Better, safer care through quality assurance of nursing, midwifery and nursing associate education.

Programme approval visit report

Section one

Programme provider name:	The Open University
In partnership with: *(Associated practice learning partners involved in the delivery of the programme)*	Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust
	Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust
	Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust
	North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust
	Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
	Royal Bournemouth & Christchurch Hospital NHS Trust
	Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust
	The Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
	Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
	Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
	Private voluntary and independent health care providers
Programme reviewed:	Pre-registration nursing associate ☐ Nursing associate apprenticeship ☒
Title of programme:	Foundation Degree in Nursing Associate practice
Date of approval visit:	1 July 2019
Programme start date: Pre-registration nursing associate	N/A
Nursing associate apprenticeship	9 September 2019

Academic level:	England
	☒ Level 5 ☐ Level 6
QA visitor(s):	Registrant Visitor: Maureen Harrison
	Lay Visitor: Jane Suppiah

Summary of review and findings

The programme presented for approval is the Open University (OU) pre-registration foundation degree (FD) for nursing associates' apprenticeship. The title of the programme is Foundation degree in nursing associate practice. The nursing associate programme is for employees in partnership organisations who apply to undertake an apprenticeship. The programme is designed to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and the Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes (SPNAP) (NMC, 2018).

The OU is an approved education institution (AEI). The programme documentation and approval process confirm evidence of effective partnerships between the OU and employer practice learning partners (PLPs). The employer PLPs supporting the development and delivery of the programme are as follows: Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Dorset Healthcare University NHS Trust, Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, North Cumbria University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Care UK Health in Justice, Cygnet Health and Wilshire and Swindon Healthcare NHS Trust, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, Isle of Wight NHS Trust, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and Queen Elizabeth NHS Trust (QET).

The OU has worked in partnership with other AEIs including in the development of the all England nursing associate assessment of practice document (PAD) which is being adopted for this programme.

The OU in partnership with QET, King's Lynn hospital confirm a collaborative action plan is in place to effectively manage any risks to practice learning related to issues from a Care Quality Commission (CQC) quality review which placed the trust in special measures. The CQC quality report rated services inadequate with staffing concerns and policies and processes being inadequately followed. Caring is rated good. All risks are managed in partnership through a rigorous and systematic process initiated by QET. The QET, OU and other AEIs which access the trust's practice learning environments have joint action plans with ongoing reviews and monitoring through bi-monthly trust education forum meetings.

The Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education (SFNME) (NMC, 2018) is met at programme level.

Arrangements at programme level between the AEI and employer PLPs meet the Standards for student supervision and assessment (SSSA) (NMC, 2018).

The programme is recommended to the NMC for approval. There's one NMC recommendation.

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Recommended outcome of the approval panel	
Recommended outcome to the NMC:	Programme is recommended to the NMC for approval ☒ Programme is recommended for approval subject to specific conditions being met ☐ Recommended to refuse approval of the programme ☐
Conditions: *Please identify the standard and requirement the condition relates to under the relevant key risk theme.* *Please state if the condition is AEI/education institution in nature or specific to NMC standards.*	**Effective partnership working: collaboration, culture, communication and resources:** None identified **Selection, admission and progression:** None identified **Practice learning:** None identified **Assessment, fitness for practice and award:** None identified **Education governance: management and quality assurance:** None identified
Date condition(s) to be met:	
Recommendations to enhance the programme delivery:	Recommendation one: Consider strengthening the involvement of service users in the recruitment, design and delivery of the programme. (SFNME R1.12)
Focused areas for future monitoring:	None identified

Programme is recommended for approval subject to specific conditions being met	
Commentary post review of evidence against conditions	
None identified	
AEI Observations	**Observations have been made by the education institution YES ☐ NO ☒**

NMC Programme standards
Please refer to NMC standards reference points
Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes (NMC, 2018)
Standards of proficiency for nursing associates (NMC, 2018),
Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education (NMC, 2018)
Standards for student supervision and assessment (NMC, 2018)
The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates
QA framework for nursing, midwifery and nursing associate education (NMC, 2018)
QA Handbook

Partnerships
The AEI works in partnership with their practice learning partners, service users, students and all other stakeholders.
Please refer to the following NMC standards reference points for this section: *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* (NMC, 2018) **Standard 1: The learning culture:** R1.12 ensure programmes are designed, developed, delivered, evaluated and co-produced with service users and other stakeholders R1.13 work with service providers to demonstrate and promote inter-professional learning and working **Standard 2: Educational governance and quality:** R2.2 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 R2.4 comply with NMC *Standards for student supervision and assessment* R2.5 adopt a partnership approach with shared responsibility for theory and practice supervision, learning and assessment, including clear lines of communication and accountability for the development, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation of their programmes R2.7 ensure that service users and representatives from relevant stakeholder groups are engaged in partnership in student recruitment and selection

Standard 3: Student empowerment:

R3.3 have opportunities throughout their programme to work with and learn from a range of people in a variety of practice placements, preparing them to provide care to people with diverse needs

R3.16 have opportunities throughout their programme to collaborate and learn with and from other professionals, to learn with and from peers, and to develop supervision and leadership skills

R3.17 receive constructive feedback throughout the programme from stakeholders with experience of the programme to promote and encourage reflective learning

R3.18 have opportunities throughout their programme to give feedback on the quality of all aspects of their support and supervision in both theory and practice.

Standard 4: Educators and assessors:

R4.7 liaise and collaborate with colleagues and partner organisations in their approach to supervision and assessment

R4.9 receive and act upon constructive feedback from students and the people they engage with to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching, supervision and assessment

R4.10 share effective practice and learn from others

Standard 5: Curricula and assessment:

R5.4 curricula are developed and evaluated by suitably experienced and qualified educators and practitioners who are accountable for ensuring that the curriculum incorporates relevant programme outcomes

R5.5 curricula are co-produced with stakeholders who have experience relevant to the programme

R5.14 a range of people including service users contribute to student assessment

Standards for student supervision and assessment (NMC, 2018**)**

Standard 1: Organisation of practice learning:

R1.7 students are empowered to be proactive and to take responsibility for their learning

R1.8 students have opportunities to learn from a range of relevant people in practice learning environments, including service users, registered and non-registered individuals, and other students as appropriate

Standard 2: Expectations of practice supervisors:

R2.2 there is support and oversight of practice supervision to ensure safe and effective learning

Standard 3: Practice supervisors: role and responsibilities:

R3.3 support and supervise students, providing feedback on their progress towards, and achievement of, proficiencies and skills

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Standard 4: Practice supervisors: contribution to assessment and progression:

R4.3 have sufficient opportunities to engage with practice assessors and academic assessors to share relevant observations on the conduct, proficiency and achievement of the students they are supervising

Standard 7: Practice assessors: responsibilities:

R7.9 communication and collaboration between practice and academic assessors is scheduled for relevant points in programme structure and student progression

Standard 9: Academic assessors: responsibilities:

R9.6 communication and collaboration between academic and practice assessors is scheduled for relevant points in programme structure and student progression

Findings against the standard and requirements

Provide an evaluative summary about the effectiveness of the partnerships between the AEI and their practice learning partners, service users, students and any other stakeholders.

The programme documentation and approval process confirm evidence of effective partnership working between the OU, employers and PLPs at strategic and operational levels. This is evident through the ongoing commitment to the proposed nursing associate programme. PLPs and students have contributed to the programme development drawing on their experiences of the health education England (HEE) nursing associate apprenticeship programme. Confirmed employer PLPs include 11 national health service (NHS) trusts, and two independent health care providers.

PLPs we met confirmed the partnership with the OU is effective and gave examples of how they have worked together to support and develop the students' academic and practice journey. A partnership approach to recruiting and selecting students is clearly evident in the programme documentation and confirmed by the PLPs and programme team. PLPs told us they recruit candidates internally and externally. The programme team told us their interviewing processes are under review and the OU aims to have more direct involvement of service users and carers (SUC) in the selection process. (Recommendation one) (R1.12)

Documentary evidence and discussion with the OU and employers provides assurance that resources are sufficient to support the delivery of the programme. OU practice tutors provide academic and practice-based support in the practice learning environments. Practice tutors are being prepared to become academic assessors. Documentary analysis and discussion with the programme team demonstrate the OU is actively appointing more staff who will become academic assessors. The OU aim to have a support ratio of one academic assessor to five students. PLPs positively affirm the support the OU provides their employees through personnel who are available in the workplace or are contactable via email

or phone. PLPs told us they have appointed staff to work with the OU in supporting the nursing associate students' journey from before enrolment to NMC registration.

There is joint accountability for the development, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation of the programme. The PLPs gave examples of how they have influenced the new programme development. This includes a rigorous process for recording of theory and practice hours and clearer guidance on what constitutes protected learning time.

The programme team and PLPs told us there are established practice learning meetings between the OU and the PLPs for the ongoing monitoring and reporting of practice learning and related issues. PLPs gave us examples of how students are enabled to meet the Standards of proficiency for associate nurses (NMC 2018).

The OU has a SUC strategy. We spoke to SUCs from different areas in England and Scotland who affirm the implementation of the strategy. SUCs gave examples of developing case studies and co-producing module materials. The programme team and SUCs provided assurance that SUC involvement in programme delivery is regularly being reviewed to increase SUC involvement in all aspects. (Recommendation one) (R1.12)

Students we met from the existing HEE nursing associate apprenticeship programme told us they like the flexibility and support the OU programme offers them. They describe how they manage their employment, home life and programme time. They confirm that there are processes in place with PLPs and the OU for evaluation of their programme and practice learning experiences. Students agree they are consulted regarding programme improvements, through their individual reviews and through module evaluation. Documentary analysis affirms student involvement in quality enhancement of the programme.

Assurance is provided that the AEI works in partnership with their practice learning partners, service users, students and all other stakeholders as identified in Gateway 1: *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* and,

MET ☒ **NOT MET** ☐

Please provide any narrative for any exceptions

Gateway 2: *Standards for student supervision and assessment*

MET ☒ **NOT MET** ☐

Please provide any narrative for any exceptions

If not met, state reason and identify which standard(s) and requirement(s) are not met and the reason for the outcome

Student journey through the programme

Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

R1.1 Confirm on entry to the programme that students:

R1.1.1 demonstrate values in accordance with the Code

R1.1.2 have capability to learn behaviours in accordance with the Code

R1.1.3 have capability to develop numeracy skills required to meet programme outcomes

R1.1.4 can demonstrate proficiency in English language

R1.1.5 have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes

R1.1.6 have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes

R1.2 ensure students' heath and character allows for safe and effective practice on entering the programme, throughout the programme and when submitting the supporting declaration of health and good character in line with the NMC's health and character decision-making guidance. This includes satisfactory occupational health assessment and criminal record checks.

R1.3 ensure students are fully informed of the requirement to declare immediately any cautions or convictions, pending charges or adverse determinations made by other regulators, professional bodies and educational establishments and that any declarations are dealt with promptly, fairly and lawfully.

R1.4 ensure that the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the educational programme or their designated registered nurse substitute or designated registered nursing associate substitute, are able to provide supporting declarations of health and character for students who have completed a pre-registration nursing associate programme.

R1.5 permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* and programme outcomes, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the programme. This maximum limit of 50 percent does not apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing associate programmes who are currently a NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice, and

R1.6 provide support where required to students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy, digital and literacy to meet programme outcomes.

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education specifically*:*

R2.6, R2.7, R2.8, R2.10

Proposed transfer of current students to the programme under review

Demonstrate a robust process to transfer students studying Health Education England curriculum onto the proposed programme to ensure programme learning outcomes and proficiencies meet the *Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes* (NMC, 2018).

Findings against the standard and requirements

Evidence provides assurance that the following QA approval criteria are met:

- There is evidence of selection processes, including statements on digital literacy, literacy, numeracy, values-based selection criteria and capability to learn behaviour according to the Code, educational entry standard required, and progression and assessment strategy, English language proficiency criteria is specified in recruitment processes. Service users and practitioners are involved in selection processes. (R1.1.1 – R1.1.6)

    YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- There is evidence of occupational health entry criteria, inoculation and immunisation plans, fitness for nursing assessments, Criminal record checks and fitness for practice processes are detailed. (R1.2)

    YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- Health and character processes are evidenced including information given to applicants and students including details of periodic health and character review timescales. Fitness for practice processes are evidenced and information given to applicants and students are detailed. (R1.3)

    YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- Processes are in place for providing supporting declarations by a registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the educational programme (R1.4)

    YES ☒   **NO** ☐

Provide an evaluative summary from your documentary analysis and evidence AND discussion at the approval visit to demonstrate if assurance is provided that the QA approval criteria below is met or not met.

- There is evidence of recognition of prior learning processes that are capable of being mapped to the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and programme outcomes, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the programme. This maximum limit of 50 percent does not apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing associate programmes who are

currently a NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice. (R1.5)

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R1.5 is met. Programme documentation, including the OU policy, procedures and student handbooks confirm a robust approach to recognition of prior learning (RPL). Candidates may make an RPL claim for up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the programme. Documentation guiding prospective RPL candidates demonstrates that the OU only allows RPL against specific module learning outcomes, and mapped against the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates. The programme team inform us that there have not yet been applicants for RPL. During the RPL process previous qualifications must be identified. The maximum limit of 50 percent RPL claim doesn't apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing associate programmes who are currently an NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice. Documentary evidence confirms that RPL claims will be subject to external examiner scrutiny prior to formal recognition of RPL by an assessment board.

- Numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy are mapped against proficiency standards and programme outcomes. Provide evidence that the programme meets NMC requirements, mapping how the indicative content meets the proficiencies and programme outcomes. Ongoing achievement record (OAR)/PAD linked to competence outcomes in literacy, digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes. (R1.6)

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R1.6 is met

We found the development of numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy skills is evident across the curriculum in theory and practice modules specifications. Mapping documents demonstrates how this indicative content meets NMC proficiencies and programme requirements.

We found well signposted support mechanisms detailed in the programme handbook for students to develop their abilities in numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy.

Numeracy skills are tested on application to the programme. Students complete an online self-assessment tool of basic numeracy skills. This identifies the support needed by the student during the programme from the OU functional skills support team. There are digital learning materials and self-help quizzes in parts one and two of the programme. Numeracy and medicines calculations are tested via the practice assessment document (PAD). In part two of the programme there's a medicines calculation assessment with a pass mark of 100 percent.

PLPs tell us literacy skills support is available to candidates within trusts, prior to application to the programme. The programme team told us there's an online digital literacy package to prepare students for learning at the OU. This is accessed through open learning as soon as the student is offered a place. The first module in the programme has study skill development throughout the year-long module. The programme team tell us that learning analytics are used to identify

students who aren't meeting the expected standard of engagement with course materials. Literacy skills are also developed as students' progress in the programme through feedback on formative and summative academic and practice assessments. The ongoing achievement record (ORA) and PAD are linked to numeracy and written literacy.

The OU delivers the programme predominantly through digital and technological means. Some students told us they have found the OU digital platforms very accessible and their confidence in digital learning has increased. Students tell us of the many digital platforms they use and are very clear about how to access the many resources available on the module sites. They describe how easy it is to access help from the OU staff via a phone, even in the evenings and at weekends.

PLPs supporting students told us they value the responsiveness and accessibility of learner support from the OU and that they are regularly informed of an individual's progress.

Students and the programme team confirm that comprehensive support is available for the development and refinement of numeracy, literacy, digital and technological skills.

Proposed transfer of current students to the programme under review

From your documentary analysis and your meeting with students, provide an evaluative summary to confirm how the *Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes* **and** *Standards of proficiency for nursing associate* **will be met through the transfer of existing students onto the proposed programme.**

- There is evidence that students learning in theory and practice on the HEE curriculum is mapped to the programme standards and Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes and support systems are in place.

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MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

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Current students on the HEE nursing associate apprenticeship programme will not be transferring to the new NMC pre-registration nursing associate programme seeking approval. Students who interrupt their studies will, where appropriate, return to the new programme at an appropriate point. Documentary evidence confirms the HEE curriculum is mapped to the NMC Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programme outcomes and Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.

Assurance is provided that Gateway 1: *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* relevant to selection, admission and progression are met

<div align="right">

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

</div>

Outcome

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Is the standard met?	**MET** ☒	**NOT MET** ☐

Date: 1 July 2019

Standard 2: Curriculum

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

R2.1 ensure that programmes comply with the *NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education*

R2.2 comply with the NMC *Standards for student supervision and assessment*

R2.3 ensure that all programme learning outcomes reflect the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.*

R2.4 design and deliver a programme that supports students and provides an appropriate breadth of experience for a non-field specific nursing associate programme, across the lifespan and in a variety of settings

R2.5 set out the general and professional content necessary to meet the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* and programme outcomes

R2.6 ensure that the programme hours and programme length are:

2.6.1 sufficient to allow the students to be able to meet the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates*,

2.6.2 no less than 50 percent of the minimum programme hours required of nursing degree programmes, currently set under Article 31(3) of Directive 2005/36/EC (4,600 hours)

2.6.3 consonant with the award of a foundation degree (typically 2 years)

R2.7 ensure the curriculum provides an equal balance of theory and practice learning using a range of learning and teaching strategies, and

R2.8 ensure nursing associate programmes which form part of an integrated programme meet the nursing associate requirements and nursing associate proficiencies.

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education specifically*:*

R1.9, R1.13; R2.2, R2.14, R2.15, R2.18, R2.19; R3.1, R3.2, R3.4, R3.7, R3.9, R3.10, R3.15, R 3.16;

R5.1 - R5.16.

Standards for student supervision and assessment specifically*:*

R1.2, R1.3, R1.7, R1.10, R1.11

Findings against the standard and requirements

Evidence provides assurance that the following QA approval criteria are met:

- There is evidence that the programme complies with the NMC *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* (R2.1)

  YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- There is evidence that the programme complies with the NMC *Standards for student supervision and assessment* (R2.2)

  YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- Mapping has been undertaken to show how the curriculum and practice learning content meets the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* and programme outcomes. (R2.3)

  YES ☒   **NO** ☐

Provide an evaluative summary from your documentary analysis and evidence AND discussion at the approval visit to demonstrate if assurance is provided that the QA approval criteria below is met or not met.

- There is evidence to show how the design and delivery of the programme will support students in both theory and practice to experience a non-field specific nursing associate programme, across the lifespan and in a variety of settings. (R2.4)

  MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R2.4 is met.

The approval document and programme specification details that programme and module outcomes require students to demonstrate learning across the lifespan from prenatal to death. The programme includes caring for people with mental health needs, and people with learning disabilities. To develop the generic nursing associate role, all modules include theoretical input and perspectives from the four fields of nursing practice. For example, the human biology module has a life span approach. The module on perspectives on health and illness takes a family centred approach to understand influences on transitional periods across the life course. In the PAD and in theory assessments students are encouraged to examine case studies from across the life span.

SUCs have been consulted on nursing curricula content and made suggestions for the use of videos promoting reflection from a carer/patient perspective. The OU has a patient and carer voice that is presented throughout the curriculum although we recommend this could be strengthened. (Recommendation one) (R1.12) The

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SUC voice is through the medium of videos and interactive packages. For example, we saw an interactive learning package that has been co-produced with the OU. Packages follow the life span and introduce students to caring for people with mental health needs and learning disabilities.

PLPs tell us there are a variety of practice learning allocation models used in the programme. These include home/base and external practice learning experiences of differing lengths, or rotational placements without a base allocation. PLPs detailed how they are introducing the students to many different contexts of care. Practice learning opportunities are planned to enable each student to gain experience across the lifespan including caring for people with mental health needs and learning disabilities. PLPs, the programme team and the PAD identify how activity logs enable programme staff and PLPs to track all of the student's experiences across the lifespan and in a variety of different settings. Students confirm their practice learning experiences have included care of adults and children with physical and mental health needs and care of people with learning disabilities. Students tell us they are supported by their practice supervisors to follow patient journeys.

Evidence provides assurance that the following QA approval criteria are met:

- There is evidence that mapping has been undertaken to show how the programme outcomes, module outcomes and content meets the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* and programme outcomes. (R2.5)

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

Provide an evaluative summary from your documentary analysis and evidence AND discussion at the approval visit to demonstrate if assurance is provided that the QA approval criteria below is met or not met.

- There is evidence that:
  - the programme meets NMC requirements on programme hours and programme length;
  - programmed learning is sufficient to allow the students to be able to meet the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.* (R2.6)

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R2.6 is met.

Documentary evidence and findings at the approval visit confirm that the programme is delivered over two years, 45 weeks per year totalling 2300 hours. The programme includes 30 percent academic learning hours with 20 percent applying theory to practice learning hours. There's 50 percent of the curriculum hours for practice learning of which 20 percent is in spent in external practice learning experiences. This meets the NMC requirements for nursing associate programmes and provides sufficient time for students to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.

- The programme structure demonstrates an equal balance of theory and practice learning. This is detailed in the designated hours in the module descriptors and practice learning allocations. A range of learning and teaching strategies are detailed in the programme specification, programme handbook and module descriptors with theory / practice balance detailed at each part of the programme and at the end point. There are appropriate module aims, descriptors and outcomes specified. There is a practice allocation model for the delivery of the programme that clearly demonstrates the achievement of designated hours for the programme detailed. (R2.7)

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R2.7 is met

Theory and practice are integrated throughout the programme and are equally balanced. The module descriptors clearly show the module aims, content, descriptors and outcomes. The modules outcomes are mapped against the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates (SPNA) (NMC, 2018). Both the programme specifications and module specifications illustrate the learning and teaching strategies that are employed for the students to achieve the programme outcomes in both theory and practice. Much of the learning is online but associate lecturers provide tuition and there are regular interactive tutorials. Practice tutors (now academic assessors) support practice supervisors and facilitate practice learning and assessment.

The programme handbook was particularly clear in detailing the expectations of the programme. Students describe the online learning materials and identify how learning is possible by dipping in and out of the OU online resources. Students are clear on what is expected of them. They tell us they enjoy the mandatory online tutorials and forums where they learn with and from students across the country and in different care contexts. Students tell us they meet regularly with academic assessors who monitor progress. In addition there are learning analytics systems in place which alert the module team to the students' level of engagement with online learning materials.

Programme documentation, PLPs and students told us that each PLP organisation has a different way of organising practice learning experiences. Findings at the visit and documentation demonstrate clarity in how programme hours are achieved in both theory and practice.

Evidence provides assurance that the following QA approval criteria are met:

- There is evidence that programmes leading to nursing associate registration and registration in another profession, will be of suitable length and nursing associate proficiencies and outcomes will be achieved in a nursing associate context. (R2.8)

The programme leads to a nursing associate registration only.

Assurance is provided that Gateway 1: *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* relevant to curricula and assessment are met

YES ☒　　NO ☐

Assurance is provided that Gateway 2: *Standards for student supervision and assessment* relevant to curricula are met　　**YES** ☒　　**NO** ☐

Outcome

Is the standard met?　　**MET** ☒　　**NOT MET** ☐

Date: 1 July 2019

Standard 3: Practice learning

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

R3.1 provide practice learning opportunities that allow students to develop and meet the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* to deliver safe and effective care, to a diverse range of people, across the lifespan and in a variety of settings

R3.2 ensure that students experience the variety of practice expected of nursing associates to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages

R3.3 ensure technology enhanced and simulation-based learning opportunities are used effectively and proportionately to support learning and assessment

R3.4 take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, and

R3.5 3.5 ensure that nursing associate students have protected learning time in line with one of these two options:

R3.5.1 Option A: nursing associate students are supernumerary when they are learning in practice

R3.5.2 Option B: nursing associate students who are on work-placed learning routes:

R3.5.2.1 are released for at least 20 percent of the programme for academic study

R3.5.2.2 are released for at least 20 percent of the programme time, which is assured protected learning time in external practice placements, enabling them to develop the breadth of experience required for a generic role, and

R3.5.2.3 protected learning time must be assured for the remainder of the required programme hours.

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education specifically:

R1.1, R1.3, R1.5; R2.9, R2.11; R3.3, R3.5, R 3.7, R3.16; R5.1, R5.7, R5.10, R5.12

Standards for student supervision and assessment, specifically:

R1.1 – R1.11

Findings against the standard and requirements

Provide an evaluative summary from your documentary analysis and evidence AND discussion at the approval visit to demonstrate if assurance is provided that the QA approval criteria below is met or not met.

Evidence that the practice learning opportunities allow students to develop and meet the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* to deliver safe and effective care, to a diverse range of people, across the lifespan and in a variety of settings. (R3.1)

MET ☒   NOT MET ☐

R3.1 is met.

Documentary evidence and findings at the approval visit provide assurance that practice learning opportunities in the programme enable students to develop and meet the SPNA.

Practice learning experiences for the students are organised by the employer and practice education leads in each organisation and monitored by the OU. PLP representatives told us how they organise and facilitate practice learning opportunities to allow students to develop and meet the proficiencies. Documentary evidence confirms there are processes in place to ensure that each student has experience in a variety of settings including care in hospital, care close to home and care at home.

A number of PLPs confirmed that they can provide the full range and diversity of practice experiences within their own organisations in which the student is employed owing to the availability of different contexts of care. Other PLPs confirm they organise at least two external practice experiences for the student outside of their organisation.

Documentary evidence and the approval visit evidence that PLPs are committed to deliver safe and effective care, to a diverse range of people, across the lifespan and in a variety of settings.

PLPs and students confirm that practice learning opportunities are negotiated and agreed and meet the programme requirements. Students told us that the variety of

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practice learning experiences will enable development and attainment of the SPNA including annexe B procedures.

We found the prospective practice supervisors and assessors and practice facilitators we met understand the practice learning outcomes and proficiency requirements of the new programme.

Documentary evidence and findings from the approval process confirm there are established processes and policies in place for students to raise and escalate any concerns and for practice supervisors and assessors to assess the student's fitness to practice. Students identified what they would do if they had any concerns about care or concerns about their practice learning experience. One student we met told us that concerns they raised were acted on and opportunities for reflection between the wider nursing team were given. PLPs are confident that mechanisms are in place to support students who are struggling or failing to achieve and gave examples of actions taken in these situations.

Module learning outcomes demonstrate that students have learning and assessment on legal, statutory and professional responsibilities in delivering, safe and effective care.

- There is evidence of how the programme will ensure students experience the variety of practice learning experiences to meet the holistic needs of people in all ages. There are appropriate processes for assessing, monitoring and evaluating these practice experiences. (R3.2)

MET ☒   NOT MET ☐

R3.2 is met.

Documentary evidence and the approval process provides assurance that practice learning environments allow students to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages. Documentary evidence includes programme and module learning outcomes and the PAD, which identify the requirement to develop knowledge and skills necessary for nurses to meet the holistic needs of people across the lifespan.

Students told us how PLPs facilitate learning in different contexts of care. The students we met confirmed they have had a variety of practice learning environment experiences. They describe how they are encouraged to maximise learning opportunities and to work with members of the inter-professional team to increase their understanding of the patient/service user journey. Practice learning experience plans include spoke days, day release, blocks of practice experience, and enrichment weeks with specialised services.

We found there's a range of established mechanisms to ensure that the quality of practice learning environments is monitored. These are managed through partnership working between the OU and PLPs and working with other AEIs. Student evaluation, educational audit, management of complaints and monitoring of concerns raised are closely monitored by the OU together with the PLPs. External regulatory reports such as CQC inspections are addressed collaboratively in relation to risks to the practice learning environment and the student experience. Findings from the QET CQC report resulted in a joint action plan being developed

between the trust and the OU. The action plan was also developed in conjunction with other AEIs who share the same practice learning environments which were re-audited immediately. Regular monitoring and review of the plan is ongoing.

- There is evidence of plans for effective and proportionate use of technology enhanced and simulation-based learning opportunities and to support learning and assessment in the curriculum (R3.3)

MET ☒   NOT MET ☐

R3.3 is met.

The OU will deliver the proposed pre-registration nursing associate programme via technology enhanced learning approaches. Support and guidance for students are available through the online StudentHome and the student support team. Students appreciate the flexibility that technology enhanced learning offers. Programme staff, PLPs and students we met identify how Clinicalskills.net is used to develop the knowledge, understanding and technical application of clinical procedures. Employers, education-based trust staff and practice supervisors confirm resources are in place to enable use of simulation type learning activities to develop procedural proficiencies. Mandatory training occurs within the student's workplace. PLPs tell us students are encouraged to work with specialist staff to develop their learning and clinical skills and procedures, this is confirmed by students. Student activity logs alert the PLPs to where resources need diverting to enable the students to meet the procedures in annexe B.

Technology is used in assessment. Programme documentation and the programme team confirm there are computer marked assignments throughout a module, in addition to tutor marked assignments. The regular assessments enable feedback and the opportunities for students to refine skills and competence.

- There are processes in place to take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning including making reasonable adjustments for disabilities. (R3.4)

MET ☒   NOT MET ☐

R3.4 is met.

We found documentary evidence of a disability policy and disability services unit at the OU. This ensures reasonable adjustments for students are identified and supported through individualised support plans. Documentary evidence and the approval visit confirm processes are in place to ensure students' needs and personal circumstances are considered when allocating practice learning experiences. Students are encouraged to disclose any disability or learning need at application. Reasonable adjustments advised by the university disability services or the local occupational health department are managed through a risk assessment process. PLPs tell us adjustments are actioned according to the individual's need. Students confirm their understanding of the availability of these services. Students also confirm that their individual needs and personal circumstances are considered when practice learning opportunities are negotiated and agreed with the employer PLP.

Access to health and well-being support is available through the employing organisation. The OU provides local support from academic assessors and staff tutors. Students tell us the module team and academic assessors are easily available.

- Evidence that nursing associate students have protected learning time through one of the two options (A or B). There must be clarity of evidence to support the single option selected.

  Processes are in place to ensure that protected learning time will be monitored in accordance with the selected option.

  Evidence that students will be released for a minimum of 20 percent of the programme for academic study.

  Evidence that students will be released for a minimum of 20 percent of the programme time, which is assured protected learning time in external practice placements, enabling them to develop the breadth of experience required for a generic role.

  Evidence that information is provided to students and practice learning partners on protected learning time/supernumerary status and the selected single option. (R3.5)

  MET ☒   NOT MET ☐

R3.5 is met.

Some PLPs told us they provide protected learning time through option A which means the student is supernumerary when they are learning in practice. Other PLPs confirmed option B is used, with some supernumerary learning. Option B means the students are released for 20 percent of the programme time, which is assured protected learning time in external practice learning environments. PLPs and students confirm protected time is provided.

Student facing documentation, and what we were told by the programme team, and PLP evidence, is that there's clear understanding of the requirements of either option. HEE students we met confirm the protected learning time they have had allows them to have a breadth of experience and to develop a generic role. Some students tell us they wear different coloured uniforms on protected learning days to make colleagues aware of their status as learners.

Students tell us the practice facilitators and supervisors are very supportive in providing protected learning time and that they document the hours spent undertaking the different learning activities. Achievement of the protected learning hours for each student will be recorded and will be monitored by the practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors. Practice learning achievements are recorded in the PAD and ORA.

Note: If issues of concern have been identified by system regulators regarding practice learning environments which are to be used for this programme include an overview of the partnership approach between the AEI/education institution and

their practice learning partners to manage and mitigate any risks to student learning.

Assurance is provided that Gateway 1: *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* relevant to practice learning are met

<div align="right">

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

</div>

Assurance is provided that Gateway 2: *Standards for student supervision and assessment* relevant to practice learning are met   **YES** ☒   **NO** ☐

Outcome

Is the standard met?	**MET** ☒	**NOT MET** ☐

Date: 1 July 2019

Standard 4: Supervision and assessment

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

R4.1 ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education*

R4.2 ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC *Standards for student supervision and assessment*

R4.3 ensure they inform the NMC of the name of the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the education programme

R4.4 provide students with feedback throughout the programme to support their development

R4.5 ensure throughout the programme that students meet the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates*

R4.6 ensure that all programmes include a health numeracy assessment related to nursing associate proficiencies and calculation of medicines which must be passed with a score of 100 percent

R4.7 assess students to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a nursing associate

R4.8 ensure that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice, and

R4.9 ensure that all proficiencies are recorded in an ongoing record of achievement which must demonstrate the achievement of proficiencies and skills as set out in *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.*

Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education specifically*:*

R2.11; R3.5, R3.6, R 3.8, R3.11, R3.13, R3.14, R3.17;

R4.1, R4.2, R4.3, R4.4, R4.5, R4.6, R4.8, R4.11; R5.9

Standards for student supervision and assessment

R4.1 – R4.11

Findings against the standards and requirements

Provide an evaluative summary from your documentary analysis and evidence AND discussion at the approval visit to demonstrate if assurance is provided that the QA approval criteria below is met or not met

- There is evidence of how the programme will ensure how support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.* (R4.1)

<div align="center">

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

</div>

R4.1 is met.

Student facing documentation and findings from the approval event confirm there are mechanisms in place to ensure support, supervision and assessment of students which comply with the SFNME. We have seen service level agreements; commitment statements, registration agreements, which is the main contract between the OU and the student, and apprentice agreements. All contracts detail individual and collective responsibility to meet the SFNME support, supervision and assessment requirements.

PLPs confirm they have employed staff specifically to support nursing associate apprenticeship students. They described a range of support mechanism in place for the support of students. Within employer organisations, facilitators meet regularly with students and encourage interactions with the local cohort of students through reflective activities. HEE students we met told us about the support they have had from practice supervisors who they regard as role models. Students tell us that supervisors encourage them to expand on learning opportunities.

The documentary analysis and approval process confirm that students are supported in learning, teaching and assessment by appropriately qualified and experienced OU academic staff. Locality based academic assessors and staff tutors, module tutors and practice supervisors and assessors will support and monitor the students' progression through the new programme. Each student will be allocated a practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor. The allocation process will ensure that the student won't be allocated to the same practice and academic assessor for sequential parts of the programme. Documentary evidence in the PAD supported by the PLPs, confirms that the

academic assessor will work in partnership with the practice assessor to evaluate and recommend student progression for each part of the programme.

The OU has adopted the all England PAD for pre-registration nursing associates. Within the PAD the roles and responsibilities of the practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor are very clear. Programme modules which include practice assessment are 60 credits and are delivered over one part. With support from staff tutors, PLPs are currently preparing staff for the changes to practice supervision and practice assessment and new roles.

The programme team and PLPs told us that students will receive induction and orientation at the beginning of practice learning experiences, and this is detailed in the student PAD document.

PLPs are clear about the process if a cause for concern is raised about a student's behaviour, conduct or performance. Students on the pre-registration nursing associate apprenticeship route although employees, will still be dealt with under the university fitness to practise policy and process. PLPs told us of their experience of raising concerns and are satisfied that the process is robust. We are assured that academic and practice staff are fully aware of the roles and responsibilities within theory and practice to provide support, supervision and assessment.

- There is evidence of how the *Standards for student supervision and assessment* are applied to the programme. There are processes in place to identify the supervisors and assessor along with how they will be prepared for their roles. (R4.2)

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R4.2 is met.

The documentary evidence and findings from the approval visit provide assurance that PLPs are working closely with the OU on implementation plans which are underway to prepare and support staff for the new roles as practice supervisor and practice and academic assessors. PLPs told us that existing mentors are transitioning to the role of practice supervisor. The programme team and PLPs confirm that preparation for the new roles is being rolled out. Preparation activities are flexible with multi-mode delivery including OU online resources and workshops provided in NHS trust departments. The flexible approach is helpful to independent organisations which cover very large geographical areas. The OU is providing twice weekly online workshops over the summer to support the preparation of practice supervisor and assessor roles. At the visit we were assured that PLPs and the OU are working collaboratively with other AEIs who share the same practice learning environments to prepare staff for the new SSSA.

The length of preparation packages is dependent on whether the registered nurse has supervised students before. Some trusts are giving current mentors the option of becoming practice assessors. Once preparation is complete the OU will use the staff tutor and academic assessor role to provide on-going monitoring and development of the practice supervisor and assessor roles.

We are assured that each student will be allocated an academic assessor for each part of the programme. The existing OU practice of annual recruitment and preparation of practice tutors means the OU is very well placed to provide academic assessors. The OU confirmed the processes that are in place for the training and ongoing support to develop the academic assessor role.

PLPs provided assurance that they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in the development and monitoring of these roles.

Evidence provides assurance that the following QA approval criteria are met:

- There are processes in place to ensure the NMC is informed of the name of the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the education programme. (R4.3)

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

Provide an evaluative summary from your documentary analysis and evidence AND discussion at the approval visit to demonstrate if assurance is provided that the QA approval criteria below is met or not met

- There are processes in place to provide students with feedback throughout the programme to support their development. Formative and summative assessment strategy is detailed (R4.4)

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R4.4 is met.

Documentary evidence and the approval visit confirm there are clear strategies and processes in place to provide students with feedback throughout the programme to support their development. There are a number of opportunities for formative feedback during each module. This feedback is from tutor marked assignments and interactive computer marked assignments (iCMAs). Student facing documentation confirms there are a range of assessments to test competencies. The OU supports the feed-forward process which provides information students can use to make improvements to current or future assessments. HEE students we met tell us they have received feedback both formatively and summatively. They find both tutor marked and iCMAs helpful. One student told us that they were not clear on some feedback received but felt empowered to contact the tutor for further clarification.

The PAD and ORA provide a structured approach to providing formative and summative feedback to students about their practice learning and achievement. PLPs told us that they give ongoing informal feedback during practice learning which supports student development. This includes feedback from service users and carers and other members of the inter-professional team which is documented in the PAD. Within the practice learning environment tripartite meetings at 12 weekly intervals will provide a forum for providing feedback and action planning if required.

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- There is appropriate mapping of the curriculum and practice learning placements to ensure throughout the programme that students meet the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.* (R4.5)

MET ☒   **NOT MET** ☐

R4.5 is met.

Documentary evidence, and findings from the approval process provides assurance that the curriculum will enable students to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates. The PAD is explicitly mapped to the proficiencies. There's comprehensive programme mapping which illustrates how the module outcomes meet the programme outcomes and Standards of proficiency for nursing associates including annexe A.

Evidence provides assurance that the following QA approval criteria are met:

- There is evidence that all programmes include a health numeracy assessment related to nursing associate proficiencies and calculation of medicines which must be passed with a score of 100 percent (R4.6)

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- There is an appropriate assessment strategy and process detailed. (R4.7)

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

There is an assessment strategy with details of the weighting for all credit bearing assessments. Theory and practice weighting is calculated and detailed in award criteria and programme handbooks. (R4.8)

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- There is evidence that all proficiencies are recorded in an ongoing record of achievement which must demonstrate the achievement of proficiencies and skills as set out in the *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates*. (R4.9)

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

Assurance is provided that Gateway 1: *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* relevant to supervision and assessment are met

YES ☒   **NO** ☐

Assurance is provided that Gateway 2: *Standards for student supervision and assessment* are met		
	YES ☒	**NO** ☐

Outcome		
Is the standard met?	**MET** ☒	**NOT MET** ☐
Date: 1 July 2019		

Standard 5: Qualification to be awarded
Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must: R5.1 ensure that the minimum award for a nursing associate programme is a Foundation Degree of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (England), which is typically two years in length, and R5.2 notify students during the programme that they have five years in which to register their award with the NMC. In the event of a student failing to register their qualification within five years they will have to undertake additional education and training or gain such experience as is specified in our standards in order to register their award.

Findings against the standards and requirements

Evidence provides assurance that the following QA approval criteria are met:

- The minimum award for a nursing associate programme is a Foundation Degree of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (England) (R5.1)

  YES ☒   **NO** ☐

- Evidence that students are notified during the programme that they have five years in which to register their award with the NMC. In the event of a student failing to register their qualification within five years they will have to undertake additional education and training or gain such experience as is specified in our standards in order to register their award. (R5.2)

  YES ☒   **NO** ☐

Fall Back Award

If there is a fall back exit award with registration as a nursing associate all NMC standards and proficiencies are met within the award
Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education specifically R2.11, R2.20
YES ☐   NO ☐N/A ☒
There's no fall-back award with registration as a nursing associate.
Assurance is provided that the *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* relevant to the qualification to be awarded are met YES ☒   NO ☐
Outcome
Is the standard met?   MET ☒   NOT MET ☐ **Date:** 1 July 2019

Sources of evidence

The following documentation provided by the AEI/education institution was reviewed by the visitor(s):

Key documentation	YES	NO
Programme document, including proposal, rationale and consultation	☒	☐
Programme documentation includes collaboration and communication arrangements with HE/FE partner if relevant	☒	☐
Programme specification	☒	☐
Module descriptors	☒	☐
Student facing documentation including: programme handbook	☒	☐
Student university handbook	☐	☒
Student facing documentation includes HE/FE college information for students, if relevant	☐	☒
Practice assessment documentation	☒	☐
Ongoing record of achievement (ORA)	☒	☐
Practice learning environment handbook	☐	☒
Practice learning handbook for practice supervisors and assessors specific to the programme	☒	☐
Academic assessor focused information specific to the programme	☒	☐
Placement allocation / structure of programme	☒	☐
PAD linked to competence outcomes, and mapped against standards of proficiency	☒	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education institution has met the *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* (NMC, 2018)	☒	☐

Mapping document providing evidence of how the education institution has met the *Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes* (NMC, 2018)	☒	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the *Standards for student supervision and assessment* (NMC, 2018) apply to the programme.	☒	☐
Curricula vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐
CV of the registered nurse or nursing associate responsible for directing the education programme	☒	☐
Registrant academic staff details checked on NMC website	☒	☐
External examiner appointments and arrangements	☒	☐
Written confirmation by education institution and associated practice learning partners to support the programme intentions, including a signed agreement for protected learning.	☒	☐

List additional documentation:

If you stated no above, please provide the reason and mitigation

The programme student handbook has links to core OU policies and information found in the university student handbook.

There's no practice learning environment handbook. This information is detailed in the practice learning, supervisor and assessor handbook for the programme.

There's no FE/HE college involved in this programme approval.

Additional comments:

During the event the visitor(s) met the following groups:

	YES	NO
Senior managers of the AEI/education institution with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐
HE/FE college senior managers, if relevant	☐	☒

Senior managers from associated practice learning partners with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐
Programme team/academic assessors	☒	☐
Practice leads/practice supervisors/practice assessors	☒	☐
Students	☒	☐
If yes, please identify cohort year/programme of study: Seven students from February 2019 cohort of the HEE programme.		
Service users and carers	☒	☐
If you stated no to any of the above, please provide the reason and mitigation There's no FE/HE college involved in this programme approval.		
Additional comments:		

The visitor(s) viewed the following areas/facilities during the event:

	YES	NO
Specialist teaching accommodation (e.g. clinical skills/simulation suites)	☐	☒
Library facilities	☐	☒
Technology enhanced learning / virtual learning environment	☒	☐
Educational audit tools/documentation	☐	☒
Practice learning environments	☐	☒
If yes, state where visited/findings:		
System regulator reports reviewed for practice learning partners	☒	☐
System regulator reports list:		

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn NHS Foundation Trust, CQC report published 13 September 2018.

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, CQC report published 2 August 2018.

If you stated no to any of the above, please provide the reason and mitigation
There was no requirement to visit practice learning environments or facilities for this programme approval. The OU is an established AEI and provider of NMC programmes.

Additional comments:

Issue record			
Final Report			
Author:	Maureen Harrison Jane Suppiah	Date:	2 July 2019
Checked by:	Bernie Wallis	Date:	19 August 2019
Approved by:	Helen Shapcott	Date:	27 August 2019
Submitted by:	Alex Brooker	Date:	22 August 2019