

University Intake Targets for Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery AY 2026-27



University intake targets for Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery AY 2026-27

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Summary:	Announcement of university intake targets for the controlled subject of Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education for Academic Year 2026-27.
FAO:	Principals / Chairs of Scotland's universities, and the general public.
Further Information:	funding@sfc.ac.uk

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University intake targets for Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery in AY 2026-27

Purpose

1. I am writing to announce the university intake targets for the controlled subject of Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education for Academic Year (AY) 2026-27.

Background

2. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) receives annual guidance from the Scottish Government's Chief Nursing Officer's (CNO) Directorate, providing recommended intakes for Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education. The CNO Directorate's guidance for AY 2026-27 is provided as [Annex A](#).
3. From 2015-16, the guidance from the Scottish Government has provided SFC with university intake targets for all Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education. This includes the 'three-year' courses which are funded through a Scottish Government ring-fenced grant, Honours Nursing provision (referred to as 'four-years honours'), and courses offered through the Open University in Scotland (OUIs).

Intake targets for AY 2026-27

4. **The overall intake target for Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery in AY 2026-27, as recommended by the CNO Directorate, is 4,899 students;** which is an increase of 8 students from AY 2025-26. The intake target includes students with 'home fee' status, students from the rest of the UK (rUK), and students from the Republic of Ireland (RoI). Included in the target are 675 students that have been allocated to the eight universities delivering four-year honours provision.
5. In AY 2024-25, in recognition of the challenges universities face in recruiting to Nursing and Midwifery programmes, the CNO Directorate worked with NHS Education for Scotland (now Public Services Delivery Scotland), the Council of Deans Health Scotland and individual institutions to introduce 'soft' targets which should be achievable for universities, as well as the existing targets which have been redefined as 'stretch' targets. A similar process is in place for AY 2026-27.
6. We have set out both the intake targets for AY 2026-27 and the 'soft' targets according to field of practice, as set out in the CNO's guidance. Universities should consider the split of intakes between the four Nursing fields of practice and Midwifery when recruiting for AY 2026-27.
7. In AY 2021-22, SFC took over the funding of Pre-Registration Nursing and Midwifery at the OUIs from the Scottish Government. This will continue in AY 2026-27, with the Scottish Government providing the associated transfer of resource for SFC to allocate this funding directly to the OUIs.

Indexing of Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery students

8. In addition to SFC's data collections, universities are also required to index Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery students with Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSDS).
9. In response to concerns regarding the consistency of data submitted to PSDS and SFC, a 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) document is attached as [Annex B](#).
10. This document includes information on intake targets, funded student places, SFC's consolidation number, and when students should be indexed with PSDS.

Tuition fees

11. From AY 2021-22, tuition fees for Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery were administered in a similar manner to other programmes and this will continue in AY 2026-27.
12. Universities can claim tuition fee support, through SFC's Fee Anomalies grant, for students who commenced their Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery studies prior to the beginning of AY 2021-22, with no expectation of having to pay tuition fees and who are unable to access tuition fee support through SAAS. (This may include EU students who commenced their studies prior to the beginning of AY 2021-22 and are on honours courses where universities previously invoiced the Scottish Government directly.)

Funded student places

13. The University Final Funding Allocations for AY 2026-27 will set out the initial funded student places for Nursing and Midwifery, based on the 'stretch' targets. As in AY 2025-26, it is our intention to adjust funded places in-year to reflect actual intakes, above or below the targets, and actual numbers of continuing students. It is our expectation that universities will make every effort to achieve the 'soft' targets set out in this announcement. Should any university recruit beyond the 'soft' target, they will be funded in full. The process for adjusting funded places in-year is set out below:
 - SFC has modelled funded places based on the 'stretch' targets published in this announcement.
 - These funded places will be set out in our Final Funding Allocations publication.
 - SFC will adjust the funded places and consolidation number, in-year, to reflect universities' actual recruitment of Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery students.
 - Funded places and funding will be adjusted for recruitment both below and above the existing targets (up to a maximum of the sector intake target).
 - Where our modelling has underestimated the number of continuing students, we will make an adjustment to reflect actual student numbers.

- Actual recruitment will be based on an additional SFC data collection - 'Early Intakes Return'.
- SFC will write to universities to confirm the revised funded places, based on actual recruitment, before the end of December 2026.
- Where any university has recruited below expectations for midwifery students articulating from the Next Generation HNC Health Practice (perinatal route) pilot, this should be set out in writing to SFC and it will be taken into account when adjusting funded places.

Under and over-recruitment

14. For AY 2026-27, SFC will recover funds from universities that under-enrol students eligible for funding against the adjusted funded places (based on actual recruitment), with a tolerance threshold of 3%. Any under-recruitment relating to midwifery students articulating from the Next Generation HNC Health Practice (perinatal route) pilot should be presented to SFC as a mitigating circumstance and recovery will be reduced accordingly. We will not apply financial penalties to universities who recruit above their consolidation number.

Further information

15. Please contact the Funding team, Investment & Research Directorate, tel: 0131 313 6500, email: funding@sfc.ac.uk.

Tiffany Ritchie

Interim Director of Finance

Table 1: Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Intake Targets for AY 2026-27

	Adult (stretch)	Adult (soft)	Mental Health (stretch)	Mental Health (soft)	Children & Young People (stretch)	Children & Young People (soft)	Learning Disability (stretch)	Learning Disability (soft)	Midwifery (stretch)	Midwifery (soft)	Total (stretch)	Total (soft)	Intake target for 4-year Honours Degree (included in total)
Abertay University	0	0	78	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	78	60	78
Dundee University	420	290	112	60	57	57	0	0	0	0	589	407	0
Edinburgh University	64	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	58	64
Edinburgh Napier University	440	250	134	102	101	101	60	20	109	109	844	582	0
Glasgow University	55	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	45	55
Glasgow Caledonian University	518	518	110	110	103	103	98	98	0	0	829	829	85
Open University	179	120	60	55	4	4	7	10	0	0	250	189	*189
Queen Margaret University	88	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	88	75	88
Robert Gordon University	281	200	80	40	55	55	0	0	81	81	497	376	54
Stirling University	285	200	104	70	0	0	0	0	0	0	389	270	62
University of the Highlands & Islands	118	100	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	138	120	0
University of the West of Scotland	777	675	190	190	0	0	0	0	111	111	1,078	976	0
TOTAL	3,225	2,531	888	707	320	320	165	128	301	301	4,899	3,987	675

*This is not a change from previous years; it is presentational to indicate that the OU offer a 4 year course (there is no 3 year course in Scotland).