

End-point assessment plan for Nursing associate fully integrated apprenticeship standard

Apprenticeship standard number	Level of this end-point assessment (EPA)	Integrated
ST0508	5	Fully integrated

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Introduction and overview

Nursing associates are subject to statutory regulation by the NMC. In 2018 the NMC set the standards of proficiency required for entry to the professional register and these are the occupational standards for nursing associates. The NMC also has the statutory duty to set requirements of programmes necessary to support the achievement of the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) in the occupational standard. Prior to the NMC setting the occupational standard and opening the register for nursing associates (in England), Health Education England (HEE) published a Nursing Associate Curriculum Framework (HEE 2017). Nursing associates who undertake a course based on the HEE curriculum framework can apply to the NMC for registration as a nursing associate provided the qualification, they have undertaken is deemed comparable by the NMC. The apprenticeship standard to which this end-point assessment plan applies is based on the HEE curriculum framework. It is against the law for anyone to work as a registered nursing associate without being registered with the NMC. The end-point assessment (EPA) assesses whether apprentices have passed the apprenticeship.

This document sets out the requirements for EPA for the nursing associate fully integrated apprenticeship standard. It is for the end-point assessment organisations (EPAO), that must be an NMC Approved Education Institution (AEI), who need to know how EPA for this apprenticeship must operate. It will also be of interest to apprentices and their employers.

Apprentices will typically spend 24 months on-programme working towards the occupational standard.

The EPA period should only start, and the EPA be arranged, once the employer and NMC Approved Education Institution is satisfied that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard and all of the pre-requisite gateway requirements for EPA have been met. It is expected that the gateway will be reached on completion of the final qualification module and before the AEI's examination board.

Prior to commencement, apprentices will have their numeracy and literacy skills assessed by the NMC Approved Education Institution to ensure the apprentice has the necessary skills at a minimum of Level 2 to meet the requirements of the programme.

The EPA period is expected to last a maximum of 1 month beginning when the apprentice has passed the EPA gateway.

The EPA will determine the overall apprenticeship standard and grades of:

- fail
- pass

This apprenticeship has a fully integrated EPA. The EPA will use the assessment arrangements in use for other entry routes into this occupation and will be completed simultaneously, as outlined in this end-point assessment plan. Alignment of the integrated EPA is permitted because the following criteria are met:

1. Parliament has prescribed that the occupation (profession) must be regulated and a statutory regulator has undisputed control of access to the occupation.
2. The fully integrated EPA meets the requirements of an apprenticeship.

EPA summary table

On-programme (typically 24 months)	Training to develop the occupation standards knowledge, skills and behaviours
End-point assessment gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprentice has met the knowledge, skills and behaviours • Employer and NMC Approved Education Institution (AEI) are satisfied the apprentice has consistently demonstrated they meet the KSBs of the occupational standard. • Achieved English and mathematics at Level 2. • Completion of all required modules, taking into account any recognition of prior learning (RPL) of the qualification based on the Health Education England Nursing Associate Curriculum Framework (HEE 2017) which includes the mandatory protected learning time and a minimum 675 hours of external practice placements but before the AEI's examination board • Practice Assessment Document (PAD) completed and signed-off by the workplace and training provider supervisor or assessor
End-point assessment (which would typically take place with 1 month)	<p>The EPA starts with the examination board and finishes when the AEI makes the required declarations to the NMC. The apprentice is not required to carry out any additional assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration by the examination board and notice of the decision of the examination board
Professional recognition	Registration with: Nursing and Midwifery Council

Gateway

The EPA period should only start once the employer and the NMC Approved Educational Institution are satisfied that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard.

The EPA starts with exam board and finishes when the AEI:

- upload the apprentice's course and personal details to the NMC database and declare that the apprentices have:
 - met the NMC standards of proficiency for nursing associates (2018)
 - achieved the number of learning hours required by HEEs Curriculum Framework
 - benefited from a breadth of placement experience in keeping with a generic (non-field specific) role

The apprentice must have completed the following gateway requirements prior to beginning EPA:

- Achieved English and mathematics at level 2

For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the apprenticeships English and mathematics minimum requirement is Entry Level 3 and British Sign Language qualification are an alternative to English qualifications for whom this is their primary language.

Apprentices must have successfully completed all required modules, taking into account any recognised prior learning (RPL) of the following approved qualifications as mandated in the standard:

- A regulated level 5 qualification such as a Foundation Degree or Level 5 Diploma of Higher Education delivered by an institution approved by the NMC to provide pre-registration nursing education

The apprentice will also have successfully completed a Practice Assessment Document (PAD), and this will have been signed-off by their workplace and training provider supervisor or assessor

EPA

The EPA is:

Examination board

The examination board will be constituted in line with the NMC Approved Education Institution's academic assessment regulations and must have an external examiner present when considering achievement of the NMC approved qualification.

Independence of the EPA will be assured through:

- the examination board, which will include the external examiner, being responsible for the final decision on the award of the qualification that confirms the apprentice has met the education outcomes required for registration with the NMC.
- the end-point assessment organisation (NMC Approved Education Institution) will conduct the EPA.

Grading

Name of grade	Grade descriptor
Pass	Has met the NMC standards of proficiency for nursing associates (2018) through a comparable qualification and the requirements for the declaration of good health and character
Fail	Does not meet the NMC standards of proficiency for nursing associates (2018) and/or the requirements for the declaration of good health and character

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Apprentice	As a minimum, the apprentice should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete the constituent parts of the programme successfully • meet all apprenticeship gateway requirements • understand the structure and requirements of the apprenticeship
Employer	As a minimum, the employer should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the apprentice to achieve the KSBs outlined in the occupational standard • determine when the apprentice is working at or above the level of occupational competence outlined in the occupational standard and has met all apprenticeship gateway requirements, taking account of the advice of the NMC Approved Education Institution
The EPAO (NMC Approved Education Institution)	As a minimum the EPAO (NMC Approved Education Institution) should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be an NMC Approved Education Institution for the Nursing associate apprenticeship • be on the Register of end-point assessment Organisations (RoEPAO) • work with the employer to ensure that the apprentice is given the opportunities to develop the KSBs outlined in the standard and monitor their progress during the on-programme period • confirms to the employer that gateway requirements have been met • appoint an external examiner • use appropriate recording documentation to ensure a clear and auditable mechanism for recording the decision of the examination board • maintain robust internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures and processes, and conduct these on a regular basis • submit required documentation to the NMC • conform to the requirements of the nominated external quality assurance body • conduct standardisation events and activities in accordance with NMC and external quality assurance (EQA) providers requirements • have, and operate, an appeals process • arrange for apprenticeship certification

<p>External examiner/ Independent Assessor</p>	<p>There will be one individual with the following responsibilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External Examiner in line with QAA Guidance on External Examiners/ Expertise for HE programmes 2. Independent Assessor who as a minimum should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the occupational standard and end-point assessment plan • be a Registered Nursing associate • comply to the requirements of the EPAO (NMC Approved Education Institution) • be independent of the apprentice, and the employing organisation who are involved in delivering the apprenticeship • not have been involved in the teaching or on-programme assessment of the apprentice other than in their role under point 1 above 3. External Examiner for the End Point Assessment who will carry out required activities on behalf of the EQA provider
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Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

Internal quality assurance refers to the requirements that EPA organisations must have in place to ensure consistent (reliable) and accurate (valid) assessment decisions. EPA organisations for this EPA must:

- appoint external examiners who:
 - meet QAA Guidance on External Examiners/ Expertise for HE programmes
 - meet the EQA provider's recommendations for external examiners
 - meet the Approved Education Institution's requirements as set out in their 'Assessment, Progression and Awarding' or similar guidance

Re-sits and re-takes

In line with the EPAO's (NMC Approved Education Institution) procedures.

Professional body recognition

This apprenticeship is based on the Health Education England Nursing Associate Curriculum Framework (HEE 2017). This means that any apprentice that successfully completes an apprenticeship that includes a qualification deemed comparable by the NMC will be eligible to apply for registration with the NMC.

Reasonable adjustments

The EPAO (NMC Approved Education Institution) must have in place clear and fair arrangements for making reasonable adjustments for this apprenticeship standard. This should include how an apprentice qualifies for reasonable adjustments and what reasonable adjustments will be made. The adjustments must maintain the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment decisions outlined in this EPA plan.