



## Thames Valley Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in General Practice Nursing

This document provides responses to frequently asked questions about the Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in General Practice Nursing course funded by NHS England across Thames Valley for Primary Care and delivered by Buckinghamshire New University.

### What is the programme?

The Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in General Practice Nursing course is for qualified nurses or nursing associates new to General Practice to support their transition into Primary Care. This course covers core clinical skills essential for nursing roles in Primary Care and includes an introduction to other key areas such as health promotion, screening and long-term condition management as well as offering leadership development and strengthening understanding of accountability, quality and governance. The course is delivered locally by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). For more information on the course, please view [BNU's Graduate Certificate General Practice Nursing webpage](#) or contact the course team [primarycarenursing@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:primarycarenursing@bnu.ac.uk).

### Who is eligible for this course funding?

To apply for this course, you will need to meet the following eligibility:

- Be a qualified nurse or nursing associate **new** to General Practice (have started in your nursing role within the last year)
- Be employed by a practice or PCN in a Practice Nurse or Practice Nursing Associate role
- Work within the Thames Valley region
- Work a minimum of two days per week in Primary Care
- Meet the university entry requirements (please see university course website for more information)

### Is the programme fully funded?

Yes, the course is fully funded by NHS England's Workforce Transformation & Education department. If an applicant is approved on this course, course fees are paid directly to the University so there is no need for a GP practice to pay in advance / invoice etc.

### How is the course delivered?

The current programme is delivered through mix of online and face-to-face teaching. Face-to-face learning is required in this course for clinical skills and will be delivered at either Uxbridge or High Wycombe BNU campus.

### When do the courses take place?

The Fundamentals in Primary Care courses are run twice a year, in January and September.

### How many places are there on a course?

There are 25 fully funded places per cohort.

### How will the course be assessed?

The course is assessed through a mix of work base assessment, portfolio of practice and academic assignments.

### What educational level is the programme?

The course can be undertaken at either academic level 6 (last year of an undergraduate degree) or at level 7 (Masters level). Nursing Associates should undertake the programme at level 6 (as a Nursing Associate foundation degree is delivered at academic level 4 and 5). Nurses may choose between level 6 and level 7.

### Which educational level should you choose?

The **content** for the Fundamentals in Primary Care course is the same across academic level 6 and 7. The assessment of clinical skill competency in practice is also the same across the two academic levels. The difference between the two programmes lies in the **academic assessment** – one is assessed at academic level 6 and the other at academic level 7. For those wishing to study at level 7 (Masters level), your academic writing must reflect the level of critical analysis, synthesis, and application to practice appropriate with this level of study. Additionally, the word count for the level 7 assignments is greater. The decision around what academic level to choose may be impacted by a range of influences, for example previous level of academic study, personal circumstances, time available for independent study outside of work, intentions for future study etc. but it is ultimately down to the individual. Applicants may wish to discuss what level is best for them with their line manager and are welcome to follow up with the BNU programme team if they have any further questions about the two levels.

### What are the recommendations for Supervision?

Consistent and skilled clinical support is vital for this work based learning pathway. Applicants must be allocated a named Practice Assessor, this should be an experienced Nurse or Nursing Associate (for Nursing Associate applicants) ideally within the same practice or PCN and who has completed their SSSA (Standards of Student Supervision and Assessment) training – funded SSSA training is available please contact the Primary Care School team for more information.

Both Practice Assessor and applicant will need **protected time** to meet regularly throughout the course for coaching, support, supervision and the completion of a portfolio of competencies.

Recommendations for the minimum protected time required are as follows:

Week 1: Initial interview at the outset of the course

Week 15: Mid-point interview

Week 26: Final Interview and summative assessment of the portfolio

Intervening weeks: a 30-60 minute debrief with Practice Assessor each week to discuss progress and review whether any additional support is required.

The applicant will also need to be allocated a Cytology Mentor – this can be the same individual as their Practice Assessor or different. The training for cytology has strict criteria around supervision in the workplace, please see the following national guidance for all employers and training providers: [Education pathway - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

### What are the GP practice/PCN requirements?

Applicants will require 1 day (7.5 hours) per week of paid study leave to complete the course over a period of 6-8 months. The course will be delivered on the same day each week throughout.

The practice/PCN will also need to consider time for supervision, support and coaching within the workplace (particularly for achieving competency in clinical skills) and should identify a Practice Assessor for their employee (an experienced Nurse or Nursing Associate ideally within the same practice or PCN). Please see question above for the supervisory requirements of the course.

### What are the requirements of the student / individual applying?

The individual must have the support of their employer to undertake this course. They must also meet both the eligibility for funding above alongside the University entry criteria.

By accepting the funding, the individual is making a commitment to attend and fully participate in all elements of the programme. All components and elements, including all clinical skills must be fully engaged with to pass the course.

In addition to a day of paid study leave per week, it is anticipated that individuals will need to dedicate some time outside of their working hours to completing the programme of study.

### How do you apply for this course?

An interested applicant will need to submit their interest via the Primary Care School [england.primarycareschooltw.se@nhs.net](mailto:england.primarycareschooltw.se@nhs.net) and a member of the team will be in contact with next steps.

If an applicant is approved onto the course, the applicant and their practice manager will need to complete a funding agreement form. The Primary Care School require an applicant's name and contact details, manager's details, and confirmation that their GP practice or PCN agrees to support them with this programme of study.

Applicants **must** have support of their employing GP practice or PCN.

Once the signed funding agreement has been returned, The Primary Care School will confirm your funding approval. You will then be contacted one month before the course with enrolment instructions.

### What should I do if either the student or practice/PCN are struggling with this programme of study?

In the first instance please contact the Primary Care School [england.primarycareschooltw.se@nhs.net](mailto:england.primarycareschooltw.se@nhs.net) and the course team at the university [primarycarenursing@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:primarycarenursing@bnu.ac.uk). There are a range of support mechanisms available both academically and practically, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

### Any further questions?

Please contact the Primary Care School [england.primarycareschooltw.se@nhs.net](mailto:england.primarycareschooltw.se@nhs.net) if you have any further questions.