



Nursing



OVERVIEW

Nurses usually work within a multidisciplinary team with other healthcare professionals but are the main point of contact for patients, often providing the most consistent care. You will need to build trust with patients and may also have to contact their families, particularly in cases of chronic illness where the patient may be returning regularly for treatment.

SKILLS

You'll need to have:

- interpersonal and verbal communication skills to liaise with other medical and healthcare professionals
- the ability to gain patients' trust and support them both emotionally and through advice and information
- empathy, sensitivity and emotional resilience, to help those in difficult circumstances
- written communication skills to keep patient records and write care plans
- observation skills and attention to detail
- the ability to deal with a variety of patients at once

Routes to qualification and professional accreditation

To work as a nurse in the UK, you must be registered with the [Nursing & Midwifery Council \(NMC\)](#). To be eligible to register you must complete a pre-registration nursing degree or registered nursing degree apprenticeship (RNDA) delivered by an NMC-approved educational institution (AEI). Degree courses usually last three years full time. The programme is a mix of clinical practice, giving you direct experience of working with patients and families, and academic learning. You could be based within a variety of settings, including hospitals, the community, patients' homes and independent organisations.

You may be able to get accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) if you have practice-based learning or a degree in another health-related, biology-based or social sciences subject. Having APEL may shorten your course to two years, but this is at the discretion of individual institutions, so it is best to check with course providers. For a list of recognised programmes, see [NMC Approved Programmes](#).

Entry Requirements to degree courses and degree apprenticeships

For a career in nursing, you will need a degree or degree apprenticeship. Entry requirements are:

- 5 GCSEs at grade 4/C or above (including English Language/Literature and Maths, possibly with a Science subject too),
- 2 or 3 A-Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualifications (BTECs / T-Levels).

Courses often specify preferred or essential Level 3 subjects, such as at least one science, for example biology, or social science subject.

You can also complete the required training via a nursing degree apprenticeship. The NHS offers a range of healthcare apprenticeships: [NHS apprenticeships](#).

Work Experience

Work experience in a clinical or care setting is important, as well as keeping up-to-date with current developments in nursing and the NHS. This will provide valuable evidence for your UCAS personal statement and will help with interviews later. Some hospitals offer work experience placements. Check your local hospital's website to find out more about placements, open days and careers events.

You could also contact local GPs as well as care homes for placements. There are organisations specialising in sourcing work experience, for example: www.premedprojects.co.uk/nursing-work-experience and [Careers in the NHS | Springpod](#).

What can it lead to?

As a newly registered nurse, you will usually start your first job with a period of [preceptorship](#). This transition phase is designed to help you further develop your practice and gain in confidence. It covers fundamental competencies in patient care as well as broad skills in leadership, management, teaching and communication.

Your registration with the NMC must be renewed every three years and in order to do this you'll have to show you've met revalidation requirements. This includes completing 450 hours of registered practice and 35 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) over the three-year period. Find out more at [Nursing & Midwifery](#)

Useful websites

[Health Careers](#)
[Guide To Becoming A Nurse](#)
[NMC Approved Programmes](#)
[Royal College of Nursing](#)
[Nursing Matters podcast RCN](#)