

Return to Practice

Thank you for your enquiry about the Return to Practice (RTP) course at the University of the West of England. The information that follows should help you to gain a better idea of what is involved and what you need to do to apply.

The model for provision of Return to Practice has recently changed to an employer led model with places commissioned by Health Education South West (HeSW). Healthcare organisations, such as NHS Trusts, GP practices and independent providers will be supporting returnees to return to practice with the intention of employment on successful completion of the course. To support this HeSW have set up a website for additional information and to find organisations that are advertising for and looking to support return to practice nurses.

[Health Education South West](#)

Commonly asked Questions:

How much does the course cost?

Health Education South West is currently commissioning and funding places for the Return to Practice course. A bursary is available to cover costs associated with your study.

Who can apply for the course?

Adult Nurses, Mental Health Nurses, Children's Nurses, Learning Disability Nurses, School Nurses, Occupational Health Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors can apply.

Where is the course taught?

The course is taught at our Glenside Campus, Blackberry Hill, Bristol, BS16 1DD, here is a link to information and directions to the campus [Glenside Campus](#). The course may also be provided at our Gloucester campus which is at Alexander Warehouse [Gloucester campus](#)

What is the duration of the course and how often will I have to attend university?

The course has six face to face study days which start at 10.00 am and finish around 1600 and are spread out throughout the duration of the course. The theoretical aspect of the course is run alongside your practice placement.

How do I go about applying?

Healthcare providers will advertise vacancies suitable for return to practice nurses at key points throughout the year. The dates of the adverts will align to the 3 intakes of the Return to Practice course here at UWE (start dates Sept/Oct, Jan and May of each year). Look for adverts on the [NHS jobs](#) website or local press. Organisations and contact details of staff leading RtP are

available on the [Health Education South West](#) website so it is also advisable to contact staff at these organisations to find out more details.

Will I require a clinical placement?

Yes – nurses wishing to return to practice need be assessed in practice by a sign off mentor or a practice teacher if a Health Visitor or a supervisor of midwives, if you are a midwife.

How is the clinical practice assessed, is it continuous assessment?

There is a practice based continuous assessment where a record of your progress is made in an assessment document, called the Ongoing Achievement Record (OAR). This document has elements of self-assessment and finally is completed by the “sign off” mentor. The Ongoing Achievement Record (OAR) is structured around the nine NMC outcomes that need completion to be eligible to return to practice, these are

- An understanding of the influence of health and social policy to the practice of nursing and midwifery
- An understanding of the requirements of legislation, guidelines, codes of practice and polices relevant to the practice of nursing and midwifery.
- An understanding of the current structure and organisation of care, nationally and locally.
- An understanding of current issues in nursing and midwifery education and practice.
- The use of relevant literature and research to inform the practice of nursing and midwifery.
- The ability to identify and assess need, design and plan interventions and evaluate outcome in all relevant areas of practice, including the effective delivery of appropriate emergency care.
- The ability to use appropriate communications, teaching and learning skills
- The ability to function effectively in a team and participate in a multi-professional approach to people’s care.
- The ability to identify strengths and weaknesses, acknowledgement limitation of competence and recognising the importance of maintaining and developing professional competence.

Is there a final exam?

There is no final exam. In addition to the practice based assessments, you are also required to pass a 1500 word academic assignment at level 3, which is based on reflective practice. You will also need to compile a professional portfolio of evidence and pass a numeracy assessment to complete the course.

Do you need a degree to undertake the course?

No, however as Nursing is now only studied at degree level, the NMC require the RtP course to be undertaken at level 3 (Degree level). The Return to Nursing Practice module is worth 20 credits. You will be given support in identifying your study skills needs when you start the course. As part of the course and materials are delivered through online learning resources, some familiarity with using a computer is useful.

Who would provide my wage or cover my expenses?

Normally there are no allocated wages for nurses returning to practice, however a bursary is currently available to cover study and other associated expenses. Please see the [Health Education South West](#) website for more details.

Who would provide me with a uniform?

You will be supplied with two uniforms (if appropriate) and an ID Badge.

How many hours/week that I would have to work during my placements?

The period of time for supervised clinical practice will be discussed and agreed at interview as this can depend upon the number of years that you have been out of clinical practice, your employment history, and whether you have been working in an assistant or support role within a health care environment before application. A suggested guide for negotiating hours and days that are needed to be assessed as competent and confident to return to practice has been informed by guidance published by the Department of Health (DH, 2011). The time span of the placement needs to correlate with the course for example, June to December.

Years out of practice	Guidance for hours for nurses	Guidance for hours for Health Visitors	Guidance for hours for Midwives
5-10	minimum practice hours required = 100 (maximum 200)	minimum practice hours required = 150 (maximum 250)	450
11-20	minimum practice hours required = 200 (maximum 300)	minimum practice hours required = 300 (maximum 400)	450
>20	minimum practice hours required = 300 (maximum 400)	minimum practice hours required = 450 (maximum 550)	450

Who does the Health and Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks?

All applicants offered a place are required to undergo an OH and DBS check and this forms part of the condition of acceptance. This will be part of the recruitment process.

- An Occupational Health (OH) check is carried out as part of the application process. Those offered a place are asked to complete a health assessment and declaration questionnaire and must be prepared to undergo medical examination if necessary. Clearance is obtained before the start of the course. Applicants to the Return to Practice course must have good health sufficient for safe and effective practice as a registered practitioner.
- All applicants to health and social care courses are required to undergo an enhanced DBS check before they commence their placement. The DBS procedure is kept separate from the academic decision making process. This process will be carried out by the employer.

What happens at the interview events?

The interview is an opportunity to meet with staff from the employing organisation and the University.

The interviews will include the following

- One to one interview to explore
 - Your past experience as a nurse RN/EN
 - Why you left nursing and why start again now?
 - Your current role and future placement
- Math test*
- English test*

*Further information and practice opportunities will be sent out with your invitation to the interview.

Is there a maths test?

Yes there is also an online calculation test that needs to be passed during the course as well as the maths test on the day of the interview

My NMC statement of entry is in my maiden name does this matter?

You need to ensure that the names on your application form and on your NMC statement of entry are the same. As differences such as surnames recorded differently on your application form can delay the processing of your re-registration after successful completion of the course as we use this information to process registration applications with the NMC.

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.

I currently work as a health care assistant and my employer is interested in supporting my returning to practice- is this possible?

All placement areas need to have an up to date educational audit to ensure that the learning outcomes can be met and you will also need access to a sign off mentor. The university will be able to advise further if these are not in place.

If your organisation meets the above criteria, they should contact: [Health Education South West](#) to ensure that they are allocated a commissioned place.

What is a Sign off Mentor?

In August 2006 the NMC introduced “Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice”. Within these standards the new role of a **Sign off Mentor** was identified.

The NMC state that “the Sign off Mentor is the person who makes the judgments about whether a student has achieved the required standards of proficiency for safe and effective practice and for their entrance to the register.”

Simply put, the mentor working with a pre-registration student in their final placement or a Return to Practice student in their placement area takes the responsibility for saying that the student is fit to go on the register. In addition a returnee should work with a mentor for 40% of their placement time.

For any further questions on the course, please contact:

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Information about our facilities can be found at the [Department of Nursing and Midwifery](#)

