



Chief Nursing Officer Directorate

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Francesca Osowska
Chief Executive
Scottish Funding Council
Apex 2
97 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

21 May 2026

Dear Francesca,

PRE REGISTRATION NURSING AND MIDWIFERY UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

This letter is to advise the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) of the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate's proposals on recommended intake targets for nursing and midwifery undergraduate programmes for academic year (AY) 2026-27.

Having considered all the factors involved, Scottish Ministers previously set a three year intake target for all pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes for the period AY 2023-24 to AY 2025-26. The target for AY 2026-27 is 4,899 nursing and midwifery student places. The intake target is for students eligible for 'Home fee' status, rest of UK students and students from the Republic of Ireland. This is the first year of the negotiated period of three years, which was agreed to give stability to the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and take into account capacity of our Board partners to manage student placements.

As you will be aware, recruitment to controlled places on nursing and midwifery programmes remains challenging and for AY 2026-27 we have continued the approach started in AY 2024-25 where we worked with NHS Education for Scotland (NES), the Council of Deans Health (Scotland) and individual institutions to negotiate more realistic targets on which funding will be based. For ease, we have named the formal targets as "stretch" and the negotiated more realistic targets as "soft". HEIs will be funded on actual recruitment, based on SFC's data collection with funded places adjusted in-year to reflect actual recruitment.

Recommended intake targets, by HEI and fields of nursing and midwifery, are set out in the **Annex**. It is our continued expectation that HEIs should make every effort to recruit to the "soft" targets in this letter however if they are able to exceed those, they will be funded in full and not subject to clawback for over recruitment as we anticipate the "stretch" target is still unlikely to be met.

As in AY 2025-26 no intake target has been set for the discontinued Shortened Midwifery Programme at Edinburgh Napier University, however SFC should continue to fund eligible continuing students.

SFC would normally recover funds from HEIs who under-recruit eligible students against funded places by more than 3% and apply penalties to HEIs who exceed their consolidation number by more than 10%, subject to the consideration of any mitigating evidence presented by the university. As in AY 2025-26, SFC should monitor under-recruitment against the adjusted funded places, based on actual recruitment. Over recruitment at a 10% level is not expected but should that occur, we would not seek to apply a penalty.

Subject to discussions with the SFC over the calculation of the fundable student population and confirmation of the funding for AY 2026-27, we will transfer the appropriate level of funding required.

Scottish domiciled students should apply to the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) for their tuition fees, and the SFC should no longer fund nursing and midwifery at the gross teaching price. Continuing EU students and 'Home' students unable to access SAAS tuition fee support who commenced their studies in the 2020-21 academic year or earlier will continue to be funded by the SFC for both tuition fees and teaching grant until the completion of their programmes.

This letter is copied as per the copy list below. Please don't hesitate to contact me to discuss any aspect of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Aisha Holloway
Chief Nursing Officer, Scotland
Chief Nursing Officer Directorate
Scottish Government

Copy List

University Principals, Heads of Schools of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Sciences
Convener, Council of Deans of Health (Scotland)
Chief Executive, NHS Education for Scotland
Director General Health and Social Care
Director General Education and Justice

Annex

1. Proposed Intake Targets including 'Stretch' and 'Soft' targets for Academic Year 2026-27

2026 Distributions	Adult	Adult (soft)	Mental Health (MH)	MH (soft)	Children & Young People (CYP)	CYP (soft)	Learning Disability (LD)	LD (soft)	Midwifery	Midwifery (soft)	TOTAL	SOFT TOTAL	Intake target for 4 year Honours Degree (included in total)
Abertay University	-	-	78	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	78	60	78
Dundee University	420	290	112	60	57	57	-	-	-	-	589	407	0
Edinburgh University	64	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	58	64
Edinburgh Napier University	440	250	134	102	101	101	60	20	109	-	844	473	0
Glasgow University	55	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55	45	55
Glasgow Caledonian University	518	518	110	110	103	103	98	98	-	-	829	829	85
Open University	179	120	60	55	4	4	7	10	-	-	250	189	*189
Queen Margaret University	88	75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	88	75	88
Robert Gordon University	281	200	80	40	55	55	-	-	81	-	497	295	54
Stirling University	285	200	104	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	389	270	62
University of the Highlands & Islands	118	100	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	138	120	0
University of the West of Scotland	777	675	190	190	-	-	-	-	111	-	1078	865	0
Total	3225	2531	888	707	320	320	165	128	301	-	4,899	3686	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).

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