

Health Education Funding in England from 2017/18: All Change?

Summary

From 1 August 2017, new students in England on nursing, midwifery and allied health professional (AHP) pre-registration courses (university courses which lead on to registration with one of the health professional regulators) [will have access to the standard student support package of tuition fee loans and support for living costs, rather than getting an NHS grant.](#)

This is a significant change to the funding system for health education in England. But it doesn't mean that everything is changing: many of the most important aspects of studying to become a health professional are staying the same. This briefing sets out three key areas.

The reasons to become a health professional

The reasons to become a health professional aren't changing. There are brilliant, rewarding careers across the professions in health and social care and beyond. With the care needs of our population increasing, the demand for highly able and committed health professionals is only likely to grow.

Most nursing, midwifery and AHP courses have excellent graduate employability, with newly qualified practitioners in high demand: it's not uncommon for these courses to have 100% graduate employment. You can find the employment statistics for each course at [Unistats](#), the official hub for higher education information.

There are also a number of places that will give prospective students details about the variety of careers and roles that health professionals undertake. [NHS Careers](#) is a good place to start. Professional bodies (such as the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the College of Occupational Therapy and the Royal College of Nursing) also have information on the specific career opportunities in their profession.

Getting on to a course

The standards that prospective students have to meet to successfully apply for a course aren't changing. Universities have their own requirements and application processes, so potential students will need to familiarise themselves with these when considering applying for a course.

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Purpose: Although important changes are coming to the funding mechanism for university courses for nursing, midwifery and allied health profession in England, many things about these courses are staying the same.

This briefing sets out some of the important areas of continuity for these courses.

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Relevant for: Prospective students, staff in higher education, staff advising students at schools and colleges.

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These would typically include an application form (most via UCAS but some students apply directly to the university), an interview and other tests, such as numeracy and literacy. Many courses also require that prospective students have had some kind of relevant work or caring experience to support their application.

If you're planning to apply for a course that starts in autumn 2017 your application preparations will be just the same as they are now. Almost all health courses have more applicants than places, so make sure you understand the requirements of the universities you want to apply to and take the time needed to prepare a strong application.

Graduating to become a health professional

The standards that students need to reach in order to successfully complete their courses and register as a health professional are also unaffected by the funding changes.


For nursing and midwifery programmes, the standards for education are set by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The NMC is a UK-wide regulator with the job of checking that university courses all meet their standards. The NMC is going to be designing new education standards for both pre-registration nursing and midwifery courses across the UK between now and the end of 2017 but this is independent of changes to education funding.

[Find out more about the NMC and its role in education.](#)

The standards for education for the allied health professions are set by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The HCPC is also currently reviewing its standards of education and training. It is expecting to consult on these in 2017.

[Find out more about the HCPC and its role in education.](#)

Whatever changes are made as a result of these reviews, these will take a number of years to be phased in, so there are no major, immediate changes on the horizon for students thinking about applying in the next year.



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