

International Nurse Recruitment

Best Practice Guide ver. 2

December 2021

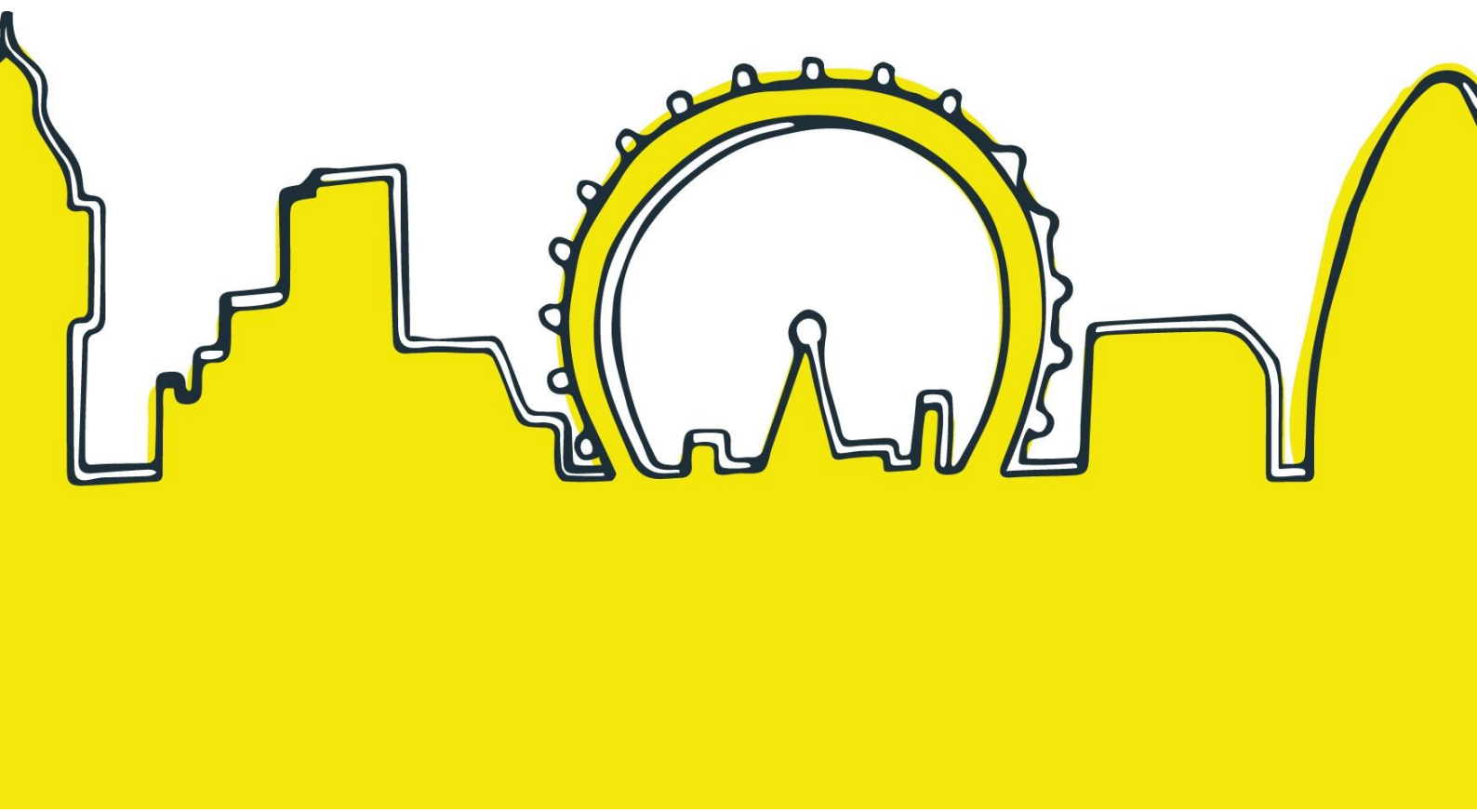


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Introduction

The best practice guide has been developed to support a pan-London approach to international nurse recruitment that meets with best practice principles and ensures that both the overseas nurse (also referred to in some organisations as the internationally educated nurse) and the employing organisation have a positive experience of the recruitment and employment process which should be efficient and effective in its nature. The guide will feature the international nurse recruitment electronic portal and will be available to both employing organisations and overseas nurses.

The guidance is designed to be used in conjunction with the NHS Employers' overseas recruitment toolkit. It reflects best practice principles in line with ethical recruitment current guidance and principles outlined by the bodies, such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Health Education England Global. The approach has been developed through an extensive stakeholder engagement exercise from NHS organisations across London, representing all fields of nursing. This version 2 of the best practice guide comprises of the original content from version 1, with additional useful information based on feedback and evaluation from the original version. There is also an addendum that provides specific guidance around COVID-19. Engagement has included task and finish group meetings, workshops, the CapitalNurse conference, and sharing best practice across organisations. We would encourage organisations to use the CapitalNurse branding if using any aspect of this best practice approach.

For those nurses trained within the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA):

The EU sets minimum training standards that nurses responsible for general care (adult nursing in the UK) and midwives must meet to be eligible to register and practice in their home member state and across the EU. These standards are set out in Directive 2005/36/EC on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications. If the nurse trained in an EU or EEA member state, they will need to apply for recognition of their qualification and meet additional requirements before they can be registered. They will not need to undertake a Test of Competence if their nursing qualification is recognised. There are three different routes to recognition of qualification: Automatic, Acquired Rights and Individual Assessment. Guidance on recognition and assessment can be found here: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/register-nurse-midwife/trained-in-the-eu-or-eea/>

Background

London, England's capital city, is one of the most interesting and vibrant cities in the world. There are a huge range of opportunities available for people who come from abroad to work and live in London. The hospitals and healthcare settings located across the capital are diverse in size and nature, providing an opportunity for overseas nurses to choose between living and working in the heart of London, on the outskirts in a smaller town, or countryside location. There are many opportunities to care for people of all ages across all care settings and healthcare specialties.

Pastoral Support

The pastoral support element that is provided to the overseas nurse throughout the recruitment journey and beyond is an essential one. Whilst organisations may differ in the specific details of the pastoral support they can provide, as a CapitalNurse best practice approach, each organisation should offer as a minimum some form of:

- Accommodation support
- Climatisation support
- Salary advance



International Nursing Recruitment Pastoral Offer Self-Assessment

When considering recruiting overseas nurses, it is imperative to make sure the Trust's pastoral offer is exceptional and allows new recruits to feel welcomed and at home in both their new country and organisation. NHS England and Improvement have developed an easy to use pastoral self-assessment tool which will allow Trusts to assess where their current pastoral offer currently sits against the gold standard. It covers pastoral care for pre-arrival, arrival, and induction and NMC registration. A copy of this self-assessment tool can be found in the NHS International Recruitment Toolkit.

Pre-Arrival

Preparatory information material to support the overseas nurse in readiness for their arrival to the UK will help reduce some of the anxiety associated with relocating and working in a new country. Organisations may differ in how to prepare their overseas nurse the following considerations were suggested and agreed by the CapitalNurse Overseas nurse Focus Group:

- **A welcome letter** to be sent prior to the arrival of the overseas nurse setting the tone and making them feel welcomed and valued by the organisation. It doesn't need to be overly formal, but you should consider referencing why you are looking forward to welcoming them to your organisation - what great benefits they will be getting by working as an employee of your organisation.
- **A welcome pack** included with your welcome letter enhances the first impressions and deepens the overseas nurse's understanding of the organisation. Sending it before arrival to the UK has significant benefits for orientation, as it encourages the overseas nurse to research the organisation and the local area beforehand, which in turn will reduce anxieties on arrival. A full checklist of what to include in your welcome packs can be found in appendix 1



Fig 1. Key considerations

- **The Professional Development Guidebook** has been developed as part of the CapitalNurse best practice guidance to enable the overseas nurse to capture their development needs and career aspirations. It is recommended that this is sent by the agency prior to their arrival to the UK, as early as possible once the overseas nurse has signed their conditional offer. The guidebook outlines information on NMC revalidation and encourages reflective learning as the driving vehicle to build upon continuous professional development (CPD) and career conversations during and post the NMC registration stage to support the appraisal process.
- An **early engagement** virtual meeting or Q&A webinar between the trust and overseas nurse is recommended following the issuance of certificate of sponsorship. This allows the trust



representatives to get to know their future employee and talk about the organisation in more detail. Furthermore, it provides the overseas nurse an opportunity to ask their questions which will help reduce anxieties.

Additional considerations:

- Keeping a sense check on how things are going with them by checking in every couple of days will help avoid any challenges along the way
- Without startling them, be sure to advise them on pick pocketers
- Pre-ordering of staff uniform/badges
- Pre-booking of essential appointments and attending with them will help with the onboarding process and give you additional time for induction and or OSCE preparation.

Appointments to consider and to include in the first three days' itinerary are:

1. Occupational health appointments
2. Outstanding HR checks (if applicable)
3. Collection of Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)
4. Bank account and ESR/payroll arrangements

Good practice examples

Trust 1: Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust have developed a useful welcome pack that provides an overview of the organisation including a full itinerary of the first three days of arrival in UK. This is sent to the overseas nurse prior to their arrival in the UK

Trust 2: Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust have developed the 'King's OSCE Pre-Course Preparation and Welcome Pack' that contains useful information to help the overseas nurse prepare for their OSCE and to settle in the UK. It is expected that this is sent to the overseas nurse and that they read this prior to their arrival in the UK.

Trust 3: Whittington Health NHS Trust arrange welcome meetings with overseas nurses after their certificate of sponsorship has been issued. In these meetings, they talk about the trust and the area where the nurse will be working. They can also answer any specific questions that the overseas nurses may have.

Trust 4: Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust facilitate a virtual deployment briefing a week prior to the overseas nurses' arrival. The meeting involves the itinerary once the nurses reach the UK, and discussions about the current weather, clothing, and nurses' expectations. This time is also taken for a Q&A session. The trust has sent out newsletters to the overseas nurses, outlining current events and programmes the trust is running. This allows them to feel part of the organisation and learn more about the trust.

Arrival

Airport pick up

Meeting your overseas nurse at the airport on their arrival and transporting them to their accommodation is a vital part of the onboarding experience. This helps settle the overseas nurse in orientating their new space and surroundings. If possible, it is good practice to include previously recruited overseas nurses to welcome them at the airport.



Accommodation

Ensure the overseas nurse meets with their accommodation team to obtain the keys and the contract of tenancy is signed. It is good practice to provide free accommodation for four weeks.

Ensure that they understand the repayment process after their four-week free accommodation (if applicable) or signpost them to websites of keyworkers' accommodation or other rental properties. It is recommended that this information is included within their welcome packs prior to arrival to allow the overseas nurse to plan. Nonetheless it would be advisable to check they understand the process again.

Assistance with bank/post office

On route to the accommodation, consider visiting the post office to pick up the Biometric Residence Permits and factoring in their bank appointments on the day of their arrival (strongly advised if arriving on a Friday).

Financial Support

It is essential to provide some form of financial support to the overseas nurse on arrival. A salary advance of approximately £500 in cash should be considered, as this will ensure that the overseas nurse has access to cash should there be any delays in the bank account being set up. It is down to individual organisations to determine the reclaim period, however we recommend this should be over a period of 12 months and commence after NMC registration.

Transportation

Consider purchasing a pre-topped up Oyster card for your overseas nurse. If your organisation reclaims for this, ensure this is explained. If your organisation does not provide this element of pastoral care, we recommend as a minimum, to support the overseas nurse in purchasing Oyster cards with their cash advance.

Arrival Pack

Feedback has suggested that some form of arrival pack is helpful and could include linen, bedding, pillows, toilet paper, crockery, milk, eggs, rice, noodles, bread, butter, coffee, tea.

Clinical Practice

Please see Managers Guide on Pastoral Support as a recommended approach to support the overseas nurse.

Greeting lunch/welcome dinner

Depending on how you have structured the itinerary for the overseas nurse, you may wish factoring in a welcoming event and invite previously recruited IEN, ward managers and other clinical staff as part of their orientation. Welcoming them in your newsletter is also another method of helping them feel included in your organisation.

Navigating around the local community

Helping your overseas nurses with navigating around your hospital site(s) and local community is a good way of familiarising them with their surroundings. This could include taking them to the local



supermarket, helping them use the tube/bus services, showing them the local church/spiritual place. You may wish to consider adopting the buddy system approach to support with the navigation.

Furthermore, it is recommended that overseas nurses are provided with information on dentistry and other health services in the community. In addition to signposting them to the nearest GP surgeries and dental practices in the local area, it is useful to make them aware of how these practices run and which services and treatments are free or paid.

Buddying and Peer Support

Peer support from previously recruited overseas nurses is an excellent approach to supporting existing cohorts for OSCE preparation, orientation and integration. This approach will have significant benefits in reducing anxieties and allaying fears.

Health and wellbeing hubs

The life changing event of moving from another country can cause culture shock and homesickness. Providing health and wellbeing support and signposting your overseas nurses to wellbeing hubs both in and out of the Trust can make it a more positive experience. Wellbeing hubs can offer a clinical assessment and access to support where needed, such as talking therapy or counselling. Furthermore, the NHS have introduced a confidential staff support line for people potentially facing significant stress, and it is free to access seven days a week. This ensures that the overseas nurses can check in on their physical and psychological health and wellbeing, which will enable feelings of fulfilment at work.

Good practice examples

Trust 1: Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust offer a 3-day arrival package from Wednesday to Friday to help the overseas nurse settle in and to assist with administrative needs such as their bank accounts, residential permits and support with integrating around London i.e. showing them how to purchase and use an Oyster card. In addition, Imperial provide a welcome lunch and introduce the clinical leads and previous cohort to support integration into the workplace.

Trust 2: Whittington Health purchase a hamper pack. For individual rooms the hamper includes bread, butter, tea, coffee, eggs, toilet paper, soap, milk, biscuits - and for the larger grocery pack the overseas nurse share: onions, ginger, garlic, chillies, noodles, rice, tinned tomatoes, curry powder. Crockery, bed linen, sheets, duvets, and pillows are not provided in the hampers as these are included with the accommodation.

Trust 3: Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust have introduced a 'buddy system' where each overseas nurse is linked to a previously recruited overseas nurse who helps them with practical living trips and in adjusting into the neighborhood. The newly recruited overseas nurses are introduced to a local church that conducts services in their own languages within the first week of their arrival in London

Trust 4: University College of London Hospital (UCLH) have a successful social media networking support from previously recruited overseas cohorts in place for offering overseas nurses. What's app and Facebook are used by the cohorts and lead nurse to keep connected with the overseas nurses, even prior to their arrival to the UK and to provide ongoing OSCE.

Trust 5: West London NHS Trust have a successful post OSCE 12-week pastoral integration program to support their overseas mental health nurses' transition into the role as registered nurses.



The program can be delivered in acute inpatients, community mental health services and older adults mental health services and consist of clinical and theoretical learning that's mapped with the NMC standards and proficiencies. The program has been well received across London and other English regions.

Preparation for NMC Registration

Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) introduced a Test of Competence (ToC) for internationally registered nurses and midwives in October 2014. Nurses and midwives trained outside of the European Union (EU) / European Economic Area (EEA) are tested for their clinical competence and knowledge through a two-part process to enable them gain registration in the United Kingdom (UK), including achieving language capability requirements – OET/IELTS.

The ToC assesses candidates against the current UK pre-registration standards and is specific to a field of practice, including Adult Nursing (RN1), Mental Health Nursing (RN3), Learning Disability Nursing (RN5), Children's Nursing (RN8) and Midwifery Nursing (RM). In 2020 the NMC will be launching a new ToC in line with the Future Nurse Standards. The company that is designing the new Test will produce a range of materials to help candidates prepare. In addition, the Future midwife: Standards of proficiency for midwives will be launched in early 2020 and will become fully implemented by September 2021.

The two parts of the ToC process include:

- Part one - Computer-Based Test (CBT), a numeracy and multiple-choice examination which is accessible around the world for applicants to access from their home countries.
- Part two – Objective Structured Clinical Examination, commonly known as the OSCE (which is always held in the UK at one of the approved test centers).

Candidates must complete the entire UK registration application process within two years of passing part one which is their CBT. If a candidate is unable to do this, they will need to re-sit the CBT and begin a new application. Overseas nurses have up to 12 weeks from employment start date noted on their certificate of sponsorship with the employing organisation to sit the OSCE exam. They can be legally employed as a pre-registration candidate during this preparation time.

OSCE and Education Support

What is the OSCE?

The OSCE is based on UK pre-registration standards. The Nursing and Midwifery Council brought some amendments to the OSCE and changes were implemented in August 2021. Its new structure comprises ten separate stations instead of six. Four stations continue to be linked together around a scenario and relate to four stages of the nursing and midwifery care process:

- **Assessment-** holistic patient-centered
- **Planning**
- **Implementation**
- **Evaluation**



Four of the six remaining stations will take the form of two pairs of two linked stations, which test practical clinical skills. The remaining two stations are for assessing the nurse's professional values and critical appraisal of research and evidence and associated decision-making. These two stations are both written stations.

Pre-Arrival to the UK

Preparatory information materials on personal development, educational pathways and OSCE training will support the overseas nurse with their personal preparations for arrival to the UK and during their preparation for the NMC registration period. Information provided to the individual needs to be balanced and it is important not to overload the new overseas nurse with too much information at this stage. It is recommended that the information that is provided to the overseas nurse is only an overview of the NMC OSCE requirements and the educational support they should expect re OSCE preparation in the first few months after they arrive in the UK. This information can include NMC website details regarding exam blueprints and the relevant test center's website and Health Education England information and resources.

Good practice examples

Trust 1: The Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust have developed a short two-page leaflet, 'International Nursing OSCE Training Programme' that provides an overview of their OSCE training programme with some other general information, available via their website: <https://www.rbht.nhs.uk/sites/nhs/files/Nurse%20recruitment/International%20OSCE%20Recruitment%20Leaflet.pdf>

Trust 2: Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust have developed the 'King's OSCE Pre-Course Preparation and Welcome Pack' that contains useful information to help the overseas nurse prepare for their OSCE and to settle in the UK. This pack contains a team photo and is sent to the overseas nurse prior to their departure, giving them the opportunity to read about what to expect once they arrive.

Trust 3: Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust. The overseas nurses (from the Philippines) undertake a Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) prior to arrival in the UK and this is provided by the recruitment agency. They are given general information about life in the UK and about the Trust. As part of this the agency provides the nurses with an OSCE boot-camp that gives them an overview of the OSCE.

OSCE Preparation

To ensure candidates have adequate time to prepare for the OSCE, they are given up to 12 weeks to complete the examination. In the run-up to the examination, candidates must be given support and the opportunity to practice and prepare for the OSCE. The experience a candidate has in their first few weeks is vital to their success in the OSCE.

The NMC's registration process no longer requires applicants to complete a period of supervised practice, therefore the importance of establishing a quality and well-structured induction and training programme is critical.

In preparation for the OSCE, it is important that candidates have reviewed and are familiar with the NMC nursing blueprints. These will now be based on the Future Nurse Standards and are the NMC's standards for competence which all student nurses/midwives must acquire before they can successfully register as a nurse/midwife in the UK. The examination blueprints set out the scope and



content of the OSCE in terms of the topics, skills, and procedures that the newly registered nurse/midwife will need to know and be able to demonstrate. Find out more and access a copy of the blueprints on the [NMC website](#). There are specific competencies outlined for the different fields of nursing with online resources available within the competency documents.

Corporate and Clinical Induction Programme

A thorough theoretical and practical induction to the organisation and to the candidate's clinical area, where this is relevant, is essential to ensure there is a positive experience from the outset. This will make the overseas nurses feel part of the Trust and provide the opportunity to engage with other new starters and new nurses. The timing and structure to corporate and clinical induction will vary between organisations but the principle is that the overseas nurse will feel well informed and supported to integrate into the organisation during an agreed programme of induction and orientation. The corporate element will need to feature at the most appropriate time taking into consideration the structure of the orientation and OSCE training programmes.

If there is a period of supervised practice in a clinical area, the overseas nurse should be supported by a supervisor, supplemented with regular release for OSCE preparation sessions with a named Clinical Facilitator/Trainer.

Good practice examples

Trust 1: Whittington Health NHS Trust offers a comprehensive induction to the organisation for the overseas nurses. This takes place over a three-week period and includes a detailed corporate induction during the second week. Following that, the Trust offers a period of 2 to 3 weeks dedicated OSCE training, practice and assessment leading to the OSCE itself. An overview of this is outlined in the 'Whittington Health Handbook for Nurses and Midwives' as part of the information on Training for Overseas Nurses. <https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/document.ashx?id=10820>

Trust 2: London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust provide a two-week induction which is outlined in their 'International Educated Nurses (IENs) Programme Details and Guidelines'. Their IEN programme runs over 8 weeks in total.

Pre-employment - the overseas nurse is sent a Pre-Employment Directed Learning document that supports their knowledge and training when they attend face-to-face mandatory training scheduled in the IEN Programme. All overseas nurses are registered for NHS email accounts and must complete some on-line mandatory training before they arrive in the UK.

Weeks 1 – 2: On arrival the overseas nurses are welcomed by senior nursing and clinical staff. A meet-and-greet evening reception is organised and is attended by candidates from prior programmes. Banking, accommodation and Occupational Health appointments take place over the two-week period including Corporate and Local Induction.

Week 3 – 8: Formal programme preparation for OSCE assessment and adaptation to the NHS. An IEN Competency Framework must be completed within the 8-week timeframe.
Nurses. <https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/document.ashx?id=10820>

Key Principles for preparing candidates for the OSCE

The following principles were agreed by the Capital Nurse OSCE Best Practice Task and Finish Group (October 2019) which included representation from provider organisations across London.



Practical Elements of the Preparation/Training Programme

- The programme should combine theory and practice within the classroom environment.
- The environment for practical teaching of clinical skills should ideally be in a clinical simulation type setting/bespoke clinical facility; where this is not available the layout of the training area should reflect the clinical environment as much as possible with the appropriate clinical equipment.
- Informal assessment should be offered throughout the OSCE training programme with a formal mock OSCE to be undertaken at least 1-3 weeks before the OSCE date to help identify if the overseas nurse is ready for their examination proper.
- The programme should fully prepare the candidates to undertake the NMC OSCE and prepare them for employment as a band 5 Registered Nurse in a range of clinical areas.
- Teaching should be provided by senior nursing staff and dedicated education team staff supported by registered nurses who have previously passed their OSCE exam. It is recommended that there is a ratio of no greater than one trainer to 10-15 overseas nurses for practical skills training to ensure that teaching and support is effective for both the facilitator and the overseas nurses. Best practice guidance for other practical skills training recommends no more than 8-12 people per practical skills training session. Theoretical training sessions can be classroom style and can allow for more participants.
- Study days should be offered as protected learning time for staff participating in the OSCE process and where they are working clinically during this training period time should be incorporated into their shift allocation.
- Mock exams should include four nursing process stations covering assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. All clinical skills that could potentially be assessed should be covered at two clinical stations. Skills are assessed on a field of nursing practice, for example adult nursing.
- Ensure practice areas and mock exams are organised in the same way as the actual OSCE, with simulated people in a hospital/community setting, so that this becomes familiar. In mock exams, it is good practice for overseas nurses to wear their uniforms (where applicable to the clinical area) and have assessors who have not been teaching them during their OSCE training.
- Ensure that the overseas nurse has plenty of time to practice their skills prior to taking the OSCE.
- Individual feedback should be provided to participants to ensure there is ongoing learning and to support better preparation for the actual examination.

Additional considerations:

- There should be consideration of the numbers of overseas nurses being recruited to the organisation and numbers arriving at any one time – the numbers of participants on any training programme needs to be in line with educational facilities and numbers of trainers available to ensure a positive experience and a successful outcome.
- Ensure the programme helps empower the overseas nurse with practice and experience, and the ability to verbalise and demonstrate their knowledge.
- Ensure the programme helps the overseas nurse build up their resilience and confidence to speak up in front of others, as this can be something which they may not be comfortable with.
- The overseas nurse needs support in effective patient communication to ensure this is well demonstrated in the OSCE.
- Consider creating a dedicated support group for the training period.
- Online OSCE learning can act as an additional support to face-to-face learning – this is provided by the test centers via their learning platforms. It is not recommended that other online training materials/videos are accessed as the quality cannot be assured.



- It is essential to understand that the overseas nurse is already qualified in their home country and previous experience and education must be recognised.
- Trainers should have an awareness that there are varied approaches to learning and to delivering clinical practice in different countries and it is essential to be mindful of this during the training programme.
- Pastoral support in the period leading up to, and after the OSCE examination day is essential to ensure the overseas nurse feels valued and that there is good oversight of their health and well-being during this time.
- The overseas nurse should be supported to develop coping strategies about managing any examination anxieties.

Although there is always time pressure linked to a candidate sitting the OSCE and to move staff through this process quickly, low pass rates suggest speed initially may cause more difficulties in the longer term. If the overseas nurse is not ready for their test, a discussion should take place on whether there should be a change to the planned examination date.

Training programme options

A typical six-eight-week programme:

Week 1	Welcome to the UK – help with accommodation, settling in, opening a bank account etc. +/- corporate induction. Please also refer to Pastoral Care guidance.
Week 2	Corporate/local and professional/nurse induction.
Weeks 3 – 4	OSCE training (APIE/clinical skills) +/- clinical placement experience
Week 5	OSCE mock examination including feedback
Week 6 – 8	Bespoke OSCE practice and supervision, and attendance at OSCE centre Registration with the NMC if successful.

Good practice examples

Trust 1: Imperial College – example of a shorter programme

Imperial College follows a systematic 3-week programme to help international recruits prepare for their OSCE:

Week 0	3-day arrival package from Wednesday to Friday to help the nurses settle in and to assist with administrative needs (bank accounts, biometric residential permits) and to give them a chance to get to know each other. This week also includes a welcome lunch with clinical leads to introduce them to some of the staff they will be working with.
Week 1	Focuses primarily on assessment planning, implementation, and evaluation. The actual content and methods of training might vary a bit by cohort based on their knowledge and experience and their comfort levels with the examination process. While the nurses receive peer feedback throughout



	the week, they are given critical feedback after a mock test at the end of the week.
Week 2	This is more skills focused. The specific skills focused on change based on the

Trust 2: Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust – example of a longer programme

Week 0 Nurses arrive as a cohort on Friday morning and are helped to settle in and receive a comprehensive welcome pack, a do's and don'ts booklet, introduction to their accommodation and to a local church that conducts service in their language. Where possible they are provided with accommodation at the Woolwich site / with older overseas nurses.

Week 1 From Monday to Wednesday after arrival, the nurses attend a corporate induction along with other Band 5 nurses that are new to the Trust. A shared induction between both local and overseas nurses helps them feel part of the Trust from the very beginning.

Week 1 – 2 They have a three-day induction with their ward.
Over the next 8 weeks, they continue to work on the wards gaining valuable real-life experience but have ten 6.5-hour sessions with the international recruitment lead to help them prepare for their OSCE.

Whilst on the wards the nurses are responsible for most patient interventions but are clearly identified by a green tabard as they are unable to administer medicines until registered. They have opportunity to talk to the previous cohort that has just taken their OSCEs.

Caution should be exercised when reviewing outcomes data; there may be other reasons why an individual has not been successful at first or subsequent attempts at the OSCE that are not related to the quality or length of the teaching programme.

Trust 3: Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, an 8-week programme

Kings offers a 5-day formal training programme that runs over a four-week period commencing in the first week of arrival, with a mock OSCE exam at week 6.

In training they receive an OSCE preparation manual which gives clear guidance and examples of documentation. In addition, the overseas nurse is invited to attend regular practice sessions; they are offered a 'buddy' (previous OSCE passer) and are supported by their local Practice Development Nurses (PDN) to prepare. They can book one week's annual leave prior to the NMC OSCE which is taken in week 8. The Trust's OSCE pass rate has been 100% for the last 2 ½ years.

Trust 4: Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust – example of a shorter programme

Week 1 – 2 **First 2 weeks** of intensive training including some clinical shifts in adult wards, classroom teaching, supervised practice sessions and MOCK exam



Weeks 3 Supervised practice
Week 4 OSCE at Ulster University

The OSCE programme includes Basic Life Support and Manual Handling training. An OSCE manual guides candidates on topics they need to learn, and a procedure workbook is provided which they complete prior to attending classes. 1:1 sessions are provided for those candidates that need further help. The pass rate from 2017-2019 is outlined below:

1st Attempt	2nd Attempt	3rd Attempt	Total
No. = 248 / 83%	No. = 46 / 15%	No. = 6 / 2%	No. = 300 / 100%
DNA = 1 (Candidate did not attempt to have the exam)			

Trust 5: Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust – Mental Health Nursing OSCE Preparation Programme

This 10-day programme is a preparation programme for mental health nurses trained overseas who seek to register with the NMC as mental health nurses in the UK and is split between two weeks.

Week 1 Delivered remotely
 Covers essential theory and underpinning knowledge

Week 2 Face to face/practical
 Covers the overview of testing process at OSCE centres, essential theory and skills practice, and mock assessments and feedback

The programme runs during the first 2 weeks of each month at a central London location.

Trust 6: Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust – Children’s Nursing OSCE Preparation Programme

GOSH provide training to overseas nurses who are eligible to register with the NMC as a Children’s Nurse. This 10-day programme is delivered face to face and provides overseas nurses with an opportunity to learn through classroom teaching, hands on role play for clinical stations and mock examinations.

Before the programme starts, nurses will gain access to the GOSH Digital Education Network which is their virtual learning platform. Here, overseas nurses can find key resources and materials to help them prepare for the course. Throughout and beyond the programme, they can access a wealth of resources and materials to help them with their learning and successfully complete their NMC OSCE.

Supernumerary period

Each organisation will differ in the period of their OSCE training programme and therefore how long the overseas nurse may be in a supernumerary capacity as part of their induction to the organisation and their clinical area, and as part of the OSCE preparation. The supernumerary period should be agreed based on the support that the overseas nurse will need to properly prepare them for delivering care safely and competently in an agreed staffing capacity so that they feel well-supported and that patient care will not be adversely affected.



Train the Trainers

The quality of trainer for the practice sessions is important to ensure there is a positive experience for the overseas nurse and that the training is as efficient and effective as it can be, resulting in a high pass rate for the organisation and success for the individual. It is recommended that organisations ensure that their trainers have a recognised facilitator/assessment qualification and/or relevant teaching experience, and that they send their OSCE facilitator/trainer to a recognised train-the-trainer course or that they access another healthcare organisation for support and information.

There should be one trained OSCE facilitator within the organisation who will then be able to train other facilitators and clinical managers. Train the trainer courses are now provided by all of the test centers - information is available on these courses via the university websites (see 'Useful Information and Resources' section). All Trusts now have access to the test centers' on-line learning platforms so that OSCE trainers can access information directly to ensure they keep up to date with any OSCE programme changes.

Good practice examples

Trust 1: Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust: The lead nurse for international nurse recruitment has attended the train the trainer course. This staff member can then offer guidance, training and support to others which includes the relevant clinical managers as well as the Trust's practice educators.

Trust 2: Croydon Health Services NHS Trust: The Lead Nurse for Professional Development and Education and the Practice Development Nurse for overseas nurses have both attended the train the trainer course. This enables them to support both the cohorts of overseas nurses and the wider practice education team across the Trust. It also means that they are kept up to date re any changes in process.

Costs

There are different fees for different stages of the application process:

Application for nursing/midwifery: £140
Part 1 test of competence (CBT): £83
Part 2 test of competence (OSCE): £794
Admission onto NMC register: £153

Total £1,177

This does not include typical costs of the local Trust training programme and preparation for the OSCE, which varies widely dependent on educational resource in the form of people and facilities available within each organisation, and length of the training period. Costs are also incurred in relation to travel and subsistence, again this will vary in relation to which OSCE centre is accessed by the organisation. There may be financial benefits of Trusts collaborating about OSCE training and delivery especially where a small organisation may not have adequate educational resource to deliver a training programme within a shorter timeframe.

Costs may include where candidates need to re-sit part or all the OSCE (partial re-sit: £397 and full re-sit, failing five or more stations: £794). Re-sits will also incur costs for the organisation regarding further preparation for the individual to support improvement action based on feedback provided.



Post NMC Registration

It is essential that pastoral support continues post NMC registration to encourage social integration into the workplace with consolidation of skills as an NMC registered nurse. The professional development guide for overseas nurses outlines the baseline to support the overseas nurse beyond NMC registration with the following:

- Skills development
- Goal setting
- Personal Development planning
- Annual Appraisal
- Preceptorship
- Revalidation

Like any health and social care organisation, there are challenges such as supporting another member of staff who may have different cultural values and experiences to the preceptor.

Utilising your organisation's educational leads/practice development nurses to touch base with the preceptor and offer advice and/or coaching can play an integral part of pastoral care, both for your overseas nurse and the preceptor.

Overseas nurses gaining NMC registration with an ambition to give excellent patient care with compassion and empathy could be affected in poor practice environments. A lack of staff, no role models, little support and poor preceptorship could contribute to this; it is therefore essential to choose an experienced preceptor with enough leadership qualities to be able to act as a role model and provide a rich and bespoke preceptorship.

Clinical supervision during and beyond preceptorship is an essential pastoral element of support for all nurses and other professionals, as it offers a safe environment to discuss difficult emotional and social issues arising from patient care. For the overseas nurse, who is new to the register and working in an unfamiliar clinical territory, it also offers a safe space to reflect on different cultural experiences in practice. A preceptor will need to have good clinical supervision skills to provide strong motivation, boost morale, confidence and reduce any distress that may arise, whilst giving timely, accurate feedback on practice. This will help the new overseas nurse make better decisions, solve problems that are holding them back, learn new skills, and otherwise progress their careers. You may consider using a coaching approach to enable some of the career and professional development conversations to take place. Using a coaching model such as the GROW (see below) model is a simple yet powerful framework for structuring your supervision and sessions.



Fig 2. GROW coaching model example

The GROW Model

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Good practice examples

Trust 1: Royal Free NHS Foundation Trust have introduced a 'guardian support system' beyond preceptorship. The overseas nurses are allocated a nurse within the organisation, but outside of their clinical area to provide ongoing support and career coaching. The guardian supporting the overseas nurse needs to have 10+ years' experience practicing as a registered nurse and could be at any banding level. The international recruitment team holds a live database of the 'guardians' within the organisation. Once allocated, the guardian sends a letter to the overseas nurse to introduce themselves.

Trust 2: University College of London Hospital (UCLH) have introduced the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (SSSA) training into their preceptorship programme that the overseas nurse attends. The vision is that they will have developed skills through completion of a Preceptorship Open Learning Tool, attending a study day and having dedicated support in Clinical Practice from the Practice Education Team. They will to be able to be practice assessors for student nurses on successful completion of the 12 months Preceptorship programme.

Preceptorship

There should be a period of preceptorship for the newly registered overseas nurse with an opportunity for a more bespoke version of preceptorship taking into consideration that some of the nurses may have considerable clinical experience. The NMC strongly recommends that all new registrants have a period of preceptorship when commencing employment including anyone who has entered a new part of the register and those newly admitted to the register from other European economic area states and other nation states.

Where an overseas nurse is newly qualified and has no previous clinical experience then the nurse must be offered a place on the Trust's usual preceptorship programme alongside other newly qualified nursing staff. This should also apply to those overseas nurses that have not practiced clinically within the previous 12 months.

Preceptorship arrangements should be agreed as part of their personal development plan and career planning conversation at the recruitment stage and documented in their personal development guide.

A period of preceptorship will help the newly registered overseas nurse develop the confidence to practice competently and ensure they are familiar with and can meet their obligations under the NMC Code. During this period the nurse should be supported by an experienced practitioner so that they can develop their confidence as an independent professional, and to refine their skills, values and behaviors. This is especially important for the overseas and newly qualified nurse to ensure they are able to provide effective patient-centered care confidently.

Good practice examples

Trust 1: Example of Trust offering preceptorship to all overseas nurses

Croydon Health Services NHS Trust offers places on its Preceptorship Programme to all overseas nurses. The programme has been developed using the CapitalNurse Preceptorship Framework and includes a range of pathways for those working in specialist areas. Overseas nurses have been allocated to this programme to assist with integration into the Trust's workforce. By integrating the overseas nurses in this way, they will be able to explore all topics with the wider workforce and shared learning can take place, as newly qualified UK nurses can also learn from experienced overseas colleagues.



Trust 2: Example of Trust offering bespoke preceptorship

Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust include topics from their Preceptorship programme within their 5-Day IEN programme. This ensures staff are prepared to work clinically as well as being prepared for their OSCE. Once registered all IENs complete their drug assessment and IV study day. Any newly qualified nurse would automatically be enrolled onto the preceptorship programme.

Trust 3: Example of Trust offering bespoke preceptorship

Whittington Health NHS Trust preceptorship programme all overseas nurses are placed onto the Trust's preceptorship programme once they have achieved their registration and completed their supernumerary period for their new permanent band 5 posts. The programme follows the overall CapitalNurse Framework with three full study days and additional relevant clinical skills training days. IENs will work through the preceptee development workbook designed to identify the individual preceptee's learning needs. They have regular, frequent contact with the preceptorship lead - face to face, telephone or via their "What's App" group. This approach safeguards that all the overseas nurses are working successfully through the programme and achieving their identified learning needs and goals and safely integrated into their new teams.

Personal Development and Career Planning (includes appraisal and revalidation)

Personal development and career planning support the concept that learning is a lifelong activity and that setting goals can help individuals to achieve career and personal aspirations. Personal development planning helps strengthen the capacity of learners to reflect upon their own learning and achievement and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development; it also motivates them to improve their skills which ultimately supports improvements in the quality of patient care.

Employers should be committed to offering learning and development opportunities for their staff providing access to training to extend individual's range of skills and knowledge to support their staff in taking on new responsibilities and to support career progression. As part of this process staff should be offered an annual personal development review and a personal development plan should be agreed.

For overseas nurses, as with all nurses, midwives and nursing associates registered with the NMC, personal development includes the requirement to revalidate every three years to be able to maintain their registration with the NMC. Revalidation is straightforward and helps demonstrate that the nurse is practicing safely and effectively, allowing them to reflect on the role of the Code (2018) in their practice and to demonstrate that they are 'living' the standards set out within it.

The professional development guide that has been developed as part of this best practice guidance provides an outline on next steps in relation to post registration considerations and revalidation, and what the overseas nurse should expect as part of their post UK registration personal and career development. The professional development guide includes the overseas nurse's SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. It is recommended for the employers to be aware of the overseas nurse's SWOT analysis to gain insight into the nurse's perception of their learning needs and growth opportunities, and this will be a useful tool to determine what support the nurse needs that the Trust can provide.

Furthermore, the guide also includes information on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements and outlines the development and career conversations that commenced on pre-employment, which may include specialty training aspirations; post UK registration conversations should build on these.



Evaluation

As with any process, it is best practice to evaluate its success. It is recommended that employers capture the overseas nurses' experience 6 months after their arrival to the UK. The evaluation can include the onboarding process, OSCE support, pastoral care, and preceptorship. Data can be collected using Microsoft Forms, Survey Monkey, forum, or celebration events. The results will help allow improvement in the experience of future overseas nurses employed by the Trust if practice that produce the best results are continued and issues identified are addressed.

Costing Framework

Introduction

A consistent theme around identifying a best practice approach towards overseas recruitment of nursing has been related to a perceived disparity in the costing frameworks used by different organisations. The remit of the costings task and finish group was therefore to understand and explore these perceived differences and to identify the consistent practices where possible.

Background

The costing framework task and finish group consisted of a number of different organisations including those that currently undertake campaigns and those that don't. Initial conversations identified a framework of costs that need to be met and are mandated externally and then a framework of costs that fell under the Pastoral and OSCE optional elements of the support provided to overseas nurses.

The scope of the work was to:

- Develop a framework that could be used as a baseline to have a parity of offer for any nurse working as an overseas recruited CapitalNurse
- To be clear and transparent about centrally mandated costs i.e. visas and optional costs such as accommodation.
- Pastoral packages and costs – to understand the London baseline and current practices.
- To understand what benefits Trusts in London provide to their substantive post i.e. well-being packages to ensure parity of offer to UK trained staff

In addition to group discussions a brief survey was sent out to trusts to identify current practices related to when and how much of costs were reclaimed and offered, and a review of all offers currently provided by London trusts. This information was obtained from reviewing information available on Trust websites.

The findings were not significantly disparate especially related to costs reclaimed from nurses; the differences were related to timescales of payback not necessarily the amount. The other key finding was that there was little real variation in the costing framework offers made to the overseas nurses. This element was then further explored by the pastoral group to understand what were the overriding factors that nurses used when choosing a trust to work in.

Figure 3 shows a breakdown of costs associated with the recruitment of overseas nurses. There is a very detailed breakdown in the NHS Providers toolkit, but this indicates the findings from the Pan-London work and the outcomes of the group discussion around what reasonable current practice was



collated from all survey results and from discussion points. This indicates current agreed best practice but is intended as a guide and is not intended to replace local arrangements or agreements.

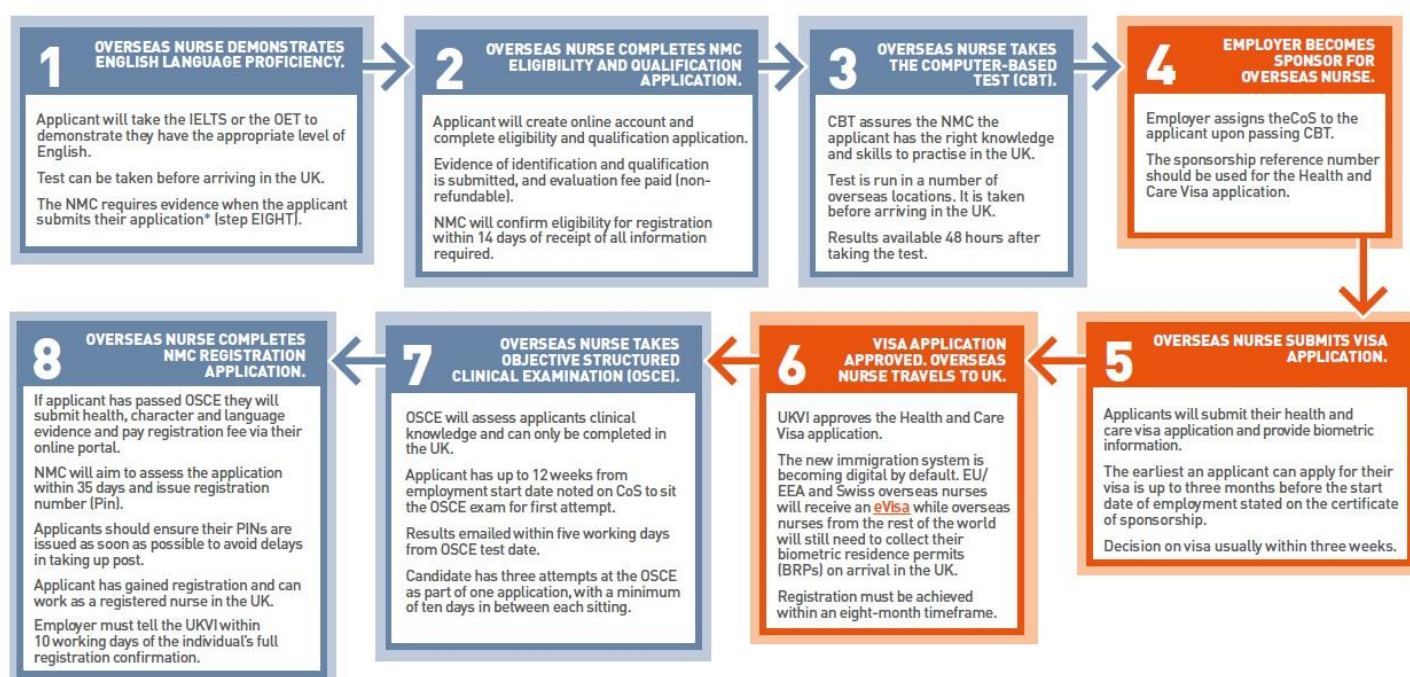
International recruitment of Nurses & Midwives- CapitalNurse Consortium Costing framework – November 2021			
ITEM/DETAIL	Core costs (subject to change)	Consortium actions	Comments
Pre Registration/ recruitment			
Certificate of Sponsorship	£199	Not to reclaim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs listed may be subject to change. Should this occur it will be expected the principles of cover and reclaim to still apply. • Costs are expected to be covered up to the ceiling cost but may be less than detailed • Costs identified to be reclaimed to be reclaimed over a period of 12 months from receipt of NMC PIN number
Immigration skills charge	£3,000	Not to reclaim	
International Health Surcharge	Nil	NA	
Health and care Visa (valid for 3 years in line with Certificate of Sponsorship) Should trusts choose to use priority visa processes then they (trust) still cover the costs	£232	Not to reclaim	
TB screening	Up to £50	Not to reclaim	
OEC (Overseas Employment Certificate)	£45	Not to reclaim	
Part 1 test of competence (CBT) (includes a CBT retake should a change to part of register be required)	£83	Not to reclaim	
NMC Application Fee	£153	Not to reclaim	
Language support IELTS/OET	£214- £350	Not to reclaim	
During registration/ Pastoral			
Candidate flights to UK- approximation of costs	£800	Not to reclaim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable costs – such as flights may be impacted and increase by world events. Costs not to be passed on to candidate • Costs identified to be reclaimed to be reclaimed over a period of 12 months from receipt of NMC PIN number
Transfer of Candidates from airport of arrival to client accommodation- approximation of costs	£30	Not to reclaim	
Accommodation support for first 4 weeks- approximation of costs	£600-£800	Not to reclaim	
Salary advance/ cash loan.	£500 cash advance min	Reclaim	
OSCE Fee	£794 per attempt	Reclaim	
Pastoral Package - approximation of costs	£50-100	Not to reclaim	
<i>During OSCE preparation and up to receiving NMC PIN to be paid bottom of band 4</i>			
Post Registration			
<i>ON receipt of PIN to be paid Band 5 plus appropriate HCA</i>			
Return flight at the end of contract/Visa Term (if employee is not extending)	£800	Not to reclaim	Country specific



Useful information and Resources

Recruitment Timeline

The diagram below from the NHS International Recruitment Toolkit shows a summary of the registration and immigration process for an overseas nurse who is out of country and will be sponsored under Health and Care Visa to work in the UK.



Candidates can apply for a Health and Care Visa with up to 5 years validity, although 3 years is more common. It is dependent on the Trust which length of stay they choose to employ the overseas nurses for.

English Language Requirements

Occupational English Test (OET) - This is a test of English for Healthcare. Candidates listen to patient consultations, workplace conversations and medical talks; read a range of healthcare - related texts; write a referral letter; and participate in role play as a nurse. OET is scored from A (best) to E. Nurses must ensure they achieve the following grades: at least a grade C+ in the Writing section, and at least a grade B in the Reading, Listening and Speaking sections. The NMC accept OET on Paper, OET on Computer and the OET@Home.

International English Language Test (IELTS) - This is a test of Academic English. Candidates listen to conversations in everyday and education settings as well as an academic lecture; answer questions on a range of academic texts; write a data report and an academic essay; give a presentation and answer questions on both familiar and abstract subjects. IELTS is scored from 9.0 (best) to 0. In the UK nurses need a score of 7.0 in listening, reading and speaking and a score of 6.5 in writing.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

Visit the [NMC website](#) for further information about joining the UK register and for information around the [NMC nursing exam blueprint](#).

Computer Based Test (CBT)

For more information, please read the [CBT candidate information booklet](#).

NMC approved OSCE test centers

There are currently three universities which are approved OSCE test centers, providing a choice of four locations to sit the OSCE: Ulster (Derry-Londonderry), Northampton, Brookes (Oxford and Swindon). Each of the universities offer the OSCE in the different fields of nursing and midwifery.

Visit the university websites for further information for candidates and trainers:

[University of Northampton](#)

[Oxford Brookes University](#) (Oxford campus and Swindon campus)

[Ulster University](#) (Northern Ireland, Derry-Londonderry).

There will be two additional OSCE test centres effective February 2022:

[Northumbria University](#)

[Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust](#)

On these sites you will find:

- The Candidate Journey Map
- A Candidate Information Booklet
- Top Tips booklets for each field of nursing and midwifery
- Mock Scenarios for each field of nursing and midwifery
- Marking Criteria for each field of nursing and midwifery
- Information about costs, how to book the exam and location maps
- Train the trainer course contact details.

Each test centre has its own on-line learning platform which candidates can access for information and guidance on OSCE documentation and support materials including observation charts used in the examination, reading lists specific to field of practice, Weblinks, e-books (accessed via the digital library) and individual station template examples.

NHS Employers

Series of films to support overseas nurse transition:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2018/02/new-resource-launched-to-support-transition-into-uk-nursing-practice>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSq6PTKVwf8&index=2&list=PLrVQaAxyJE3cV_yg4qamiFN_A-yUxEw555



Health Education England (HEE)

A [series of films](#) for overseas nurses and their trainers to help support transition and integration into UK practice.

The new resource consists of several training videos aimed at familiarising overseas nurses to UK clinical environments, and to offer some insights and orientation to simulation-based clinical scenarios. The resource is intended to be a support at the point of registration and is not a guide to passing the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) exam as part of the Nursing and Midwifery Council part 2 test of competence. It does however offer tips and signpost to references that may be beneficial in preparing for the OSCE exam.

International Nursing Associations

A list of international nursing associations that provide support to overseas nurses in the NHS: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/nursingmidwifery/international-recruitment/>



Appendix

Appendix 1: Pre-Arrival Pack

Airport Pick up	Include the pick-up points
Itinerary	Recommended for the first 3 days of arrival
Accommodation	Include details of length of tenancy and repayment process, and options for alternative accommodation
Clinical area	Contact details, hospital site and ward managers name
Property information	Key worker details, letting agents and/or recommend useful apps to search from properties
Finances	Advance in wages. Include if this will be in cash and explain the repayment process
Pension/National Insurance/Tax	It is important to provide them with this information prior to their arrival. Keep it simple as overloading them with this information may overcomplicate their understanding
Key contacts	International recruitment team, payroll, occupational health, human resources, switchboard number of each of your hospital sites
The Professional Development Guidebook	This should be sent by the agency prior to arrival to enable the overseas nurse to capture their development needs and career aspirations.
OSCE preparation/induction schedule	Include times, dates, and process
Driving information	Information about driving license, car lease, a list of local driving schools, etc.
Map of hospital main site	If your organisation has multiple sites you may need to consider more than one map
Facilities of hospital main site	Café opening hours, Wi-Fi areas, prayer room/chaplaincy services/multi faith opening hours
Community facilities near hospital main site	Pharmacy, opticians, local supermarkets, cashpoints
Union	Be sure to explain the benefits of having union membership, as in overseas countries being in a union membership can be seen as negative
Ethnic minority networks/ international nursing associations	Information about the ethnic minority networks in your Trust and local communities, and list of international nursing associations
Travel	Include some information on TFL and consider including a TFL underground map
Health	Information on how to register with a GP, nearest GP to hospital site, opticians, dentist
Mobile phones	Three and GiffGaff have been recommended to be affordable sim cards
Things to do	Information on retail shopping park (e.g. Westfield) and free things to do in London such as Museums



Appendix 2: COVID-19 Considerations

Pre-Arrival and Quarantine Requirements

Overseas nurse arriving to the UK must follow the government quarantine rules which will depend on their country of origin and vaccination status. An updated guidance on quarantine can be accessed on the official UK government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

The list of approved vaccines and countries with approved COVID-19 vaccination for travel to England can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countries-with-approved-covid-19-vaccination-programmes-and-proof-of-vaccination>

Arrival

If the overseas nurse has to quarantine, it is still recommended that the Trust welcome the overseas nurses at the airport and take them to their quarantine accommodation (wearing the appropriate PPE). The appointments for occupational health check, outstanding HR checks, collection of BRP, and bank account arrangements will have to be done post quarantine. Furthermore, the greeting lunch/welcome dinner should also be scheduled post quarantine.

Pastoral Care and OSCE Support

Meeting the emotional, social, and spiritual needs of newly recruited overseas nurses is essential, and even more so at a time where physical interactions are limited, combined with the ever-mounting pressures of the COVID-19 response. It is good practice to set up a Whatsapp or Facebook group to maintain communication with the overseas nurses especially during quarantine.

While the overseas nurses are on quarantine, your Trust may also consider loaning them a laptop so they could access the intranet for training, virtual meetings, and OSCE preparation materials.

Ethnic Minority Risk Assessment

Evidence confirms that black, Asian and minority ethnic people (BAME) are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, experience greater morbidity and mortality. It is a requirement for all NHS organisations to meet their duty of care to the staff they employ in assessing and addressing the risks to staff presented by COVID-19. Thus, an Ethnic Minority Risk Assessment should be performed for each BAME staff from overseas. It is also recommended that all staff undergo a FIT mask testing regardless of the clinical area they have been allocated.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Effective April 2022, it will become compulsory for all NHS staff in England to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. To qualify as fully vaccinated in England, the overseas nurses must have proof of full vaccination with a full course of an approved vaccine. The list of approved vaccines can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countries-with-approved-covid-19-vaccination-programmes-and-proof-of-vaccination>

If they do not qualify as fully vaccinated, encourage the overseas nurse to book their COVID vaccine as soon as possible.



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- Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust
- Guy's and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust
- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
- King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust
- North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust
- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Brompton And Harefield NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Free NHS Foundation Trust
- The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- The Homerton University Hospital
- University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- West London NHS Trust
- Whittington Health NHS Trust

References

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_89.htm

[Share buddy system \(STP approach\) if one trust hasn't got previous cohort.](#)

