Programme Specification for Return to Nursing Practice (BNSA3050)

This document applies to Academic Year 2026/27 onwards

Table 1 Programme Specification for Return to Nursing Practice

1.	**Awarding institution/body**	University of Worcester
2.	**Teaching institution**	Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery
3.	**Programme accredited by**	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
4.	**Final award or awards**	NA
5.	**Programme title**	Return to Nursing Practice (BNSA 3050)
6.	**Pathways available**	None
7.	**Mode and/or site of delivery**	Blended learning with theory days combined with clinical hours in an appropriate practice setting
8.	**Mode of attendance and duration**	Part time 1 year
9.	**UCAS Code**	N/A
10.	**Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement**	• NMC (2019) Return to Practice Standards • NMC (2019) Part 3: Standards for Return to Practice Programmes • NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses • NMC (2018) Part 1: Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education • NMC (2018) Part 2: Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment
11.	**Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision**	April 2020 Updated October 2020 – placement hours, zoned academic role and Self-Assessment of Prior Learning. August 2021 – AQU amendments August 2022 – AQU amendments July 2023 – annual updates

12. Educational aims of the programme

The University has a strong reputation for delivering high-quality, innovative and contemporary nurse education. This transformational Return to Nursing Practice programme has been developed collaboratively with practice partners, service users and students. The programme is designed for Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) nurse registrants whose registration has lapsed or for those unable to meet the NMC revalidation practice hours requirement to return to or remain on the NMC register as a Registered Nurse.

The programme aims to:

- Provide appropriate learning opportunities and resources, which facilitate the integration of theory and practice, to safely and effectively support students to confidently achieve the seven platforms and associated skills annexes of the NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses in their intended area of practice. Ensuring eligibility to register with, or remain on the NMC register, as a Registered Nurse (Adult, Children's or Mental Health);

- Develop competent, compassionate, autonomous and accountable professionals, who are fit for purpose, who practice in accordance with NMC (2018) The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes and which module/code they relate to

Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	*On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:*
1.	Assess, plan and evaluate the skills and knowledge required to deliver safe, effective, non-discriminatory, individualised patient care to a diverse range of people in their intended area of practice;
2.	Critically evaluate relevant healthcare strategies, policies, legal and ethical frameworks and their application to nursing practice;

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills

3	Critically appraise a range of evidence to provide holistic care to a diverse range of people;

Table 4 learning skills and capabilities related to employability outcomes for module code/s

Skills and capabilities related to employability

4.	Evidence and defend decision-making and problem-solving approaches in making informed judgements for patient care, including the importance of involving patients and their families in their care;
5.	Evidence a critically reflective approach to personal development and the delivery of autonomous patient-centred care;

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module code/s

Transferable/key skills

6.	Demonstrate advanced communication, numeracy and digital capabilities, relationship management and clinical skills required for their intended area of practice.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The teaching, learning and assessment approaches employed across this programme encourage students to be engaged, resilient, lifelong learners who are critically aware problem solvers. The strategy seeks to ensure that, through approaches to learning, teaching and assessment across

theory and practice settings, students have the best opportunities possible to achieve these attributes and capabilities.

The programme is student-focused, building on existing knowledge and skills; utilising scenario-based, e-learning and practice-focused strategies to reflect the real world of contemporary nursing practice. It emphasises student engagement with learning and promotes a self-directed autonomous approach.

The educational experience offered is flexible and inclusive to enable individuals to take full advantage of the opportunities that part-time, university-based study offers them. The use of technologies to enhance the student experience is fully integrated and the virtual learning experience will be introduced and used throughout the programme.

For NMC revalidation or readmission to the NMC register, it is a requirement to evidence 450 hours of practice in the previous three years. The exact requirements for Return to Nursing Practice will be determined on an individual basis by the course leader/Academic Assessor in collaboration with Practice Partners. This process involves a needs analysis which demonstrates the returners prior learning and experiences in relation to the NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency.

The methods of assessment are designed to enhance learning and build confidence in not only the students' academic ability, but their skills and competence in practice. Students will complete a summative assessment comprising a of critical reflection and completion of a proficiency based practice assessment document (PAD).

Teaching
Students are taught through a blended learning approach, consisting of lectures, seminars, workshops, simulation-based learning sessions and practice learning. Interactive workshops take a variety of formats and are intended to enable the application of learning through discussion and small group activities. Teaching ensures that each student meets the programme requirements for their intended area and field of practice (Adult, Children's and Mental Health).

In addition, Personal Academic Tutor meetings will be tailored to the student's particular needs and will be personal, flexible and proactive.

The programme enables students to experience a range of placement experiences relevant to their field of practice and intended area of practice, using a Hub and Spoke model. This facilitates work-readiness, personal and professional development. Students on placement are supernumerary and are supported by a Practice Supervisor and assessed by a Practice Assessor, both having undergone appropriate preparation for their roles. Further support is provided by the zoned academic for the setting, the inter-professional team, a nominated person (usually a member of the practice education team) and an Academic Assessor. Students will have access to the organisations intranet and library resources whilst on placement, in addition to University resources.

Practice learning is assessed using the England Return to Practice, Practice Assessment Document (RtP PAD). The exact proficiencies each student must achieve are determined through tripartite review involving the student, the Practice Assessor and the Academic Assessor, to identify current knowledge, skills and previous experiences. This will facilitate the identification of the student's individual needs in relation to their intended area of practice, including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

Contact time
During semester one, students will complete 36 hours of class contact time. These hours are delivered as 6-hour days spread across the semester. Typically, class contact time will be structured around:

- group lectures
- interactive workshops
- seminars
- clinical skills simulation
- scenario based workshops
- E-Learning and Virtual classrooms

Students will also complete a maximum of 450 practice learning hours (exact requirements will be determined on an individual basis, with a minimum of 150 hours). During semester one students will complete a maximum of 30 hours of skills and simulated learning, to complete mandatory training and prepare students for their placement. During practice learning weeks, usually occurring in semester two, students will be expected to attend placement for a minimum of two days (shifts) per week. All practice learning hours, including skills and simulated learning must be formally recorded and signed for.

Independent self-study
In addition to the contact time, students are expected to complete 36 hours of personal self-study across the programme. Typically, this will involve utilising library resources, reading and assignment preparation.

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including The Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff
Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the module. The team is made up primarily of Registered Nurses from different backgrounds, with expertise in their chosen field of practice/area of expertise. Teaching is also supported by the inter-disciplinary and multiagency team, when specialist knowledge is required. Contributions by service users, carers and their families, provides opportunity for them to share their lived experiences, with service users as appropriate having a role in the assessment process. Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, with 76% of permanent lecturers on the programme being Fellows of the Higher Education Academy, including 9% Senior Fellows (January 2020).

Assessment
Assessment enables students to learn about themselves as learners, reflecting on their learning experiences and providing opportunity to demonstrate their academic, practical, technical and professional progress and achievement in theory and practice. Both formative (informal and developmental) and summative (formal) assessment strategies are incorporated. Formative numeracy assessment linked to medicines management is completed via an e-platform. They play an important role in helping to develop employability skills and to prepare students to develop their career. Summative assessment activities consist of:

- A critical reflection
- Assessment in practice

14. Assessment strategy

Assessment reflects the *University's Assessment Policy* and NMC (2019) Part 3: Standards for Return to Practice Programmes. Assessment forms an integral part of the programme design and underpins authentic and holistic learning. Formative assessment is central to student learning, it provides opportunity for students to learn about themselves as learners and to gain constructive feedback that supports summative assessment. Students are strongly advised to engage with formative activities to increase confidence and active engagement in the learning process. Formative feedback is provided from a number of sources including the module teaching team, Personal Academic Tutors/Academic Assessors, Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors

and service users. For the summative assessment, a comprehensive assignment guide containing explicit assessment criteria, aligned to the module learning outcomes is provided, clearly indicating what students need to do to successfully complete the assessment.

Students are guided and assessed in the practice setting using the RtP PAD, it contains all the formative and summative elements of the assessment process, including professional values, episodes of care and medicines management, which facilitate achievement of the required proficiencies and skills. The RtP PAD is pass/fail only, with the summative assessment taking place upon completion of the required placement hours.

In-line with NMC requirements, no compensation exists between the assessment of theory and practice or with the assessment of individual items of assessment in a module, ensuring all programme outcomes are met.

15. Programme structures and requirements

The Return to Nursing Practice programme requires the successful completion of one 15 credit module at level 6:

Table 6 award map

LEVEL 6					
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Status**	**Pre-requisites**	**Co-requisites**
BNSA3050	Return to Nursing Practice	15	Mandatory	None	None

The Return to Nursing Practice programme sits under Nursing as a standalone module.

In line with NMC requirements, subject to achievement of proficiencies and outcomes, the nominated Practice Assessor and the nominated Academic Assessor evaluate and confirm a students' safe and effective practice and suitability to be readmitted to, or remain on, the NMC register.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

This award is located at Level 6 of the OfS sector recognised standards and is constructed to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the proficiencies, communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures as detailed in: NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses and the professional requirements of the NMC Code.

The following key documents have informed the development of this programme:

- NMC (2018) Part 1: Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education
- NMC (2018) Part 2: Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment
- NMC (2019) Part 3: Standards for Return to Practice Programmes
- NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses
- NMC (2019) Return to Practice Standards
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) (2014) and QAA (2019) Annex D: Outcome Classification Descriptions for FHEQ level 6 and FQHEIS level 10 degrees

Practice learning meets the requirements of the University's Policy on the Management of Placements and Work-based Learning.

17. Support for students

Students accessing the programme have diverse needs, with student support being a central element of the Return to Nursing Practice programme and is available from within the Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery and from the wider University. An example of wider University support is available at Student Services.

Disability support
The University is committed to ensuring that disabled people, including those with specific learning difficulties and/or mental health difficulties are treated fairly. Reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged. The Disability and Dyslexia Service within Student Services provides screening and assessment of disabilities combined with offering specialist disability support.

Course Leader
The Course Leader, who is a Registered Nurse, works closely with Academic Assessors and Personal Academic Tutors to carefully monitor student progression and achievement. The Course Leader has a key role in working with students to identify their previous experiences and learning to confirm placement hours, practice placement requirements and learning needs. The Course Leader provides a supporting declaration of good health and character for all students who have successfully completed the programme. They also ensure all students are aware of how to apply to re-join the NMC register.

Personal Academic Tutors
Personal Academic Tutoring is at the heart of supporting students personally, professionally and academically. The programme team believe that the Personal Academic Tutor system is fundamental to student success. Every student will be allocated a Personal Academic Tutor, this may be the course leader. They act as the first point of contact for students experiencing problems or concerns arising while at university, offering signposting to wider University support services. They promote the academic and professional development of their tutees, including supporting employability and provide the official University reference for their tutees. Tutorial support is personal, flexible and proactive; it is tailored to the particular needs of students. Students are expected to attend tutorials; if they are unable to attend, tutorials can be offered via telephone, email or Skype by prior arrangement with the tutor.

Academic Assessors
All students will be allocated an Academic Assessor. Academic Assessors will be Registered Nurses who are an academic member of the University teaching team. The Academic Assessor, alongside the student and Practice Assessor will be involved in the tripartite review of the students' knowledge and skills against the NMC domains, proficiencies and skills annexes, to produce an individualised plan to support student achievement in the practice setting. Academic Assessors will communicate with Practice Assessors at identified points across the programme. This facilitates the monitoring of student progress, with a discussion about student learning and achievement of proficiencies across theory and practice taking place prior to the end of the programme, to confirm a students' safe and effective practice and suitability to be readmitted to, or remain on, the NMC register.

Placement support
Prior to commencing their placement all students will have a joint Trust induction and preparation for practice learning. These will include professional responsibilities and expected conduct in line with the NMC Code, introduction to the RtP PAD, policy and guidance. Students will also complete an individual placement induction/orientation on the first day of placement which will be documented in the PAD. All students will complete mandatory training prior to commencing their placement including: Basic Life Support, Moving and Handling, Conflict Resolution and Fire training.

All practice learning and assessment is further supported by:

- Work Based Learning Support Team

- Practice Facilitators/Educators/Nominated Person
- Practice Supervisor(s)
- Practice Assessor
- Practice Liaison Team
- Academic Assessor
- Personal Academic Tutor

Practice Supervisors, Practice Assessors and Academic Assessors will have all received appropriate preparation for the role and receive ongoing support to undertake the role. This support, alongside Occupational Health and Disability Services, ensures students individual needs and personal circumstances are taken into account, including making reasonable adjustments as required for students with disabilities.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy
The University aims to provide fair and equal access to education for all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it.

The programme seeks to recruit nurses (Adult, Children's or Mental Health), whose registration with the NMC has lapsed or who are unable to meet the NMC revalidation requirements to remain on the NMC register.

Students will not be considered for this programme if they have had their name removed at any time from the NMC register due to a fitness to practice investigation.

The programme is not open to international students.

Applicants are invited to a selection event.

Entry requirements
Prior to commencing the programme students must show evidence that they are or were registered with the NMC as an Adult, Children's or Mental Health nurse.

In addition, students must:

- Demonstrate values in accordance with NMC (2018) The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates;
- Have capability to update numeracy skills required to meet programme outcomes;
- Demonstrate they meet NMC English language requirements;
- Have capability in literary and digital/technological literacy to meet programme outcomes;
- Be able to work in a clinical area for a minimum of 2 days per week to meet the required placement hours over a pre-arranged period of time.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements
Students are required to demonstrate health and character sufficient to ensure safe and effective practice in accordance with the NMC (2022) Guidance on health and character. Applicants are required to complete a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced level check for the Child and Adult Workforce via the University. This requirement may be waived if the applicant has a suitable DBS check in the Update Service, which has been presented to Admissions and is confirmed via an Update Service check to have had no changes since its original issue. Applicants who have lived outside the UK for a period of three months or more at any time prior to starting their course must also provide a satisfactory overseas police check or certificate of good conduct from the country (or countries) where they resided. Applicants are also to complete an occupational health assessment.

Recognition of Prior Learning
Recognition of prior learning is not applicable to this programme.

As part of the admissions process, a needs analysis is completed to identify student's previous experiences in relation to the NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency, programme outcomes, placement hours and the students intended scope of practice. This will form the basis of a tripartite review of the students prior learning and experiences with their Academic Assessor and Practice Assessor in relation to the standards of proficiency to identify a learning plan.

Admissions procedures
Part-time applicants apply directly to University of Worcester. Shortlisted applicants are invited to a selection event.

Admissions/selection criteria
Applications will be scrutinised by the course leader to ensure appropriateness of student choice in relation to their rationale for completing the programme including NMC registration status, including length of lapsed registration, revalidation requirements and their chosen area of practice.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a values-based selection event. This involves a series of activities and an interview facilitated by the academic team, practitioners and service users, allowing candidates to demonstrate their values in accordance with the NMC (2018) Code, numeracy and literacy skills, and a commitment to succeeding on the programme.

Academic staff, service users and practice learning partners attend training in the principles of selection, equality and diversity through the University or the practice partners employing organisation.

Where a candidate is unsuccessful at interview they are offered written feedback, against individual performance and interview outcome.

Those candidates who meet all the criteria for entry and are successful at the selection event are offered a place, conditional upon confirmation of good health and good character.

19. Regulation of assessment

The programme operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass module
- The module is assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in module specification.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each assessment.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass the module.
- No compensation permitted, a pass mark in each assessment is required
- Full details of the assessment requirements for the module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items
- A student is required to submit assessment items by 3pm on the due date and in accordance with the published process described in the module outline.
- A student may request an automatic extension of up to seven days up to six times in an academic year (depending on the number of credits studied) as described in the Delayed Assessment Procedures.
- A student who submits work late will not have work marked unless they have an approved claim of exceptional circumstances.

- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Retrieval of failure

- A student is entitled to re-sit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module; the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- Where assessment of practice learning is failed students will be offered an opportunity of a 100-hour placement to facilitate retrieval of the fail.
- Failure in the original and reassessment opportunity in practice will result in being withdrawn from the programme
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

This course is subject to the University's fitness to practice procedures.

Requirements for Awards

- Successful completion of BNSA3050 provides eligibility to be re-admitted to, or to remain on, the NMC register as an Adult, Children's or Mental Health nurse.

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Return to Nursing Practice is professionally accredited by the NMC and achievement of BNSA3050 normally indicates a students' fitness to practice and eligibility to be re-admitted to, or to remain on, the NMC register. Almost all successful students go straight into nursing employment, locally and nationally in a wide range of healthcare settings. Students acknowledge that the programme improves their career prospects and future career aspiration. Return to Nursing Practice sits within the BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies programme and there is an opportunity for students to use the credits awarded from the Return to Nursing Practice module towards an Honours or Non-Honours degree by undertaking further modules.

Student employability

The overall emphasis of the Return to Nursing Practice programme is to promote professionalism and work-readiness. We work closely with local NHS Trusts to ensure that our Continuing Professional Development provision is both current and relevant to ensure our programmes enhance practitioner employability.

Links with employers

The Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery has excellent working relationships with its practice partners. Regular strategic and operational meetings promote collaborative developments. A number of meetings including Practice Facilitator meeting and Practice Panels help facilitate open channels of communication. Work Based Learning Support team, practice education teams and the programme team collaborate to review and confirm placement capacity. Practice partners and service users/carer (via the University experts by experience group: IMPACT) contribute to the ongoing monitoring and review of the programme and are partners in the development of any new curriculum developments. They are also involved particularly with recruitment and the delivery of skills and simulated learning, with specialist practitioners providing expert input across the programme. The University is also part of the Pan England Return to Practice working group, who have developed the Return to Practice PAD, which will be adopted by the University of Worcester.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated programme documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.