
Annex B: FAQs regarding Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education numbers

What is our intake target?

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, on advice from the Chief Nursing Officer, determines the overall intake target for Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education each year. Upon receiving advice from the Chief Nursing Officer, SFC writes to universities to set their individual intake targets. In 2023, the Chief Nursing Officer announced targets for the next three years, subject to annual review. These covered the Academic Years 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26, making this the last year of the multi-year target.

Who is included in the intake target?

The intake target includes all students eligible to pay 'Home Fees', Republic of Ireland (RoI), and rest of UK (rUK) Pre-registration, Nursing and Midwifery Education students who enrol for the course for the first time, regardless of the year of the course which they enter (e.g. students articulating directly into year 2 from college should be included in the intake).

The intake also includes forecasts of students expected to start later in the session, i.e. a second intake, and students who have transferred from a different (non-Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education) course at the same institution.

The intake, as reported to SFC, should only include students enrolled at the institution on 1 December, or who had enrolled at the institution after 1 August and attended for more than five weeks.

A full definition of eligibility is included in the [SFC Early Statistics Return notes of guidance](#).

Eligibility criteria based on residency conditions continue to be set out in the Nursing and Midwifery Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2007.

Which courses are included in the Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education target?

Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education courses are those courses where students are indexed with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) upon commencement and are eligible for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) upon graduation. This does not include return to practice courses aimed at previously registered nurses whose registration has now lapsed and who want to return to the NMC register.

We have college students articulating onto year two of the Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education programme. When are they indexed and do they count against the intake target?

College students articulating onto year two of a Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education programme should be indexed when they start at university, and they should be included within the annual intake, which reports all students commencing at a Scottish university on a Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education degree programme.

We have a student recommencing on a Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education programme after a gap of several years, do they count against the intake target?

Any student who restarts a Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education programme after a gap in their studies of more than three years should be counted against the intake target.

We under-recruited last year, should we over-recruit this year to make up the number?

For AY 2025-26 the Scottish Government has agreed to fund recruitment above the published intake targets for individual universities, providing that the intake target for the sector as a whole is not exceeded.

In a regular year it is expected that universities should recruit to the annual intake target. SFC models the funded places for each university based on the minimum of the target intake or the actual intake, so this may lead to additional students recruited above the annual intake target being unfunded.

How do we report our actual annual intake?

You are required to report your actual intake of Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education students to SFC through the Early Intakes Return and Early Statistics Return.

In addition to the figures reported through the Early Statistics Return, NES will use indexing data, submitted by universities, to derive an actual intake. We would expect that the intake figure submitted to SFC and the intake figure derived from the indexing data to be broadly similar, and SFC and NES may contact universities to explain any differences.

What is the purpose of indexing Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education students?

NES has retained the function of maintaining a national index of all Nursing and Midwifery students who commence a course of training in Scotland. This process supports students' professional registration by transferring a notice of eligibility to register to the NMC when a student completes their pre-registration programme. NES uses this data to report students

commencing a pre-registration course for the first time, recommencing on a course, and can also allocate students to cohorts. This is in order to standardise measures of student demographics, recruitment and retention.

Is our intake target the same as our number of funded places?

No. The intake target refers to all Scottish-domiciled and rUK Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education students who enrol for the course for the first time, whereas the funded places relates to the total population of Scottish-domiciled students only.

What is the difference between SFC's number of funded places and their consolidation number?

Funded places are the number of places for Students eligible for Funding (mainly Scottish-domiciled students) for which SFC will provide funding. If a university's number of students eligible for funding, returned to SFC through the Final Figures Return, is more than 3% below their funded places then SFC will recover funding (universities will be given the opportunity to present any mitigating circumstances before any final decision on the recovery of funds is taken).

The consolidation number is for the monitoring of the total number of Students Eligible for Funding and rUK students to avoid excessive demand on the NHS for placements. If a university's population of students is more than 10% above their consolidation number then SFC will impose a financial penalty (universities will be given the opportunity to present any mitigating circumstances before any final decision on a financial penalty is taken). As in AY 2024-25, SFC and SG will not seek to impose a penalty on universities who over-recruit in AY 2025-26.

What if our proportion of rUK students changes?

You should contact SFC. There is no target for rUK students; they are included within the overall annual intake target. SFC uses the assumed proportion of rUK students in the annual calculation of funded places. SFC shares the funded places calculation with universities in advance of funded places being finalised and published. This is intended to ensure that SFC's assumptions in the funding calculation reflect those of the university; however we appreciate that the actual number of rUK students may change from the forecast number.