

Opportunities for healthcare workers to enter University to study for a qualification in professional healthcare

Experienced and motivated healthcare and social care workers develop skills, gain experience and achieve vocational qualifications while learning at work. They are likely however to lack the study skills they will need to enter and succeed in university health professional education courses. Bridging Programmes aim to equip these workers with the skills required to succeed in a university.

The Faculty of Health and Social Sciences at Bournemouth University (BU) is working with NHS and other employers and Further Education Colleges to enable support workers to progress to University to gain professional qualifications and so develop their careers. BU recognises that there are a number of vocational qualifications such as modern apprenticeships and QCF3 diplomas that enable entry to University. However, learning at university can be very different from learning at work. As a result, organisations such as BU, Health Education England, Skills for Health and NHS employers are working together to provide Bridging Programme that enable support workers with vocational qualifications to proceed to University.

This paper seeks to answer questions that frequently arise in relation to Bridging Programmes. It draws heavily on the on-line guide put together by Skills for Health. This can be found at <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/standards/item/229-skills-for-health-bridging-programme> (accessed 05-12-2018).

What is a Bridging Programme?

A Bridging Programme aims to help healthcare support workers who have an appropriate vocational qualification to have their learning achievements recognised as valid for meeting entry requirements to pre-registration nursing and other health professional education courses at university. The Bridging Programme also teaches learners to understand the variety of opportunities available to them at university, and to prepare themselves personally for the experience and plan their application.



Does Bournemouth University recognise any Bridging Programme delivered in the UK?

BU only recognises approved Bridging Programmes offered by organisations with which it has a formal agreement. Currently those organisations are:

- Bournemouth and Poole College
- Poole General Hospital
- Fareham College

Each of these organisations will be offering Bridging Programmes in 2015 -16. We hope that more organisations will be recognised as time progresses.

Who is the Bridging Programme for?

Healthcare and social care workers and learners, operating at and achieving vocational qualifications at or above level 3 (inside or outside an Apprenticeship). They will wish to progress into professional education courses in health, using a combination of their vocational qualification(s) and the Bridging Programme qualification. They will be:

- learning at work in health and or social care
- unlikely to have A levels
- unlikely to have the time or resources to do a full or part time Access to HE course.

Where does the Bridging Programme lead?

Learners achieving the Bridging Programme have the opportunity to apply to participating universities offering health professional education courses in nursing and other healthcare occupations.

There is no guarantee of entry but participating universities welcome applications from people achieving the Bridging Programme qualification. Universities work in partnership with FE Providers and employers to encourage and support Bridging Programme learners hoping to progress to higher level professional education courses in health and social care.

Why do the Bridging Programme?

The Bridging Programme is for motivated and capable healthcare assistants and many others in the healthcare workforce who would like to move on to a range of programmes that lead to registration as a health professional. For many, the Bridging Programme opens up a new opportunity to progress professionally in healthcare.

How long does it take?

Bridging Programmes can vary in duration from weeks to a year. Some will stand alone and follow on from your initial level 3 qualification. Others may be integrated into your Level 3 vocational qualification.

Are Maths and English included in the Bridging Programme?

No. It is expected that *in addition* to the Bridging Programme and their vocational qualification, learners will normally also need to have achieved GCSE Grade A* - C (9-4 in the reformed grading) in English and Maths or functional skills qualifications in English and Maths at Level 2.

Will BU recognise my prior learning through my vocational qualifications and experience as a healthcare worker?

BU recognises that prior learning on the job is a significant element in Level 3 vocational qualifications. This is why BU accepts applications to its healthcare degrees and diplomas from people who have completed vocational qualifications at Level 3. However, Level 3 vocational qualifications vary as does the nature of your healthcare experience while working. You need to be aware that your healthcare qualification and experience should be relevant to your chosen career. For example, the level of anatomy and physiology required to undertake a Paramedic Science degree will be very different from that required for a degree in Mental Health Nursing. Similarly, work experience should also be relevant to the chosen career path.

Will completion of a recognised Bridging Programme guarantee me a place at BU?

No. But as part of its recognition agreement BU guarantees an interview for the chosen course. You must be aware that all courses have more applicants than places available and gaining a place will depend on your personal qualities, your performance at interview and employer references as well as upon your entry qualifications.

Is the Bridging Programme the same as an Access Course?

The Bridging Programme is not an Access to HE course. Access to Higher Education Diploma courses are designed to provide the underpinning subject knowledge and skills needed – and may include some study skills - to progress to a degree or diploma course at University. These courses enable adults who do not have the necessary level 3 qualifications (such as 'A' levels) required to enter higher education to acquire the Access to HE Diploma, which is equivalent in standard to these qualifications.

The Bridging Programme is exclusively concerned with developing study skills for HE and planning for entry to university, for those working in healthcare and in social care. The qualification design and composition reflects best practice in study skills learning, achievement and assessment, to be found in Access to HE Diploma courses. Achievement of the Bridging Programme qualification attracts 70 UCAS tariff points. These may be counted towards the UCAS entry requirements for courses.

The Bridging Programme - combined with relevant vocational qualifications at level 3 (and any recognition of prior learning) and normally, maths/English qualifications - provides another possible route into HE, alongside A levels and their equivalents, and Access to HE Diplomas.

Do Requirements vary between Courses?

Yes. Each healthcare course has a different emphasis in relation to the subjects studied and some will require greater proficiency in some subjects, the details are below.

Adult Nursing

Adult Nursing accepts a variety of Level 3 qualifications supported by a Bridging Programme approved by Bournemouth University. Preferred examples are:

1. Support services in Healthcare - Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Clinical Support Workers - Bournemouth & Poole College
3. Level 3 qualification in Healthcare – Poole General Hospital
4. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College

Mental Health Nursing

Mental Health Nursing accepts a variety of Level 3 qualifications supported by a Bridging Programme approved by Bournemouth University. Preferred examples are:

1. Support services in Healthcare - Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Clinical Support Workers - Bournemouth & Poole College
3. Level 3 qualification in Healthcare – Poole General Hospital
4. QCF3 in Mental Health – Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust
5. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College

Children and Young People's Nursing

Children and Young People's Nursing accepts a variety of Level 3 qualifications supported by a Bridging Programme approved by Bournemouth University. Preferred examples are:

1. Maternity and Paediatric Support – Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Support services in Healthcare - Bournemouth & Poole College
3. Clinical Support Workers - Bournemouth & Poole College
4. Level 3 qualification in Healthcare – Poole General Hospital
5. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College
6. Level 3 qualification BTEC in Child Care – Fareham College

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy accepts a variety of Level 3 qualifications supported by a Bridging Programme approved by Bournemouth University. Preferred examples are:

1. Clinical Support Workers - Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Level 3 qualification in Healthcare – Poole General Hospital
3. QCF3 in Mental Health – Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust
4. Allied Health Professional Support – Bournemouth & Poole College
5. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College

Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy will consider applicants with a level 3 qualification **but also requires an A level in Biology or Physical Education**. The following level 3 qualifications are preferred:

1. Clinical Support Workers - Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Allied Health Professional Support – Bournemouth & Poole College
3. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College
4. Allied Health Apprenticeship programme – Poole General Hospital

Operating Department Practice

Operating Department Practice will consider applicants with a level 3 qualification supported by an approved Bridging Programme. The following level 3 qualifications, particularly the first, are preferred:

1. Perioperative Support – Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Support Services in Healthcare – Bournemouth & Poole College
3. Maternity and Paediatric Support - Bournemouth & Poole College
4. Allied Health Professional Support – Bournemouth & Poole College
5. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College
6. The Perioperative Apprenticeship programme – Poole General Hospital

Midwifery

Midwifery will consider applicants with a level 3 qualification. There is considerable competition for places and additional qualifications in the biological sciences would be welcome (e.g. A level Biology, OU SK277). The following level 3 qualifications are preferred, particularly the first:

1. Maternity and Paediatric Support - Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Support Services in Healthcare – Bournemouth & Poole College
3. Clinical Support Workers – Bournemouth & Poole College
4. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College
5. Maternity and Paediatric Apprenticeship programme – Poole General Hospital

Paramedic Science

Paramedic Science will consider applicants with a level 3 qualification but also requires further evidence of achievement in **Biological sciences**. Examples of this are A level Biology, the OU SK277, Biology modules of an Access Course at Merit or Distinction. The following level 3 qualifications are preferred:

1. Clinical Support Workers - Bournemouth & Poole College
2. Support Services in Healthcare – Bournemouth & Poole College
3. Allied Health Professional Support – Bournemouth & Poole College
4. Level 3 qualification BTEC Health and Social Care – Fareham College

READING

¹ HEE (2014). The Talent for Care Strategic Framework. A national strategic framework to develop the healthcare support workforce. Part of Framework 15, the Health Education England guide to action.

² Cavendish C (2013) The Cavendish Review - An Independent Review into Healthcare Assistants and Support Workers in the NHS and social care settings.

³Shape of Caring: A review of the future education and training of registered nurses and care assistants