

Return to Nursing/Midwifery

Top 10 myths

1) I trained 20 years ago as a nurse/midwife. Can I still return?

You can apply to return to practice no matter how long you have been out of practice.

We are encouraging returners to all fields of nursing, including mental health, learning disability and cancer nursing as well as midwifery.

2) Do I need to attend university to return to nursing?

There are 3 routes available leading to re-registration with the NMC:

- University Return to Practice courses: there are 25 courses available across England. More details [\[link\]](#)
- NMC Test of Competence (ToC): this route may be particularly helpful if your registration recently lapsed
- Readmission route: if you already have enough practice hours or are on the temporary register, you may be able to re-register via the readmission route.

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3) Do I need to self-fund my Return to Practice?

Health Education England will pay for your course and placement fees. You'll also be given a stipend of £1,000 to cover expenses related to your study period eg, childcare, travel, books etc.

If you chose to undertake the Test of Competence HEE will refund the cost of the OSCE and CBT, if you are able to demonstrate you have gained employment in the NHS.

4) Can I work and return to nursing /midwifery at the same time?

Yes, you can. Many employers offer Return to Practice nursing posts (usually a Band 3 until you are able to return to the NMC register). Your employer will support you to return to the register and provide a salary too.

5) I am a Learning Disability nurse can I undertake the Test of Competence?

The Test of Competence is suitable for all fields of nursing and midwifery.

6) To return to midwifery practice do I need to undertake a university course?

An alternative route to return to midwifery or nursing practice is the NMC Test of Competence, you will undertake a computer-based test (CBT) and an objective structured clinical examination called an OSCE via the Test of Competence (ToC) route. You would not need to undertake a clinical placement and if you chose the ToC route HEE will reimburse your costs. [\[link\]](#)

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7) What can I do to prepare for the Test of competence?

Preparation is key if you wish to re-register with the NMC via the Test of Competence (ToC). There are two options available to undertake the ToC: a self-funded route or an employer supported route.

If you chose the self-funded route, there is a wealth of information on the NMC website including test blueprints. There is also lots of materials on test centre websites.

If you are interested in a ToC preparation programme you can contact the Return to Practice team through the Health Careers Return to Practice website and we will refer you to your local RTP team.

(Link to Health careers ToC)

8) Do I need to complete practice hours?

If you undertake the return to practice university course, the hours spent on placement will vary and be negotiated with you. During this period, you will be working in a supernumerary status and under direct supervision of a supervisor or assessor.

If you choose to undertake the Test of Competence you will not need to do a clinical placement. Instead, you will undertake online test called a computer-based test (CBT) and an objective structured clinical examination called an OSCE.

9) Do I need a degree to Return to Practice?

You do not need a degree to return to practice. However, as nursing and midwifery is now only studied at degree level, the NMC require the Return to Practice programmes to be undertaken at degree level. If you successfully pass the course, you will receive credits at degree level which can be used towards completion of a degree.

10) I am on the temporary register do I need to undertake a course or the Test of Competence to re-register with the NMC?

If you can satisfy the re-admission requirements to return to the permanent register, you may not have to complete a course or Test of Competence.