



Nursing Associate Apprenticeship





An apprenticeship is essentially a job with training. Apprentices are employed under the same terms and conditions as any other employee and are subject to the same performance and disciplinary requirements.

The Apprenticeship Standard sets down specifically which knowledge, skills and behaviours must be developed in order to achieve the qualification/accreditation, and evidence of this development is essential. All apprenticeships are OFSTED regulated and in the case of the Nursing Associate apprenticeship, the NMC proficiency standards must also be met and clearly evidenced.

The Trust contracts with a Higher Educational Institution (HEI) for delivery of the apprenticeship, The Trust currently partners with both the University of Bedfordshire and The University of Suffolk. Each University sets out its own delivery programme that meets the apprenticeship Standards and satisfies the NMC requirements. The programme that they have approved by the NMC, is the programme they must deliver.

As delivery programmes can be different for each HEI, it may be that two Apprentice Nursing Associates working in the same ward area – but being trained by different Universities, can have slightly different programmes. It is really important that managers of Apprentices, know and understand the requirements of each individual apprentice. Apprenticeship rules require that all apprentices studying at Level 3 and above, achieve passes at Level 2 for English and Maths before they can complete the programme. It is our policy locally, in agreement with our Universities, that Nursing Associate Apprentices must already have Level 2 English and Maths before starting the programme. This is to avoid situations where the apprenticeship has been completed but the required level of English and Maths has not been achieved. This would result in failure for the apprentice.

The cost of the apprenticeship is £15,000 per learner. The costs of the training are met through our Apprenticeship Levy. There are also costs associated with backfilling apprentices during times when they are required to be at University or away from their base, these costs are met by the Trust.

The apprenticeship requires a specific number of theory and practice hours to be completed and there is also a requirement to complete a number of protected learning hours during the two year programme. These hours are prescribed and must be met. Each apprentice will be allocated a base placement – a work area where they will spend most of their practical working hours, they will also need to spend time in alternative placement areas, either in different locations within the Trust, out in the Community or in Mental Health. It is essential that all learners attend placement and complete the required number of hours, this is to ensure that all apprentices experience a broad range of care, covering birth through to end of life and all stages in between.

Apprentices will be allocated a Practice Supervisor and Assessor, who must be suitably trained to perform this role. These may vary with shift patterns. Supervisors and Assessors should be familiar with the apprenticeship programme and its requirements and will provide support to ensure that specific skills are signed off and that opportunities for development are identified to allow clinical practice opportunities. These are critical roles that require high levels of awareness, teaching and coaching skills. The role is also highly rewarding and offers the opportunity for ongoing development.