

Reasonable Adjustments in Pre-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Training Policy

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Faculty is committed to education that is inclusive and accessible.
- 1.2 We aim to support our students with disabilities, long-term conditions, and temporary health concerns to meet the objectives of our pre-registration courses for nursing and midwifery.

2. Professional Regulation - knowledge, skills and behaviour

- 2.1 Professional standards for nursing and midwifery education and training are required by law and set by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) as the regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
 - 2.1.1 Nurses and midwives must demonstrate proficiency in specific procedures at the point of registration with the NMC in order to be regarded as competent.
- 2.2 The safety of our students and those in their care is of paramount importance, in line with the NMC (2018) statement that:

'Public safety is central to our standards. Students will be in contact with people throughout their education and it's important that they learn in a safe and effective way.'

- 2.3 The Faculty, as an Approved Education Institution, is given the flexibility to develop its own innovative approach to education subject to compliance with the NMC standards and coverage of the necessary proficiencies and competencies.

3. Occupational Health – medical fitness

- 3.1 Preregistration education to become a nurse or midwife has a significant component of clinical practice and therefore is regulated to the same standard as that of a qualified nurse or midwife.
 - 3.1.1 A student nurse or midwife should be medically fit to enrol on the programme and to continue with their studies if there is a change in their health during the programme.
 - 3.1.2 The Faculty seeks advice from colleagues in our contracted occupational health (OH) services regarding students' medical fitness to study and,

importantly, what adjustments may be put in place to facilitate their studies without compromising professional standards or competencies as set out by the NMC.

3.1.3 Medical fitness is determined based on the physical and psychological functioning of the student in balance with the functional requirements of the programme, taking into account potential risks to the student, patients under their care and others.

3.1.4 Medical fitness encompasses a wide range of criteria including evidence of immunity, mobility, upper limb function, vision, hearing, speech, literacy and numeracy, skin function, interruption of consciousness, concentration, awareness, memory and the ability to learn and understand.

3.2 Occupational Health has an advisory role.

3.2.1 It is ultimately for the Faculty to decide, having received information from Occupational Health and other relevant sources, whether the applicant / student has the capability to safely perform nursing and midwifery procedures in accordance to the NMC standard, with reasonable adjustments, **without supervision** on joining the register.

3.3 We seek advice from King's Disability Support team where appropriate.

3.3.1 Disabled students are encouraged to refer themselves for support and advice to the Disability Support team as well.

3.3.2 There are certain occasions when a more in-depth assessment of an applicant's or student's functional capability is required to ascertain medical fitness and to inform adjustments to facilitate their studies. On those occasions, a Functional Assessment will be undertaken with input from Occupational Health, Disability Support and an experienced educator from within the Faculty to determine whether:

- The student has the capability to safely perform nursing and midwifery procedures, with reasonable adjustments.

AND

- The student has the capability to safely perform these procedures, with reasonable adjustments, without supervision on joining the register.

3.4 It is exceptionally rare that a student is judged medically unfit due to health issues.

3.4.1 In those very rare instances where there are no reasonable adjustments that may be made to enable the student to complete their studies in accordance with the NMC requirement, we will work with the student to identify an appropriate exit-route from the programme.

- 3.4.2 It would be disingenuous to prolong the period of preregistration study if it would not be possible for the student to join the NMC register on graduating the programme.

4. Competence Standards

- 4.1 **A 'competence standard' is a term taken from the Equality Act 2010 meaning an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has particular level of competence or ability.**

- 4.1.1 For our purposes, the NMC standards of proficiency provide the basis of the competence standards that students are required to demonstrate in order to graduate and join the NMC register.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

- 5.1 Students or applicants who meet the [definition of Disability in the Equality Act 2010](#) have a 'protected characteristic' and must not be discriminated against.

- 5.1.1 The Faculty endeavors to consider temporary or permanent adjustments for all applicants and students regardless of whether they meet the legal definition of disability.

- 5.1.2 Adjustments must be reasonable (please see 5.1.3 and 5.1.4).

- 5.1.3 'Reasonable adjustments' is a term taken from the Equality Act 2010 meaning a change or concession to a provision, criterion or practice made to remove disadvantage arising from a disability.

- 5.1.4 As an approved education institution, we are required to make reasonable adjustments for eligible students across all learning environments and for supervision and assessment. Adjustments might include, for example, the provision of additional time for examinations.

- 5.2 It is important to note that the competence standards which are objectively justifiable as measures of professional proficiency are not subject to the reasonable adjustment duty. These dual requirements means that there may be circumstances in which we may not be able to implement an adjustment that would otherwise be considered reasonable even if this means a disabled student may be adversely affected.

- 5.3 The Faculty approach to 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled students is guided by NMC regulations.

- 5.3.1 Beyond competency and impact on the quality of education, there are several other factors that must be taken into account to determine whether an

adjustment is reasonable. These for example include practicality, impact and cost.

5.3.2 We also must bear in mind the geographical location and physical layout of the range of practice learning environments to which we send students.

5.3.3 We work with a number of practice learning partners over a wide geographical area in Inner and Outer London. In order for students to have a well-rounded experience of clinical practice, attendance in practice learning environments will usually involve some travelling and use of public transport.

5.3.4 The Faculty will consider every case individually to determine whether the adjustments are reasonable.

6. Practical guidance on safety, competence standards and the limits of the reasonable adjustments duty

6.1 The NMC requires the Faculty to take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning, including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

6.2 The Faculty balances its duties and responsibilities by dealing with reasonable adjustment requests on a case by case basis.

6.3 In order to help manage expectations, set out below is a limited (but not exhaustive) list of the types of adjustments that the Faculty **is generally unable** to implement as they compromise the capability to perform the nursing and midwifery procedures safely in accordance with NMC standards:

6.3.1 Part-time attendance. Students must complete their programme within five years, if they are to avoid the need for additional education or training and must undertake a fixed number of clinical hours.

Why - It is an NMC requirement derived from its Order and Rules that students register their award within five years. If a student does not register their qualification within that period, they will need to undertake additional education and training or gain such experience as specified in NMC standards.³ In addition, all students are required to gain adequate clinical experience under the supervision of qualified nursing staff.

6.3.2 Short placements. Placements are 150 hours (four weeks) minimum in order for the requisite skills to be assessed.

Why - The NMC requires approved education providers to design and deliver a programme of suitable length to ensure students are proficient in delivering safe and effective care. Students are also required to experience the range of hours expected of registered nurses.

- 6.3.3 Permanent fully supervised patient contact. Students must be able to perform procedures, calculations and undertake observations without supervision at the point of registration. Students will need to work independently when registered and must demonstrate progress towards this goal over the course of the programme.

Why - It is an NMC requirement that, at the point of registration, nurses are competent to diagnose nursing care requirements, initiate life preserving measures, give advice, instruction and support, deliver, assure and evaluate nursing care independently.

- 6.3.4 Permanent avoidance of specific patient groups (for example all- male wards) or procedures (for example avoiding needles or hand washing).

Why - It is an NMC requirement that all students experience the variety of practice expected of registered nurses to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages regardless of their career plan in the future.

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