Further details about a blended learning nursing degree have been announced today by Health Education England. As set out in the NHS Long Term Plan to help grow the nursing workforce this innovative approach to learning maximises the opportunities to provide a fully interactive and innovative programme through a digital approach.

The blended nursing programme is flexible, giving students easy access to learning while making it easy to balance family or carer roles with their education. This flexibility means that a higher rate of students will be
able to access the degree and to complete their studies. Through agile working, and using the latest technologies students will also be able to keep their learning environmentally friendly, with less travel.

This innovative, accessible nursing degree programme will start from January 2021 and is designed to create a significantly different offer in nursing education that will support the growth of this digitally expert and professional nurse workforce suited to the demands of care and service now and in the future. It will give nurses easy access to new and emerging technologies and will help them and their employing Trusts to meet the requirement for strong digital capabilities. It will also give NHS Trusts access to a future workforce that is flexible, adaptable, innovative and enthusiastic about change.

HEE has signed up seven universities to this new, Blended Learning Nursing Degree. The theoretical component is predominantly delivered online, widening participation by enabling people to learn on their own terms, which will give wider access to nursing degrees for people who may previously have had barriers to a nursing career.

The seven delivery partners for the new degree are Open University & Middlesex University, Open University & University of West of England, Coventry University, University of Huddersfield, University of Sunderland, University of Gloucestershire and Birmingham City University.

Patrick Mitchell, Director of Innovation and Transformation for Health Education England, said:

"This is a critical and ambitious programme of work, to support the introduction of blended learning degrees in healthcare. It shows the way to the future of educating and training our workforce, with the use of existing and emerging learning technologies.

It signifies how HEE is working in partnership with HEIs, to establish a radical shift in nurse education in England. We were impressed by the innovation that our chosen universities had put into their plans, especially around looking for new student markets, embracing the widening participation agenda and their use of innovative technologies. This approach has been accelerated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it will really help to enable wider access to nursing degrees for people who may previously have had barriers to a nursing career."

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

"Today's expansion of nurse training is hugely welcome and will help us deliver on our commitment for 50,000 more nurses, as well as offering innovative and accessible new ways to train. This world-leading new blended degree will equip the next generation of nurses with that expertise from the get go.

It will also open doors by providing more flexible learning options to attract a more diverse range of applicants. This new programme is open from January and I'd encourage anyone interested in a career in nursing to apply."

Applications can be made from the autumn this year.


Links