

DEFINITIVE COURSE RECORD

Course Title	FdSc Nursing Associate [Higher Apprenticeship]
Awarding Bodies	University of Suffolk
Level of Award ¹	FHEQ Level 5
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Recognition	Nursing and Midwifery Council (approval pending)
Credit Structure ²	240 Credits Level 4: 120 Credits Level 5: 120 Credits
Mode of Attendance	Full-time
Standard Length of Course ³	2 years full-time
Intended Award	FdSc Nursing Associate
Named Exit Awards	CertHE Fundamentals of Health and Social Care
Entry Requirements ⁴	- Apprentices must be employed in the health or care sector - Maths and English GCSE 4-9 (A-C) or Functional Skills Level 2 - Satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. - Occupational Health review - A formal interview with the course team and employer partners - Meet the eligibility criteria for Apprenticeship Funding
Delivering Institution(s)	University of Suffolk
UCAS Code	N/A

This definitive record sets out the essential features and characteristics of the FdSc Nursing Associate [Higher Apprenticeship] course. The information provided is accurate for apprentices entering level 4 in the 2026-2027 academic year⁵.

¹ For an explanation of the levels of higher education study, see the [QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(2024\)](#)

² All academic credit awarded as a result of study at the University adheres to the [Higher education credit framework for England](#).

³ Where the course is delivered both full-time and part-time, the standard length of course is provided for the full-time mode of attendance only. The length of the part-time course is variable and dependent upon the intensity of study. Further information about mode of study and maximum registration periods can be found in the [Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards](#).

⁴ Details of standard entry requirements can be found in the [Admissions Policy](#) and further details about Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) can be found on the [University's DBS webpage](#).

⁵ The University reserves the right to make changes to course content, structure, teaching and assessment as outlined in the [Admissions Policy](#).

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Course Summary

The FdSc Nursing Associate [Higher Apprenticeship] offers a practical and rewarding route into the nursing workforce. It offers apprentices a mix of work-related specialist skills and academic study. Apprentices will deliver care alongside registered nurses and the wider healthcare team. Apprentices will have opportunities to contribute to the delivery of safe, compassionate, person-centred, and effective care under appropriate supervision. They will develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to care for people of all ages, respond to physical and emotional needs, escalate concerns, and contribute to clinical decisions. Practice is at the heart of the programme, with placements providing insight into adult, mental health, learning disability, and children's care, in a supportive learning environment. Apprentices will also benefit from hands-on skills sessions, guest speakers, and real-world insights from service users. On completion, graduates can register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) as Nursing Associates and can progress towards becoming Registered Nurses.

Course Aims

In providing this course, the University and course team aim to:

1. Instil a strong commitment to professional accountability by applying the NMC Code and relevant legal, ethical, and regulatory frameworks, while fostering professional identity and a dedication to lifelong learning.
2. Enable apprentices to acquire, practise, and demonstrate core clinical skills safely and effectively in a range of care settings, applying knowledge to real-world situations while working within their professional scope as Nursing Associates.
3. Prepare apprentices to deliver person-centred, evidence-informed care that is safe, holistic, and responsive to individuals across the lifespan, including those with acute, long-term, or end-of-life needs.
4. Equip apprentices to actively promote health and prevent ill health in diverse settings, supporting both individual well-being and population-level health improvement.
5. Develop the ability to use critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and current evidence to support and contribute to safe decision-making, care planning, and quality improvement.
6. Cultivate excellent communication and interpersonal skills to foster therapeutic relationships, effective teamwork, and advocacy across multidisciplinary and cross-organisational care.
7. Promote the delivery of equitable, inclusive, and culturally competent care that respects individuals' rights, values, and perspectives; while fostering curiosity, open-mindedness, and awareness of one's own biases.
8. Build on apprentices' ability to apply literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, including the use of artificial intelligence tools, to interpret, record, communicate, and use clinical information safely and efficiently to support evidence-informed care and service improvement.

Course Learning Outcomes

The following statements define what apprentices graduating from the FdSc Nursing Associate [Higher Apprenticeship] course will have been judged to have demonstrated in order to achieve the award. These statements, known as learning outcomes, have been formally

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approved as aligned with the generic qualification descriptor for level 4/5 awards as set out by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)⁶.

Level 5

1. Demonstrate knowledge of professional accountability and ethical frameworks, applying them to legal and ethical decisions while demonstrating integrity and acting as a role model, in line with the NMC Code.
2. Critically evaluate roles and responsibilities within multidisciplinary teams, contributing appropriately to supervision and delegation to support integrated person-centred care.
3. Demonstrate safe and compassionate fundamental nursing care across the lifespan, consistent with the knowledge and skills provided in the NMC Standards of Proficiency for Nursing Associate.
4. Critically appraise clinical evidence and research to inform professional judgement and improve the quality of care within the defined Nursing Associates' scope of practice.
5. Apply principles of health promotion and illness prevention, critically assessing their effectiveness and impact, while also recognising the role of individual and community responsibility in shaping the population's health.
6. Contribute confidently to care planning, risk assessment, safeguarding and clinical decision-making across the lifespan, demonstrating accountability and adherence to Nursing Associates' professional boundaries.
7. Demonstrate effective communication skills to establish therapeutic relationships and enhance teamwork in diverse health and social care contexts.
8. Demonstrate the ability to recognise and escalate deterioration, analyse clinical safety concerns, and contribute to audit, reflection, and quality improvement activities that promote safe, sustainable practice.
9. Deliver culturally competent and equitable care, advocating for the rights, values, and preferences of diverse populations while actively promoting respect, tolerance, and challenging discrimination.
10. Critically reflect on personal values, behaviours, and professional development needs to foster continuous learning, adaptability, and resilience in clinical practice.
11. Demonstrate literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, including use of appropriate artificial intelligence tools, to interpret and apply clinical information safely and effectively to support evidence-informed practice.

Course Design

The design of this course has been guided by the following professional and apprenticeship standards:

- Skills England (2022) Nursing associate (NMC 2018)
- NMC (2023) Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education
- NMC (2023) Standards for student supervision and assessment
- NMC (2023) Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes
- NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency for Nursing Associates

⁶ As set out in the [QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(2014\)](#)

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Course Structure

The FdSc Nursing Associate [Higher Apprenticeship] comprises modules at levels 4 and 5. Module Specifications for each of these modules are included within the course handbook, available to apprentices online at the beginning of each academic year.

Module	Credits	Module Type ⁷
Level 4		
Fundamentals of Professional Practice	30	M
Foundations of Health and Wellbeing for Children and Young People	30	M
Foundations of Person-Centred Care in Adulthood	30	M
Nursing Associate Practice Part 1	30	M
Level 5		
Supporting Individuals with Deteriorating Health	30	M
Principles of Health Promotion and Public Health	30	M
Transitioning to a Proficient Professional	30	M
Nursing Associate Practice Part 2	30	M

Awards

On successful completion of the course, apprentices will be awarded a Foundation Degree in Science Nursing Associate. Apprentices who leave the course early may be eligible for a CertHE Fundamentals of Health and Social Care upon successful completion of 120 credits, including all mandatory level 4 modules.

Course Delivery

This course is delivered at the University of Suffolk's Ipswich campus and at the satellite sites in Bedford and Great Yarmouth, subject to employer needs and sufficient enrolment numbers. The programme uses a blended learning model that combines face-to-face and online teaching to enhance the learning experience. Apprentices across delivery sites will, where appropriate, take part in shared online teaching and learning activities, and may also engage in joint sessions with students on the non-apprenticeship delivery. This approach supports consistency of curriculum delivery and ensures equitable access to learning opportunities across all delivery locations and entry routes.

For each theory module, you can expect 15 hours of taught study and 7.5 hours of OLE activity. The programme is typically delivered across three days per week within a five-week block, followed by a 30-hour reading week and a 30-hour assessment week. You are expected to complete 172.5 hours of study for theory delivery within each 30-credit module, including taught sessions, engagement with online tasks, self-directed study such as reading and research, and assessment preparation. Furthermore, you can expect people who use

⁷ Modules are designated as either mandatory (M), requisite (R) or optional (O). For definitions, see the Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards

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services and their carers (PUSC) to contribute to learning by sharing lived experiences and, where appropriate, may also be involved in assessment activities.

Each practice learning module usually includes 37.5 hours of clinical skills learning, 360 hours of external placement and 217.5 hours protected learning (completed in your home area) to meet the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registration requirements.

In addition, there is a 30-hour induction at the beginning of Year 1, a 7.5-hour “Get Ahead” session at the start of Year 2 and a 7.5-hour “preparation for practice supervisor” at the end of the programme.

Course Assessment

A variety of assessments will be used in the course to enable apprentices to experience and adapt to different assessment styles. The assessment methods used will be appropriate to assess each module's intended learning outcomes. The overall assessment of the course will include coursework (including essays, artefacts, and presentations), examinations (written, online, and VIVA), and practical assessments.

Special Features

On successful completion of the FdSc Nursing Associate [Higher Apprenticeship], apprentices are eligible for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Apprenticeship Assessment Plan

The [Skills England \(2026\) Apprenticeship Standards: Nursing Associate \(NMC 2018\)](#) Apprenticeship Assessment Plan (AAP) sets out how the Level 5 Nursing Associate (NMC 2018) apprenticeship is assessed and clarifies what apprentices must achieve to complete the programme successfully. Employers should use this information to understand the expectations placed on apprentices and the standards they must meet throughout their training. The AAP should be read in conjunction with the General Requirements for Apprenticeship Assessment; however, if any inconsistencies arise, the AAP takes precedence.

As the statutory regulator for the Nursing Associate profession, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) sets the Standards of Proficiency that apprentices must meet to be eligible for professional registration. These standards shape the apprenticeship's structure, content, and assessment strategy. Employers should be aware that all teaching, learning, and assessment align with these regulatory requirements, and that apprentices must demonstrate competence in line with NMC expectations before they can join the register.

The assessment approach within this apprenticeship is designed to be fair, proportionate, and robust, ensuring employers can have full confidence in apprentices' readiness to practise safely and effectively. The assessments provide a reliable measure of an apprentice's capability to deliver care in a range of practice settings and offer assurance that they have developed the professional behaviours, decision-making ability, and clinical competence required of a Nursing Associate.

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To complete the apprenticeship, apprentices must achieve the qualification specified in the occupational standard. This qualification is compulsory and forms the programme's core assessed element. The University must ensure that all teaching and assessment fully comply with NMC requirements, and employers should ensure apprentices are supported to engage with all aspects of the qualification.

The occupational standard's knowledge, skills, and behaviours are directly embedded within the qualification outcomes. For this reason, the final qualification result determines whether an apprentice has successfully completed the apprenticeship; no additional assessment is required beyond the assessments already included within the qualification.

Before an apprentice enters the apprenticeship gateway to completion, employers must assess the apprentice's behaviours against the apprenticeship standard and confirm that the required behaviours and occupational competence have been achieved.

The final apprenticeship grade reflects the apprentice's achievement against the NMC Standards of Proficiency for Nursing Associates (2018). A Fail indicates that the apprentice has not yet met these standards. A Pass confirms that the apprentice has demonstrated the level of competence, professionalism, and readiness required for entry to the NMC register and for practice as a Nursing Associate.

Course Team

The academic staff delivering this course are drawn from a team that includes teaching specialists and current practitioners. All staff are qualified in their subjects with their own specialist knowledge to contribute and are registered with the appropriate professional body (i.e. NMC).

Course Costs

Apprentices undertaking FdSc Nursing Associate [Higher Apprenticeship] will not be charged tuition fees directly. Tuition fees will be agreed between the University and a apprentice's employer. Apprentices will be required to sign a Training Plan A before starting their apprenticeship, which will detail the apprentice's, employer's, and University's expectations under the apprenticeship agreement.

Academic Framework and Regulations

This course is delivered according to the Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards and other academic policies and procedures of the University and published on the [website](#).