

Entry requirements (mental health nursing)

This page has information on the entry requirements for mental health nursing.

Academic entry requirements for mental health nursing degrees and nursing degree apprenticeships are set by individual universities and employers respectively. Typically you will usually need a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 4/C or above (typically English language or literature and a science subject), plus at least two (and ideally three) A-levels or equivalent level 3 qualifications. You should check with each university or employer directly before applying to see if your qualifications meet their entry standard.

Alternatives to A-levels

If you're applying for a university course, be aware that each university sets its own entry requirements. It is vital to check the individual entry requirements of the universities you plan to apply to as they can vary.

You should check with each university directly before applying to see if your qualifications meet their entry standard.

You can use our [course finder](#) ^[1] to find out which universities run approved clinical courses. The university websites provide detailed entry requirements, and you can always phone admissions departments for more information.

Various qualifications may be accepted as alternative qualifications to A-levels. These include:

- Scottish Highers/Advanced Highers
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma qualifications
- OCR Cambridge Technicals
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Access courses, eg Access to Nursing

You may be asked to achieve a certain level in these alternative qualifications, for example a merit or distinction in the case of BTEC.

In some cases it is possible to combine academic qualifications with vocational qualifications. For example, you might have an A-level and a BTEC qualification and this combination may

be accepted by universities, depending on the subjects and grades.

Other alternative academic and vocational qualifications may also be acceptable – in all cases contact your chosen universities for more advice.

Before starting an Access course, always check with universities to ensure that the qualification is an acceptable entry requirement.

Other routes into mental health nursing

Nursing degree apprenticeships are offered by some employers. There will also be increasing opportunities for current healthcare support staff to apply for nursing associate apprenticeships [2] which could lead onto nursing degree apprenticeships.

Want to learn more?

- [Find universities running courses on our course finder](#) [1]
- [More information on studying to be a nurse including nursing degree apprenticeships](#) [3]
- Numeracy and literacy

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Applicants to mental health nursing degrees must demonstrate evidence of literacy and numeracy. This includes evidence of being able to:

- read and comprehend English or Welsh
- communicate clearly and effectively in writing, including using a computer
- accurately manipulate numbers as applied to volume, weight, and length, (including, addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, use of decimals, fractions, and percentages).

If you have a disability, the above can be met through the use of reasonable adjustments.

- Accelerated programmes

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Any relevant previous learning you have could count towards your pre-registration nursing course. It's up to each university, but you may be able to do a shortened course (up to one year shorter) if your previous learning is considered relevant. Examples of previous learning might include a relevant degree or other studies, such as a health-related or biology degree or relevant practice experience in a nursing or related discipline.

Accelerated programmes can also be found on our course finder by searching for 'accelerated' programmes [1].

- Criminal convictions

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You will have to take a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check [4] to take up a place on a pre-registration nursing programme. You must confirm on your university application that you agree to a DBS check. If you have a criminal conviction or a police caution, this will not automatically bar you from working in the NHS. Any relevant circumstances will be considered for any conviction. You'll also be required to have a Protection of Children Act List check before you begin your clinical placement if your programme involves regularly caring for or being in sole charge of children.

- Health conditions

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Universities must be satisfied that applicants to programmes are of good health and character to be considered a safe and effective nurse. If you have a particular health problem that may affect your ability to work or study, or if you have any questions about health requirements, contact the university to which you plan to apply. More information is available on the Nursing and Midwifery Council [5].

Partner logos



Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse/entry-requirements-mental-health-nursing>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/news/green-light-new-nursing-associate-role>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/considering-or-university/studying-nursing>

[4] <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>

[5] <http://www.nmc-uk.org/>

[6] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/>