

# Access to Higher Education Diploma

## Subject Descriptor for Nursing and Health Professions

October 2023

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# Section 1: Introduction and context

## The Access to HE Diploma

1 The Access to HE Diploma is a qualification regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). It is a Level 3 qualification (the same level as A-levels and T-levels) and is primarily focused on adult learners who wish to enter higher education but do not have the necessary qualifications in the subject area they wish to follow. When taken as a full-time course, it can be completed in one year. On completion of an Access to HE Diploma, students may go on to study at a higher level, which could be a degree, or other higher-level qualification at Level 4 or above.

2 It is an academic, credit-based qualification, comprising units of assessment expressed as learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The credit requirement for the achievement of any Access to HE Diploma is 60 credits, with 45 of these credits coming from units which are concerned with academic subject content at Level 3 and graded; the remaining 15 credits come from ungraded Level 2 or Level 3 units.<sup>1</sup>

3 While all Diplomas must comply with the overall structural requirements of the Diploma specification, there is flexibility within these requirements for AVAs to approve Diplomas with a variety of structures and with a different range of content. From 1 August 2024, an updated Diploma Specification puts in place requirements relating to the minimum and maximum of 6 and/or 9-credit units to be included within an Access to HE Diploma; this will retain flexibility within subject content while introducing greater uniformity across all QAA-recognised Access to HE provision, thereby offering more parity of experience for students.<sup>2</sup>

## Purpose of the subject descriptor

4 The purpose of this subject descriptor is to offer guidance and provide a reference point for the design, delivery, validation and review of programmes across the range of Access to HE Diplomas designed for progression to higher level study in health professions, including those regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (see Annex 1) and all fields of nursing.<sup>3</sup> In order for a Diploma to be described as compliant with the subject descriptor, it must meet the essential requirements set out in Section 2. Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) and the providers with which they work, still have scope for flexibility and innovation in course design.

5 This subject descriptor is being piloted for provision from 1 August 2024. It will apply fully from 1 August 2025.

## Relationships with other subject descriptors

6 Each subject descriptor is constructed to facilitate continued flexibility in curriculum design, but within specified parameters, appropriate to the subject area. These parameters will detail essential subject content areas that must be included in order that a Diploma is considered

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<sup>1</sup> For full details of Diploma structures and how Diplomas are graded, see the Access to HE Diploma Specification 2024 and Grading Scheme Handbook: [www.qaa.ac.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-resources](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-resources)

<sup>2</sup> Within each Diploma there will be:

- a minimum of one unit of either 6 credits or 9 credits (offered as ungraded or graded credits)
- a maximum of 30 credits that can be made up of 6 or 9-credit units; these units can be offered as ungraded and/or graded credits.

<sup>3</sup> All fields of nursing including adult, children's, learning disability, mental health

subject descriptor compliant. The degree of flexibility afforded through the subject descriptor framework is to a large extent determined by the anticipated progression destination in higher level study.<sup>4</sup> This subject descriptor offers high levels of flexibility to allow AVAs to approve Diplomas that meet the needs of providers, and, in turn, local and regional contexts.

## Status of the subject descriptor

7 Access to HE Diplomas with the specific titles of **Access to HE Diploma (Nursing)** or **Access to HE Diploma (Health Professions)** must meet the essential requirements of the subject descriptor in order to use those titles. Compliance will be determined through the validation of the Diploma by the AVA.

8 Access to HE Diplomas, with other titles that meet the essential requirements of the subject descriptor, may also be approved as compliant with the descriptor. This will be determined through the validation of the Diploma by the AVA.

9 Through the process of validation of an Access to HE Diploma, AVAs will confirm that Diplomas meet the requirements of the subject descriptor and these can be identified as subject descriptor compliant on QAA's course database and visually signalled for students and higher education admissions staff on the course search on [QAA's website](#).<sup>5</sup> Course providers and AVAs should also be encouraged to include a visual signal in their course and marketing materials.

10 Access to HE Diplomas that meet the requirements of an Access to HE subject descriptor provide opportunities for students that support specific progression routes into undergraduate study and within a specific progression route. While minimum requirements have been included, completion of a subject descriptor compliant Diploma does not guarantee entry to higher education. Other requirements for entry to undergraduate courses may be imposed by higher education providers; this may include factors such as additional subject content above the minimum levels required within the subject descriptor, work experience, or Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

11 Compliance with the subject descriptor provides:

- clarity to prospective students and their advisers about the minimum requirements for Access to HE Diplomas to support informed decision making and provide reassurance that a Diploma will meet minimum entry requirements for progression to nursing and health professions<sup>6</sup>
- clarity and reassurance for higher education admissions staff that all Access to HE Diploma students studying a subject descriptor compliant Diploma will have covered the same minimum level of subject content.

## How to use this descriptor

12 The Diploma Specification and subject descriptor together define and describe Access to HE Diplomas that are designed for named progression routes.

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<sup>4</sup> Higher level study may include technical study, including higher level and degree apprenticeships

<sup>5</sup> [www.accesstohe.ac.uk/course-search](http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/course-search)

<sup>6</sup> Individual higher education provider entry requirements vary and students must ensure their Diploma will meet the entry requirements for their chosen higher level study programme.

13 This subject descriptor outlines:

- a the minimum credit requirements and essential curriculum content in areas that are expected to be included for progression to higher level study in health professions and all fields of nursing
- b the recommended maximum credit requirements and content in other subjects to support progression to higher level study in health professions and all fields of nursing.

14 In this subject descriptor, we use the term 'essential' to define content that needs to be included, in its entirety, in a Diploma in order to be subject descriptor compliant, and to a minimum number of credits and a minimum level of unit. We use the term 'recommended' where it is not necessary to follow the subject descriptor, but through the development of the subject descriptor we have determined that it would be useful to consider those areas in Diploma development. The subject descriptors provide a framework to develop Diplomas for specific progression routes that are structured in ways that are consistent with the Diploma Specification while maintaining the capacity for individual approaches in terms of unit credit values and programme design and delivery.

15 Through processes of Diploma development and validation, AVAs ensure that:

- a named Diploma meets the essential requirements set out in the subject descriptor
- the required content can be delivered and assessed
- students have the opportunity to successfully complete the learning outcomes for each unit of study on the named Diploma and can be awarded credits for each unit.

16 Ungraded Level 3 units may be used to introduce students to new subject content or to increase the volume of subject content in essential subject areas to meet local and individual needs.

## Principles

17 The content of the subject descriptor was determined with reference to the following principles:

- a It should specify the minimum content requirements for the adequate preparation of Access to HE students for progression to and success in undergraduate courses in nursing and health professions.
- b The requirements should establish consistency across all Access to HE Diplomas that are designed to support progression to undergraduate nursing and health profession courses, while allowing sufficient flexibility for AVAs and providers to determine how the content should be structured and delivered, and what additional content is included.
- c The preparation needed for this progression route resides in a sound understanding and knowledge in key subjects, the development of skills in academic study, and an introduction to the higher education learning and assessment context. It should not seek to directly address the skills and competencies of a practising nurse.

## Professional body requirements considered in the development of this subject descriptor

18 In developing this subject descriptor, consideration has been given to the standards published by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

19 The NMC specifies the following requirements in relation to the numeracy and literacy, including digital literacy, needed for an individual to undertake undergraduate training and education in nursing.<sup>7</sup>

Part 3: [Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes \(1.1.4-1.1.7 and 1.7\)](#)

Part 3: [Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes \(1.5.5-1.5.7 and 1.6\)](#)

Part 3: [Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes \(1.1.4-1.1.7 and 1.6\)](#)

### **Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression states**

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

- confirm on entry to the programme that students:
  - have capability to develop numeracy skills required to meet programme outcomes (1.1.4, 1.5.5, 1.1.4)
  - can demonstrate proficiency in English language (1.1.5, 1.5.6, 1.1.5)
  - have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes (1.1.6, 1.5.7, 1.1.6)
  - have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes (1.1.7, 1.5.8, 1.1.7)
- support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy, and digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes (1.7, 1.6, 1.6)

20 GCSE achievement in English and Maths is not a requirement of the NMC. However, higher education providers (HEPs) determine their own admissions policies and their own requirements with regard to GCSE achievement. Access to HE students and providers should check the policy of particular HEPs.

21 The HCPC regulates 15 professions and maintains a register of professionals; this subject descriptor applies to those regulated professions noted at Annex 1. HCPC also sets the Standards of Education and Training (SETs), professional skills, conduct, performance and ethics of those on the register. Programmes of study, at undergraduate and/or postgraduate level, that meet the requirements of the SETs support students to successfully complete their studies to meet the standards of proficiency that are needed for safe and effective practice in each of the regulated professions.

22 HCPC SETs require that 'The admissions process must ensure that applicants have a good command of English.'<sup>8</sup>

23 NMC and HCPC standards for selection, admission and progression for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study also require approved education institutions for graduate programmes to have in place processes to permit the recognition of prior learning, and consider the health and character of applicants.

24 It is recommended that AVAs consider both the admission requirements of HEPs and the relevant regulatory body (NMC or HCPC) when devising Access to HE Diplomas in Nursing or Health Professions.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/2023-pre-reg-standards/new-vi/standards-for-pre-registration-nursing-programmes.pdf](http://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/2023-pre-reg-standards/new-vi/standards-for-pre-registration-nursing-programmes.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/standards/standards-of-education-and-training/](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/standards/standards-of-education-and-training/)

## Section 2: Content of the descriptor

### Summary of essential requirements for this descriptor

Essential subject content	Minimum credit requirement at Level 3		Minimum credit requirement at Level 2
	Graded	Ungraded	Ungraded
Biology	15		
Numeracy in Health Context			3
Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions		3	

	Level 3	Level 2 or 3	Total
Total minimum credits for essential subject content	18	3	<b>21</b>
Credits remaining for recommended or other subject content	27	12	<b>39</b>

### Essential requirements

#### Biology

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Biology</b>	<b>Level</b>	3	<b>Minimum credit value</b>	15
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#### About this subject

25 A firm grounding in the key principles and processes of biology is essential for pursuing a career in nursing and health professions. While undergraduate courses will also include the study of biology, the inclusion of the minimum content defined here will ensure that Access to HE students are well prepared to gain maximum benefit from their degree studies.

#### Required content:

- cell structure
- cell function
- transport - for example, osmosis
- homeostasis
- human anatomy and physiology to include a minimum of THREE systems from the following: cardiovascular; respiratory; digestion and nutrition; muscular-skeletal; excretion; endocrine; nervous system; genetics

- additional content may include immunity/defence against disease, reproduction, thermoregulation.

## Numeracy in a Health Context

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Numeracy in a Health Context</b>	<b>Level</b>	2, ungraded <sup>9</sup>	<b>Minimum credit value</b>	3
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### About this subject

26 The NMC specifies the levels of numeracy and literacy required at entry for students of undergraduate programmes in nursing (see also paragraph 19). In this context, it is **both** context of the delivery and the subject content that are essential in preparing Access to HE students for assessments in their higher level studies.

27 The below content should be delivered in a way that clearly shows the link with the health context, for example: related to nutrition, fluid rates, use of 24-hour clock, use of centigrade, converting units of mass between imperial and metric systems. **For this reason, there is no exemption allowed for this content for students who have already achieved the GCSE in maths as the focus here is on numeracy in a health context, rather than purely mathematical skills.**

### Required learning outcomes

- Understand and use the four rules of number including in relation to units of measure.
- Understand and use decimals, fractions and percentages, including in relation to units of measure.
- Know how to use a calculator to solve problems and use appropriate tools to check their answers.

28 In order to support AVAs and providers, QAA has produced a specification for a unit that meets these essential elements. AVAs can choose to either use:

- QAA's Numeracy in a Health Context unit  
or
- devise their own units that incorporate the essential elements (the content and the context of delivery).

29 If choosing the latter, in order to describe the Diploma as subject descriptor compliant, the AVA should ensure its unit(s) cover all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria set out in QAA's Numeracy and Health Context Unit (See Annex 2).

30 Where AVAs incorporate the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in another unit, this may be as part of a graded or ungraded Level 3 unit.

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<sup>9</sup> When delivered through QAA's Numeracy in a Health Context Unit



## Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions</b>	<b>Level</b>	3, ungraded <sup>10</sup>	<b>Minimum credit value</b>	3
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### About this subject

31 Students wishing to progress to higher level study in nursing or health care professions need to be able to communicate effectively and work as part of a team; in doing so they need to reflect on their personal and professional practice. They also need to be able to identify and manage risks in preparation for their careers.

32 In order to support AVAs and providers, QAA has produced a specification for a unit that meets these essential elements. AVAs can choose to either use QAA's Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions unit, or devise their own units that incorporate these essential elements. If choosing the latter, in order to describe the Diploma as subject descriptor compliant, the AVA should ensure its unit(s) is Level 3, and cover all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria set out in QAA's Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions unit (See Annex 2).

### Required learning outcomes

- Understand the characteristics required to be a health professional, making reference to the relevant professional and regulatory body's (the NMC or HCPC) and the Professional Standards Authority standards for registration in relation to patient-centred care and concepts of professionalism as they apply, to conduct, performance and ethics of those on the relevant professional and regulatory body register.
- Understand effective communication and teamworking skills.
- Know how to manage risk and deal effectively with problems.
- Reflect on own personal and professional practice and develop a personal and professional development plan.

### Recommended additional subjects

33 The subjects which are required as essential within this subject descriptor make use of a minimum of 15 credits from graded units at Level 3 for biology content, and, if utilising QAA's units in Numeracy in a Health Context, and the Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions unit - 3 credits from ungraded units at Level 3, and 3 credits from ungraded units at Level 2.

34 While AVAs and providers may decide to use some of the remaining Level 3 credits (of the 60 required for a Diploma) for additional units in the essential subjects, they may also choose to include units in other subjects. The additional subjects recommended for use are psychology, health studies and sociology. **Where these subjects, or other subjects not considered in this subject descriptor, are included, they must be clearly relevant to the intended progression route.**

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<sup>10</sup> When delivered through QAA's Professional Behaviours Unit: Nursing and Health Professions

For example, in a Diploma that is intended for students to progress into Podiatry, it may be less relevant to include study in psychology.

Recommended additional subjects	Recommended maximum credit
Psychology	15
Context of health	6
Sociology	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>

## Psychology

Subject	Psychology	Level	3	Maximum recommended credit value	15
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### Recommended content:

- perspectives - grounding in theoretical approaches in psychology (behavioural, humanistic, neurobiological)
- abnormal psychology - for example, approaches to mental disorders, dementia
- cognitive psychology - for example, cognitive function in later adulthood, memory
- developmental psychology - across the human lifespan - for example, early cognitive and emotional development.

## Context of Health

Subject	Context of Health	Level	3	Maximum recommended credit value	6
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### Recommended content:

- the role of the health professional
- professional standards and regulation: the code of conduct; the role and purpose of professional bodies (for example, Nursing and Midwifery Council, Health and Care Professions Council, and the World Health Organisation); the role of representative bodies (for example, trade unions and other bodies that represent staff working in residential care, community health, and so on)
- definitions of professional practice related to public health (that is, health improvement and protection), evidence-based practice, interprofessional working
- the origins of public health; social concepts of health and public health (UK, four country perspective, and global); difference between personal and community health

- awareness of the role of government in creating the policy context within which public health services operate, develop and are funded
- significance of demography
- epidemiology; prevention and control of Infectious diseases.

## Sociology

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sociology</b>	<b>Level</b>	3	<b>Maximum recommended credit value</b>	6
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### Recommended content:

- sociological perspectives, and their significance for topics such as inequalities in health
- social definitions of health and illness, especially mental illness.

### Recommended assessment methods

35 To be well prepared to study successfully in higher education courses in nursing and health professions, where they are likely to encounter similar assessment methods, it is recommended that Access to HE students should experience the following methods as part of the assessment of their work for their Diploma:

- at least one 1,500-2,000 word essay prepared using relevant academic conventions
- a practical laboratory-based<sup>11</sup> report (using research, mathematical, statistical and writing skills)
- at least one electronically-submitted assignment
- an invigilated, time-constrained assessment or examination
- at least one instance of oral presentation to include visual aids and appropriate resources.

### Academic/study skills

36 All Access to HE Diplomas provide opportunities for students to develop and apply academic skills (generally referred to as 'study skills') relevant to their area of study. These may be accredited through ungraded units at Level 2 or 3. While no particular study skills have been identified as being of greater value than others for students wishing to progress to undergraduate courses in nursing and health professions, it is recommended that Diplomas that comply with this descriptor should include the development of study skills which would support student success in the forms of assessment recommended in paragraph 35 and professional behaviour requirements appropriate to the subject.

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<sup>11</sup> While it would be advantageous to students to have experience of working in a science laboratory, preparation of a practical laboratory-based report (using research mathematical statistical and writing skills) could be completed by other means, for example by using information provided to the students.

## **Annex 1: Health professions regulated by Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to which this subject descriptor applies<sup>12</sup>**

Biomedical Scientists

Chiropodists / Podiatrists

Dietitians

Occupational Therapists

Orthoptists

Paramedics

Physiotherapists

Prosthetists / Orthotists

Radiographers

Speech and Language Therapists

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<sup>12</sup> [www.hcpc-uk.org/](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/)

## Annex 2: QAA units in 'Numeracy in a Health Context' and 'Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions'

### Numeracy in a Health Context

<b>Unit title</b>	Numeracy in a Health Context
<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Credit value (3, 6 or 9)</b>	3
<b>Unit code:</b>	Please refer to AVA
<b>Graded/ungraded</b>	Ungraded
<b>Type: Academic subject content/other</b>	Essential

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria	
<b>The student should be able to:</b>		<b>The student can:</b>	
1	Understand and use the four rules of number including in relation to units of measure	1.1	apply the four rules of number (add, subtract, multiply and divide) manually to positive and negative whole numbers, and to fractions and decimals
		1.2	apply the four rules of number (add, subtract, multiply and divide) in the correct order to solve problems manually to positive and negative whole numbers, and to fractions and decimals
		1.3	apply the four rules of number appropriately to solve basic problems in a health context
		1.4	make accurate mental estimations in order to assess the validity of calculations
2	Understand and use decimals, fractions and percentages, including in relation to units of measure	2.1	identify equivalent fractions, and simplify any fraction by cancelling common factors.
		2.2	identify fractions corresponding to the decimal part of a number, or percentage, and vice versa (including recurring decimals)
		2.3	convert between fractions, decimals and percentages

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
	2.4 solve problems using fractions, decimals and percentages, to include converting units of measure and within a health context
	2.5 make accurate mental estimations in order to assess the validity of calculations
3 Know how to use a calculator to solve problems and use appropriate tools to check their answers	3.1 use a calculator to apply the four rules of number (add, subtract, multiply and divide) to positive and negative whole numbers, and to fractions and decimals
	3.2 use a calculator to convert between fractions, decimals and percentages
	3.3 solve problems using fractions, decimals and percentages, to include converting units of measure and within a health context, making appropriate use of a calculator

## Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions

<b>Unit title</b>	Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions
<b>Level</b>	3
<b>Credit value (3, 6 or 9)</b>	3
<b>Unit code:</b>	Please refer to AVA
<b>Graded/ungraded</b>	Ungraded
<b>Type: Academic subject content/other</b>	Other - Essential

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<b>The student should be able to:</b>	<b>The student can:</b>
<p>1 Understand the characteristics required to be a health professional making reference to the relevant professional and regulatory body's and the Professional Standards Authority standards for registration in relation to, patient-centred care and concepts of professionalism as they apply to conduct, performance and ethics of those on the relevant professional and regulatory body's register</p> <p>2 Understand effective communication and teamworking skills</p>	<p>1.1 Analyse the characteristics required to be a health professional with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) professional values, behaviours and accountability</li> <li>(b) patient-centred care</li> <li>(c) concepts of professionalism as they apply to conduct, performance and ethics of those on the relevant professional and regulatory body's register</li> </ul> <p>2.1 Distinguish between effective and ineffective skills with reference to a relevant model for each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) communication</li> <li>(b) teamwork</li> </ul> <p>2.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of own communication skills, with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) verbal</li> <li>(b) non-verbal skills</li> </ul> <p>2.3 Evaluate own team working skills</p>

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria	
The student should be able to:		The student can:	
3	Know how to manage risk and deal effectively with problems	3.1	Summarise the principles of risk management and problem-solving
		3.2	Explain how to solve a problem and manage any associated risk, using an actual or hypothetical problem relevant to a healthcare setting
4	Reflect on own personal and professional practice and develop a personal and professional development plan	4.1	Evaluate their own personal and professional practice skills against those expected of a health professional, using a chosen model of reflective practice
		4.2	Identify own continuing personal and professional development (CPD) needs based on evaluations in 4.1.
		4.3	Produce a plan to meet personal and professional development objectives based on an evaluation of different options
		4.4	Reflect on own performance against the plan, identifying learning needs for the future throughout the duration of the Access to HE Diploma

Assessment type
<p><b>Portfolio of reflective learning (All AC)</b></p> <p>Assessors may wish to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concise reflective account on each learning outcome (with agreed submission points)</li> <li>• submissions to be timed to fit across the delivery of the unit and across the student's course of study</li> <li>• the unit should be assessed across the student's programme of study.</li> </ul> <p>NB: Assessment must be proportionate and not place excessive burden on students or staff (both in volume and timing of submissions).</p>



## Indicative content

### 1. Understand the characteristics required to be a health professional

- 1.1 *Professional practice in healthcare:* Students can learn about the characteristics of a healthcare professional - for example: education/training requirements; licence to practice; performance standards and professional regulation (eg General Medical Council (GMC)/HCPC/NMC standards); public trust; and the concept of patient-centred care and NHS values (eg best possible care for patients through working together for patients, respect and dignity, commitment to quality of care, compassion, improving lives and everyone counts).

### 2. Understand effective communication and teamworking skills

- 2.1 *Communication:* Students can learn about effective and ineffective communication with reference to a model (eg transactional model); they should learn about the barriers to effective communication in a healthcare context (eg ambiguity/complexity of message, 'noise'); fields of experience of senders/receivers (eg differences between professionals and patients in use of language). Coverage should include different modes of communication - written, verbal and non-verbal.
- 2.2 *Teamworking:* Students need to learn about what constitutes a team and the benefits of effective teamworking in a healthcare context - for example: reduction in errors; improved patient care; greater job satisfaction; increased efficiency and better regulatory compliance; and shared skill sets. They can also learn about ways to improve teamworking - for example: improving communication skills; providing and accepting feedback; training; and role clarification.
- 2.3 *Evaluating communication and teamworking skills:* Students can learn about and utilise a model of reflective practice - for example, Gibbs to benchmark their communication and teamworking skills against role models in their area of practice and identify ways of improving their skills (see LO4).

### 3. Know how to manage risk and deal effectively with problems

- 3.1 *Risk management:* Students can learn about the principles and practice of risk management and different models. Students can also learn about the common features of problem-solving models - for example: identifying and analysing the problem and root cause(s); identifying solution options; selecting and implementing a solution; and evaluating results.
- 3.2 *Problem-solving:* Students could learn about rationalist and phenomenological approaches to problem-solving and when and how to use these models for different types of problem - for example, when a more flexible and dynamic approach to decision-making is required, such as when dealing with an acutely ill patient, a phenomenological approach may be better suited. Students can look at actual or hypothetical problems/common risks in healthcare, consider their likely probability and impact, and how to mitigate these risks. Examples such as nosocomial infections/healthcare associated infections could be used to learn about the common features of problem-solving models - for example: identifying and analysing the problem and root cause(s); identifying solution options; selecting and implementing a solution; and evaluating results.

### 4. Reflect on own personal and professional practice and develop a personal and professional development plan (PDP)

- 4.1 *Self-assessment and CPD:* Students need to cover the concept and importance of CPD; they can be introduced to tools for undertaking self-assessment/reflective

## Indicative content

practice (eg for knowledge, skills and competencies, employability) and undertake exercises in using the tools.

4.2 *PDP development*: Students need to understand the features and steps - for example: identifying area(s) for development; specifying meaningful, achievable yet stretching development goals and objectives; identifying the types of activity to achieve objectives (linked to own learning-style preferences); justifying selection of activities.

4.3 *Reflection on performance*: Students can learn how to document achievement against the plan and setting revised objectives, time frames and further development activities as appropriate.

## Indicative reading

1. [www.professions.org.au/what-is-a-professional/](http://www.professions.org.au/what-is-a-professional/)  
Explains what a profession is and provides links to related material
2. **Professional standards**  
  
[www.professionalstandards.org.uk/](http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/)  
Link to the Professional Standards Authority  
  
[www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/standards/standards-of-education-and-training/](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/standards/standards-of-education-and-training/)  
Link to Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards  
  
[www.gmc-uk.org/about/how-we-work/governance/council/code-of-conduct](http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/how-we-work/governance/council/code-of-conduct)  
[www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/good-medical-practice](http://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/good-medical-practice)  
Links to General Medical Council (GMC) Codes  
  
[www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/2023-pre-reg-standards/new-vi/standards-for-pre-registration-nursing-programmes.pdf](http://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/2023-pre-reg-standards/new-vi/standards-for-pre-registration-nursing-programmes.pdf)  
Link to Nursery and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards
3. [www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/team-working.html](http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/team-working.html)  
Link to teamworking models and skills
4. <https://tinyurl.com/vem5cv3>  
Link to a number of problem-solving models in healthcare
5. <https://oro.open.ac.uk/68945/1/Finlay-%282008%29-Reflecting-on-reflective-practice-PBPL-paper-52.pdf>  
An excellent scholarly paper on reflective practice
6. <http://skillsforlearning.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/preview/content/models/03.shtml>  
Shows the stages of Gibbs' model of reflective practice
7. [www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/1318/what-is-continuing-professional-development-cpd](http://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career/1318/what-is-continuing-professional-development-cpd)  
Explains what is continuing professional development (CPD)  
  
<https://career-advice.jobs.ac.uk/resources/interactive-cpd-toolkit/>  
Explains the meaning and components of CPD
8. [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/Care-Certificate/The-Care-Certificate-Self-Assessment-Tool.pdf](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/Care-Certificate/The-Care-Certificate-Self-Assessment-Tool.pdf)  
Provides an excellent framework for self-assessment which can be adapted for personal use
9. **CPD**  
[www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/continuing-professional-development](http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/continuing-professional-development)  
Link to the GMC's information about continuing professional development  
  
[www.hcpc-uk.org/cpd/](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/cpd/)  
Link to the HCPC's information about continuing professional development

### Indicative reading

[www.nmc.org.uk/revalidation/requirements/cpd/](http://www.nmc.org.uk/revalidation/requirements/cpd/)

Link to the NMC's information about continuing professional development

10. <https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-smart-goals>  
A useful guide with hints and tips for writing SMART objectives