

# Study nursing in the UK

## Where can I study nursing in the UK?

With three of the top 20 universities for nursing – King’s College London (second), the University of Manchester (sixth) and the University of Southampton (11th) – you’ll find a wide range of highly regarded nursing courses across the UK.<sup>1</sup> In total there are over 100 universities to choose from, with over 1000 courses between them.<sup>2</sup>

## What is the application process?

Nursing degrees are highly competitive and applications will typically need to show you have the required aptitude and motivation as well as strong academic credentials – usually three A-levels of ABB or better. Your numeracy and literacy will need to be very good, as will your ability to communicate. Working as part of a team under pressure, and good people skills, are critical for this role.

Most universities will expect 30 points for an International Baccalaureate, and an IELTS score of 7.0 overall, no lower than 6.0 in any one component.

## How long does it take to graduate?

Nursing degrees in the UK typically demand four years of full-time study. This includes a wide range of compulsory courses in life sciences as well as placements in different real-world health environments such as community and medical centres. This first-hand experience of the UK’s National Health Service (NHS) will give you the chance to apply the theory covered in your studies with real patients.

## What is the course structure?

UK nursing degrees combine academic study with extensive clinical placements. You’ll take compulsory modules in core life sciences and nursing practice, alongside rotations in a variety of settings including hospitals, community care, and mental health services. Many programmes are

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<sup>1</sup> [QS Top Universities, 2025](#)

<sup>2</sup> [UCAS, 2025](#)

aligned with the UK's National Health Service (NHS), offering real-world training in modern, professional environments.

## What will I study?

You'll cover subjects such as anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, infection control, health assessment, and patient care. As you progress, you'll explore areas like adult care, child health, mental health, and learning disabilities, depending on your chosen specialism. Courses also include training in leadership, ethics, communication, and cultural competence — essential for delivering effective, person-centred care in diverse global contexts.

## What qualifications do I need to be able to work in the UK?

To work as a registered nurse in the UK, you'll need to complete the Overseas Nursing Programme (ONP), which may be integrated into BSc or MSc International Nursing Studies courses. After completing your degree, you can apply for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). You must complete 400 hours of supervised placements, and you're allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during term time to help meet this. Throughout your training, you'll gain hands-on experience and develop confidence using clinical equipment and medical English.

## Why is the UK a good choice to study nursing?

The UK has helped to shape professional nursing since the 18th century when Florence Nightingale founded the first ever school dedicated to professional nursing at St Thomas' hospital in London. From administering vaccines to pioneering standards, nurses have always played a vital role in our world-leading medical research and care.

The UK is also home to the world-famous public healthcare model, the National Health Service, which has close ties to universities across the country. Closely integrated with private practice and the wider care system, you'll be learning best-practice approaches to nursing first-hand from within these modern healthcare environments, alongside leading health professionals from all disciplines.

## Are there any scholarships for studying nursing?

There are often funding options available for international students who want to study nursing in the UK. These range from part-funding, for example paying part of your fees, to full-funding which covers programme fees, living expenses, and return flights to the UK.

You can search our database of scholarships at [study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships-funding](https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships-funding) and check with individual university websites for institution-specific opportunities.

## What are my work options after I graduate?



A UK nursing degree prepares you for a wide range of healthcare careers — from adult and children’s nursing to roles in public health, mental health, midwifery, or emergency care. 94% of UK nursing graduates find work within six months.<sup>3</sup> You could work in hospitals, clinics, schools, charities, or even internationally. Through the UK’s Graduate route, international students can stay and work in the UK after graduation without requiring sponsorship.

The UK’s Graduate route allows international students to apply to stay in the UK and work, or look for work, upon graduation. International students who have successfully completed an undergraduate, master’s degree or PhD have the option to apply to stay in the UK for an agreed period, following their studies. The Graduate route does not require you to secure sponsorship.

To find out more about studying nursing in the UK in the UK and to find a course, visit [study-uk.britishcouncil.org](https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org)

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<sup>3</sup> [UCAS, 2025](#)