Special Provisions for Nursing Degrees

TQA Manual - Introduction and Contents

1. Preamble

1.1 This document outlines special provisions which have been agreed in relation to programmes which are offered by the Academy of Nursing and are subject to regulation by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. It contains specific provisions which amend, for those programmes only, the regulations, policies and procedures set out in:

- The Handbook for Approval and Revision of Taught Modules and Programme
- The Handbook for Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes
- The Credit and Qualifications Framework
- The Quality Review Framework
- The University of Exeter Policy and Procedures for Fitness to Practise (FtP)
- The University Terms and Academic Calendar

1.2 The provisions set out in this document have the same status as the provisions set out in the document that they amend.

1.3 Some of the provisions in this document are regulations which affect students – for instance in relation to referral and deferral rules. Some of them are policies which relate to staff – for instance, in relation to module development quality assurance.

1.4 This document also seeks to set out the rationale for the special provisions.

1.5 While this document aims to identify all exceptions to university regulations and codes of practice relating to Nursing programmes, other exceptions or specific provisions may exist within the regulations themselves.

1.6 The NMC’s Standards for nurses can be found at https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-nurses/. The key documents for Nursing programmes are:

- Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education
- Standards for student supervision and assessment
- Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes

1.7 The NMC Quality Assurance Framework can be found at https://www.nmc.org.uk/education/quality-assurance-of-education/how-we-quality-assure/.

2. Programme Approval and Revision

2.1 The University may not give approval to the delivery of a Nursing programme except where approval to run such a programme has been granted by the NMC, as required in the NMC’s ‘Standards for pre-registration nursing education’ requirement R10.2.
2.2 Any amendment to a Nursing programme must follow the requirements and guidance of the NMC, seeking the NMC's approval where appropriate.

3. **Credit and Qualifications Framework**

3.1 The award of BSc and MSci degrees in Nursing shall meet the credit requirement outlined in the Credit and Qualifications Framework.

3.2 However, due to the legal requirement (as mandated by EU Directive 2013/55/EU) that pre-registration nursing programmes must equate to a minimum of a BSc and have a minimum of 4,600 hours of academic and clinical learning, pre-registration programmes are longer than undergraduate programmes. Programmes leading to dual registration in two fields of nursing must be of sufficient length. The MSci nursing will run over four years and equates to maximum of 6,222 hours.

3.3 Due to the increased number of study hours, it will be necessary for the Nursing programme to teach outside of the usual University term dates. Separate term dates for the programme will be published by the Academy of Nursing.

4. **Referral, deferral and condonement**

4.1 Certain modules (usually practice modules) on the Nursing programme will be assessed as pass/fail. This is because these assessments require the demonstration of core, essential proficiencies. All students must perform these proficiencies to the acceptable, safe standard. The nature of the assessment means that additional credit could not be given for exceeding the standard, and therefore they cannot be marked on a variable scale.

4.2 Students who meet the academic requirements of the modules (typically by completing all assessments to the required standard) will be deemed to have passed the module. Pass/fail modules will usually be those relating to clinical placement.

4.3 No numerical mark will be given for pass/fail modules.

4.4 Pass/fail modules will be excluded from calculations of stage averages, degree averages and award classifications.

4.5 Summative assessments on other modules may also be ‘pass/fail’. However, when this is the case, these assessments will be weighted at 0% so that an overall module mark may be calculated. Typically these assessments will be to ensure the programme complies with section 4.6 of the ‘Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes’ which requires the University to “ensure that all programmes include a health numeracy assessment related to nursing proficiencies and calculation of medicines which must be passed with a score of 100%”.

4.6 No condonement or compensation will be permitted on any module (both theory and practice) forming part of a nursing qualification leading to professional registration. This is in order to comply with the NMC’s ‘Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education’ section 5.16 which states that “there is no compensation in assessments across theory and practice learning.”

4.7 Except where specifically detailed in the module description, all summative assessments on Nursing modules (with code beginning NUR) must be passed in order for the module to be passed. A student who has failed an assessment will be deemed to have failed the module, even if the average mark for the module is above the usual pass mark. This applies for all summative assessments, even if they have been weighted at 0% of the
module mark. This is in order to comply with the NMC’s ‘Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education’ section 5.16 which states that “there is no compensation in assessments across theory and practice learning.”

4.8 For summative assessments with a passing mark of 100% students will be permitted up to two referral attempts (i.e. a total of three attempts at the assessment).

4.9 The Practice Assessment Document (PAD) consists of specified proficiencies that must be signed off at least once by the end of a specific part. The PAD is comprised of three parts. Part one will be assessed in year one of the programme, part two will be assessed in year two of the programme, part three will be assessed across years three and four of the programme. Certain NMC proficiencies can be met in either Part 2 or Part 3 of the PAD and they are listed in the Ongoing Achievement Record (OAR). The PAD includes single opportunity of assessment for Medicine Management and Episode of Care in each part. A consolidation period of three weeks is available at the end of each academic year to meet the needs of students, especially those who have been referred in practice.

4.10 When a student has failed an assessment they will be given the opportunity to be referred in that assessment. The referred assessment will be capped at the pass mark. The module mark will not be capped. In some circumstances a second referral attempt may be allowed, where specified in the module descriptor.

4.11 Referral of failed assessments will take place within the Nursing programme academic year. There will be no separate referral/deferral assessment period, and decisions on referral will not require an Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committee. Wherever possible a timeframe for reassessment will be indicated on the module descriptor.

4.12 Students who fail a referred assessment will be deemed to have failed the academic stage, except in instances where an additional referral attempt is permitted.

4.13 All students will normally be allowed a maximum of one repeat stage, regardless of any exceptional mitigating circumstances, provided that they have not been withdrawn from the course for fitness-to-practise reasons.

4.14 Failure of a repeat stage will normally result in a student being required to leave the programme. Decisions on student progress will be taken by the Assessment Progression and Awarding Committee at the end of the academic year.

4.15 The theory and practice modules of the course are interlinked, therefore, a student who is repeating a stage will be required to repeat all the modules of that stage in full.

5. **Assessment Progression and Awarding Committee**

5.1 As all referrals will take place within the academic year, there will be no separate referral/deferral APAC.

5.2 There will be a single APAC at the end of the academic year.

5.3 In addition to the responsibilities outlined in chapter 7 of the ‘Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes Handbook’ it will be the responsibility of the APAC to

- Confirm in-year referral decisions
- Approve any interim or exit awards
- Confirm student proficiency for professional registration
5.4 Before any award is made that will lead to professional registration, the APAC must be sure that:

- The student has completed and passed all modules that form the programme
- The student meets the required proficiencies and programme outcomes in full
- The student has demonstrated their fitness for practice
- The student is eligible for academic and professional award

6. **External Examining**

6.1 It is a requirement that Nursing programmes should have at least one external examiner for practice modules, and one external examiner for theory modules. This is to comply with 2.20 of the NMC’s ‘Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education’ which requires us to “ensure appropriately qualified and experienced external examiners consider and report on the quality of theory and practice learning.”

6.2 In addition to the usual roles and responsibilities of external examiners, they shall also be required to give approval (where appropriate) to applications for Accredited Prior Learning. This is to ensure that we can “demonstrate a robust process for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and how it has been mapped to the programme learning outcomes and proficiencies” as required by section 2.8 of the NMC’s ‘Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education’.

7. **Fitness to Practise**

7.1 Students enrolled for programmes leading to professional Nursing registration will be subject to the Fitness to Practise regulations as outlined in the [University Calendar](#).