



August 2011

## Connect2...Nursing and Midwifery

**This factfile is for any adult who is considering a career in Nursing or Midwifery in Northern Ireland. To qualify as a nurse or midwife you will need to study for a degree. The Nursing degree is offered by Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and University of Ulster (UU). The Midwifery degree is offered by QUB only. The factfile will tell you what qualifications and experience you will need to apply for the Nursing and Midwifery degrees.**

If you are already working as a Health Care Assistant in the public sector, please see section on work based opportunities on page 7.

In general you will need the following qualifications to apply for the Nursing or Midwifery degree:

- Recognised English Language, Maths and Science qualifications at Level 2
- A recognised Level 3 qualification
- Evidence of IT skills

### ***! have no qualifications – what are my next steps?***

If you have no qualifications and haven't studied for some time, you could start with English, Maths or computer classes to build up your confidence and study skills. Courses are offered by your local college and some community groups. For English and Maths, you can choose between Essential Skills and GCSEs. Essential Skills classes are available at different levels and are aimed at adults. Essential Skills Level 2 qualifications are at the same level as GCSEs.

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If you feel more confident about returning to study, you can apply for an Access course at your local college – see next section for details. However, if you haven't studied in some time, it is important to think about how you will cope with classes, coursework and exams.

### ***I already have GCSEs or other Level 2 qualifications – what are my next steps?***

You can apply for an Access course at your local college. Access courses are aimed at adults who want to move on to degree level study. You can complete an Access course in 1 year full time or 2 years part time.

Find out more about Access courses in our **Connect2...Access to University** factfile.

Access courses are offered in different subject areas; for example Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences and Information Technology. During your Access course, you will normally complete a variety of modules, including a compulsory study skills option.

There are no formal entry requirements but you may need to attend an informal interview. Some colleges will require you to have been out of full time education for 2 years before you can enrol. Check with your local college for details.

As the Nursing and Midwifery degrees are heavily science based, it would be preferable to choose a science Access course or at least include one science module, such as Biology or Chemistry. This is particularly important if you have never studied a science subject before and if you don't already have a science qualification at Level 2 (please note: Psychology is not acceptable as a Science module for the Nursing or Midwifery degree).

If you don't already have acceptable English Language, Maths and Science qualifications at Level 2 (eg GCSE grade C or above or Essential Skills Level

2), you must make sure your Access course builds this in. If you aren't sure, check with the tutor **before** you start the course.

Please note: QUB does **not** accept Essential Skills Maths; you will need to have a GCSE or an acceptable Access Maths module instead.

### *What percentage mark do I need in my Access course?*

The following marks are needed to apply to the Nursing or Midwifery degree:

#### **QUB**

- Science based courses (where at least half of the overall course is in Biology or Chemistry) - an average mark of **60%**
- Non-science based courses - an average mark of **65%**

#### **UU**

- All access courses – an average mark of **65%**

### *I already have A levels or other Level 3 qualifications – can I apply directly to the Nursing degree?*

#### **Entry to QUB**

If you have **recently** completed an Access course which meets the English, Maths and Science requirements, you can apply for the Nursing or Midwifery degree.

If you have **recently** completed A levels or other acceptable Level 3 qualifications, you will **also** need to have 5 GCSEs including Maths, English and Science.

#### **Entry to UU**

If you have recently completed acceptable study at Level 3 **and** meet the English, Maths and Science requirements, then you can apply for the Nursing degree.

Check with QUB or UU to make sure your Level 3 qualification is acceptable and if you meet all the entry requirements.

### ***I already have higher education qualifications – can I apply directly to the Nursing degree?***

#### **Entry to QUB**

If you have **recently** completed acceptable higher education qualifications, you will **also** need to have 5 GCSEs including Maths, English and Science.

#### **Entry to UU**

If you have recently completed acceptable higher education qualifications **and** meet the English, Maths and Science requirements, then you can apply for the Nursing degree.

Check with QUB or UU to make sure your higher education qualification is acceptable and if you meet all the entry requirements.

### ***When should I apply for the Nursing degree?***

You must apply for the Nursing degree before you finish your Access course or other entrance qualifications. Applications for entry in **September 2012** will open in November 2011 and close in January 2012.

QUB may have a second intake in February 2013 (same closing date as above), but this is waiting for a decision by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Keep up to date with developments by visiting the QUB School of Nursing website (see contacts section).

### ***How do I apply for the nursing degree?***

There are 4 branches of nursing, leading to a BSc (Honours) Nursing Sciences. You can apply for more than 1 branch if you wish.

- Adult (QUB, UU at Coleraine and Magee)
- Children's (QUB)
- Mental Health (QUB, UU at Magee)
- Learning Disability (QUB)

## **Entry to QUB**

For entry in September 2012, apply directly to the School of Nursing and Midwifery (see contacts section). This may change – keep up to date with developments by visiting the QUB School of Nursing website.

## **Entry to UU**

For entry in September 2012, apply through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). UCAS applications are made online at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

### ***When and how do I apply for the Midwifery degree?***

The Midwifery degree is only offered by QUB and leads to a BSc (Hons) Midwifery Sciences. Entry requirements are the same as for the nursing degree. Applications for entry in **September 2012** will open in November 2011 and close in January 2012.

For entry in September 2012, apply directly to the School of Nursing and Midwifery (see contacts section). This may change - keep up to date with developments by visiting the QUB School of Nursing website.

### ***Will there be an interview for the Nursing and Midwifery degrees?***

If you are shortlisted you will be asked to attend an interview. Interviews will be held in Spring 2012 and can last between 10 and 20 minutes.

Entry to the Nursing profession is very competitive. For example, UU received 2000 applications for 236 places in 2011 – 2012. The interview is a very important part of the selection process and you should prepare for it in advance.

## **Interview preparation**

Please consider the following questions before your interview and when filling in the personal statement on your application form:

- Can you show that you have a realistic expectation of completing a full time degree? (remember that your training will be classroom and

placement based, which could involve travel, shift work and long hours.)

- Why have you chosen Nursing or Midwifery?
- Why have you chosen to study at QUB or UU?
- Are you interested in any particular aspects of Nursing or Midwifery?
- What personal qualities do you think are important for nurses or midwives?
- Why have you chosen a particular branch of Nursing and can you show that you know what it involves?
- What relevant skills and experience do you have? (for example, work experience or voluntary work in health and social care or youth work.)

### *What else do I need to know?*

To be offered a place, you must:

- Meet the academic entry criteria
- Have a successful interview
- Obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from Access NI. (see contacts section)
- Submit a satisfactory medical report
- Submit satisfactory references

### **Additional entry criteria for QUB**

If the number of applications meeting the essential criteria is higher than the number of Nursing and Midwifery places available, QUB may apply the following additional criteria to all applicants:

- GCSEs at **grade B** to include Mathematics and a Science subject.
- NICATS Maths and Science score of 70% (Access course modules)
- Experience of working (including holiday work, work experience or voluntary work) in a health or social care or pastoral youth work environment.

Check with QUB for further details.

## University Open Days

Open Days are a useful way of finding out more information about the Nursing or Midwifery degrees and give an opportunity to talk to staff.

QUB Open Days will be held on the 8 and 9 September 2011. UU Open Days will be held from 6 - 13 September 2011 at various campuses. Check their website for dates and venues: [www.ulster.ac.uk/gofar/open\\_days\\_2011.html](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/gofar/open_days_2011.html)

## *I am already working as a Health Care Assistant in the Trust. Are there any work based opportunities?*

If you are an experienced Health Care Assistant, already working in a Health Care Trust, you may be able to apply for the Pre-Registration Nursing programme with the Open University (OU). You **must** be sponsored by your employer to apply. The Pre-Registration nursing programme leads to a Diploma in Higher Education and registered nurse status. Contact your employer for further details. Find out more at:

[www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/health-and-social-care/nursing/index.htm](http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/health-and-social-care/nursing/index.htm)

If you are a Health Care Assistant and a member of Unison, they may sponsor you to complete the OU's K101 Introduction to Health and Social Care Certificate. It gives 60 credits towards the OU Nursing degree and you can use it to apply for a place on their Pre-Registration Nursing programme. Contact your Union Learning Representative for further details or see Unison's local learning website: [www.ulearnni.org](http://www.ulearnni.org). Find out more about K101 at: [www8.open.ac.uk/choose/unison/learning/introduction-health-and-social-care](http://www8.open.ac.uk/choose/unison/learning/introduction-health-and-social-care)

## *Is there any financial assistance?*

Nursing and Midwifery students have different financial support arrangements to other higher education students. Unlike other students you do **not** have to

pay tuition fees. You will receive the same support even if you already have a degree in a different subject area.

You will also receive:

- a non - means tested bursary of £6,055 each academic year (**not** based on your household income and you do not pay this money back)
- a one off book allowance (£80)
- a one off uniform allowance (£180)

If you have dependants you can apply for the following allowances (based on your household income):

- Dependants' Allowance
- Parents' Learning Allowance of £1,125 each year
- Childcare costs of up to £1,245 each year

Find out more in our **Connect2...Full Time Higher Education (with dependants)** factfile.

You can't apply for a student loan but you may be entitled to apply for a hardship loan directly from your University. Contact the Student Finance Officer at QUB or UU for details.

Further information on financial support for Nursing and Midwifery students is available from the Bursary Administration Unit, Central Services Agency: T: 028 9055 3661 / 3659 / 3692.

### **Margaret Parkinson Scholarships**

This Scholarship offers up to £1,000 each year for **graduates** with a non-Nursing degree who wish to commence nurse training. Graduates living outside the UK are not eligible.

Further information and the closing date for 2012 will be available soon on the RCN (Royal College of Nursing) website:

[www.rcn.org.uk/membership/scholarshipsawards/rcnmembers](http://www.rcn.org.uk/membership/scholarshipsawards/rcnmembers)

### **Money for Life Project**

As part of this project, EGSA can offer advice if you are concerned about financial support and/or how this might impact on your benefits. For further information contact Paulette on T: 028 9024 4274 or

E: [moneyforlife@egsa.org.uk](mailto:moneyforlife@egsa.org.uk).

Money for Life is a unique partnership between Lloyds Banking Group, the Money Advice Service and the Further Education sector partners in the four nations of the UK. EGSA is the lead partner for Northern Ireland.

### *Useful contacts*

#### **Further Education Colleges**

Belfast Metropolitan College

[www.belfastmet.ac.uk](http://www.belfastmet.ac.uk)

South Eastern Regional College

[www.serc.ac.uk](http://www.serc.ac.uk)

Southern Regional College

[www.src.ac.uk](http://www.src.ac.uk)

Northern Regional College

[www.nrc.ac.uk](http://www.nrc.ac.uk)

South West College

[www.swc.ac.uk](http://www.swc.ac.uk)

North West Regional College

[www.nwrc.ac.uk](http://www.nwrc.ac.uk)

## **Universities**

Open University in Ireland

[www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)

T: 028 9024 5025

Queen's University School of Nursing and Midwifery

[www.qub.ac.uk/nur](http://www.qub.ac.uk/nur)

T: 028 9097 571

University of Ulster School of Nursing (Faculty of Life and Health Sciences)

[www.science.ulster.ac.uk/nursing/](http://www.science.ulster.ac.uk/nursing/)

T: 028 7012 4274

## **Other**

Access NI

[www.dojni.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/accessni)

UCAS

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

Nursing and Midwifery Council

[www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)

Royal College of Nursing

[www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)

NHS Careers

[www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)

### ***I'm still not sure if Nursing or Midwifery is right for me – where can I get further advice?***

You can discuss your career and learning options with an EGSA adviser. Our services are aimed at adults and our advice is confidential and independent.

Visit our website to find out more: <http://egsa.org.uk/helping-you/>, phone us on T: 028 9024 4274 or E: [info@egsa.org.uk](mailto:info@egsa.org.uk).

### ***Related Connect2...Factfiles***

Factfiles can be downloaded from our website: <http://egsa.org.uk>

- Connect2... Access to University
- Connect2...Caring for Children
- Connect2...Return to Learn
- Connect2...Financing Further and Higher Education

While EGSA makes every effort to ensure that the information in this factfile is correct at the time of going to print, we can't accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Before enrolling on a course, please check full details with your choice of learning provider.