are able to support your Return to Practice process under the conditions.

Can I apply for the Return to Practice programme if I have been suspended or removed from the NMC register and not currently allowed to practice?

Unfortunately, this situation does not allow you to undertake the Return to Practice programme.