

GPN Programme 2019/20
Cohort 8

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Background

Nurses employed in General Practices across Scotland are estimated to conduct almost one third general practice consultations (ISD 2010). This level of care provision is set to rise as primary care meets the challenges of a modernising NHS. To meet varied workforce requirements a structured learning programme operates to support contemporary development of registered nurses employed in the enhanced and expanded general practice nursing role.

The GPN workforce is increasingly recognised in their contribution to community care to training. NES launched and evaluated a pilot GPN Programme in 2012 to 2013 as an important step in creating a career framework for general practice nursing (GPN).

The NES General Practice Nursing Programme

By being a part of this GPN Programme you will develop your knowledge and skills with a quality assured organisation.

Participant Requirements

Participants will be registered adult nurses employed by general practice to be able to complete the programme in 13 months. They will require the written support of their GP employer to participate in all parts of the programme. Table 1 provides the person specification required for participants on this programme. If you are applying to be selected to the GPN Programme this information will help you to write a supporting statement in Section A of the GPN Programme Application Form as you should show how you meet the requirements for participants on this programme of learning.

TABLE 1: PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR NES GPN PROGRAMME

FACTOR	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently employed as a Registered Adult Nurse with a general practice nursing role in Scotland • Employed in general practice with recognised learning needs to develop as a modern general practice nurse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers care as part of a multidisciplinary and multiagency team
QUALIFICATIONS TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered on Part 1 of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register • Educated to a minimum of Pre-Registration Diploma Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship preparation
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to the delivery of quality care (safe, effective and person-centered) • Team player and able to work collaboratively • Critical thinking and problem-solving skills • Good verbal and written communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to attend overnight central study days Be open minded and flexible • Can manage change and handle uncertainty
DISPOSITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of self-motivation • Understanding of professionalism and of confidentiality • Proven commitment to self-development and lifelong learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands personal strengths and weaknesses

Additional Information

The RCGP has educationally accredited this programme since 2012. The NES GPN Programme encourages individuals to apply for academic Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) from universities. Successful participants will receive a Certificate of Completion from NES, which is accompanied by certification from Queen Margaret University-Edinburgh confirming that the University is satisfied that the GPN Programme is appropriately designed and managed. It is recommended that students who successfully complete the programme should be considered to have achieved the equivalent of 60 credits at SCQF level 10 (honours level). This does not represent a direct award of credit but may be used in support of an application for Recognition of Prior Learning (see Appendix II). The credit rating is currently under review now

There are guiding principles available to help you make a claim for RPL from Higher Education Institutions for the learning you experience whilst undertaking the NES General Practice Nursing Programme. This can help you gain access into further learning programmes or gain credit towards further learning.

There are learning contracts to be signed with NES by successful applicants, the GPN Education Supervisor, and the employing practices.

Programme Management

NES GPN Education Team

- **NES GPN Programme Board** monitors the quality of education in the NES Medical Directorate. Board membership consists of representation from nursing, general practitioners, practice management, RCN, RCGP and others. Programme reports and evaluations are reviewed by the Board and recommendations are made to improve programme quality, content, and administration. The Board ratifies participant summative assessment and makes recommendations on participant referrals.
- **NES National Co-ordinator for GPN** is the programme leader who has a post graduate qualification in teaching. The role includes planning and delivering the learning programme while supported by a team of GPN Education Supervisors and the NES GPN Programme Board. The Programme Leader is responsible for organizing the process of selecting participants, delivering the programme within budget, monitoring participant progress and referrals, and writing annual reports including programme evaluation. There is an identified link to Nursing Midwifery Allied Health Professionals (NMAHP) at NES and the Programme Leader works collaboratively across the medical and NMAHP Directorates.
- **NES GPN Education Supervisors** have a defined and monitored role. Each GPN Education Supervisor must successfully attain an academic qualification at masters' level in teaching and learning skills to deliver practice-based education. In addition, they have completed learning on the programme structure and assessment. Wherever possible GPN Education Supervisors will be geographically matched to provide face-to-face, telephone or VC Facilitated Learning Sessions on a monthly basis from March 2019 to January 2020.

General Practice Team

NES requires the practice team to identify member(s) of staff to support the participants (this may be the same person):

- **Practice Sponsor** (normally a GP partner or Nurse Partner) to support the co-ordination of their employee nurse to undertake the NES GPN Programme by;
 - identifying an appropriate practice preceptor for the participant in the general practice
 - arranging access to clinical experience to enable participant to undertake learning activities
 - ensuring practice time is available for participant to attend Facilitated Learning Sessions and central events.
- **Practice Preceptor** will be nominated by the employing general practice. This should be an experienced senior practice nurse who can demonstrate an ability and enthusiasm to supervise the activities of the participant. They will have the skills to provide encouragement, feedback and guidance. This person will communicate closely with the participant, the Practice Sponsor and the NES GPN Education Supervisor.

Timetable

This is a 13-month programme using work-based learning supported by mandatory 7 central study days and regular Facilitated Learning Sessions. Successful applicants will also be asked to complete eLearning topics in February. These intensive taught days may be held at a variety of locations throughout Scotland. NES funds associated travel and subsistence according to NES policies.

Participants will be matched to a NES GPN Education Supervisor who will introduce the participant to the work-based style of learning and meet with the key members of the practice team. The learning environment in the employing practice is important. NES has written standards which applicants should read in Appendix I. Section B of the GPN Programme application form is designed for applicant's employing practice to assess and affirm that the learning environment can meet these standards. If you or your practice requires further clarification about this self-assessment, please contact NES National Co-Ordinator for GPN (lynne.innes@nes.scot.nhs.uk)

The programme continues with flexible Facilitated Learning Sessions (FLS) as stated above. The participant can expect to receive up to 4 hours of learning / month, except over holiday periods. The venue for Facilitated Learning Sessions is flexible but the participant can expect teaching and observation of clinical skills in their practice. There are five sets of central days (see Box 1 for dates). Accommodation is provided for those unable to travel to the venue between days of teaching in time for morning sessions. It is essential that participants attend these dates however in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances NES will help provide any missed essential learning.

Box 1: Proposed dates for central study days (2019/20)	
Days 1&2	27 th and 28 th February 2019
Day 3	27 th May 2019
Day 4	23 rd July 2019
Day 5	17 th September 2019
Days 6&7	10 th & 11 th December 2019

The notional hours of learning are approximately 550 and you should plan to study the curriculum for 6 hours / week (Table 2). Please note that as a practice based programme approximately half of the notional hours will be experiential learning while working in the practice. Therefore, it is essential that the participant can work enough hours in the practice to have exposure to the required learning opportunities to complete the curriculum in the 15 months of study successfully. The final portfolio of evidence is expected by the end of March 2020.

Table 2: Learning & Teaching Strategies	
Type of Learning & Teaching Approaches	No of Hours
1. Taught Learning	Total 110 hours
Face to face formal teaching in blocks of 2 x 2 days, 3 x 1 days, and includes facilitated small group learning, project work, clinical skills	60 hours
Individual work-based facilitated learning by NES education supervisors	50 hours
2. Self Directed Learning	Total 150 hours
Writing up portfolio for assessment	Approx 100 hours
Online learning using various national resources	Approx 50 hours
3. Experiential work based learning.	Total 300 hours
While undertaking GP duties complete competencies required for portfolio completion.	Approx 250 hours
	Total 600 hours*
<p>*Total formal learning is approximately 250 hours averaging 5 hours / week (approximately 4 hours / week of this time will be self directed learning) Total experiential work-based learning of 300 hours averages at 4 hours / week It is therefore key that any nurse on the programme of learning is employed sufficient hours to be able to complete the programme within 13 months</p>	

Curriculum

The programme learning outcomes are based upon *Practice* Level 5 of the Modernising Careers Framework and an *Educational* Level SCQF 10 (honours). This will enable registered nurses new to general practice nursing develop knowledge and skills to deliver quality contemporary general practice nursing. There will necessarily be a time of consolidation at the end of the NES GPN programme to enable nurses to further develop. NES can help provide advice on your future continuing professional development needs for both you and your employer.

Non-medical prescribing is not included in the GPN Programme.

Box 2: Curriculum Content for NES General Practice Nursing Programme

Early Part (Skill Focus)	Middle Part (Decision Making Focus)	Later Part (Autonomy Focus)
<p>Study skills</p> <p>Practice management</p> <p>Sexual Health</p> <p>Skills in vaccination and cervical cytology screening</p> <p>Communication & consultation skills</p> <p>Behaviour change counselling</p> <p>Healthy Lifestyle Interventions</p> <p>Clinical governance (audit / guidelines / systems)</p>	<p>Essential long-term condition management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypertension • Asthma • COPD • Diabetes • CVD • CKD • Dementia • Cancer as a LTC • Stroke & Frailty <p>Learning difficulty / vulnerable adults</p> <p>Mental health</p> <p>Nursing children in practice</p> <p>Health Improvement</p> <p>Supporting self-management, concordance, asset-based approach, Care Planning & Support, Anticipatory Care Planning</p> <p>Culture / diversity</p>	<p>Health & social care integration, integrated community teams</p> <p>Strategic planning</p> <p>Social deprivation</p> <p>Co-morbidity issues</p> <p>Quality Improvement Patient Safety</p> <p>Change management</p> <p>Significant event analysis</p> <p>Career and development (PDP)</p> <p>Research and ethics</p>
<p>Communication & Consultation Skills</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Communication & Consultation Skills</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Communication & Consultation Skills</p> <p>Leadership</p>

Assessment

To be awarded a NES GPN Programme Certificate of Completion, participants must submit evidence of satisfactory learning that meets the learning outcomes at Practice Level 5 in the NES Career & Development Framework for General Practice Nursing (2012) and the Education SCQF level 10:

1. Education Plan linked to capability assessed by NES GPN Education Supervisor.
2. Portfolio evidence including:
 - a) ePortfolio of short reports and reflective writing on tutorial learning
 - b) Assessment of long term condition reviews.
3. Consultations to analyse communication skills & behaviour change counselling.
4. Essays on cervical cytology sampling audit, hypertension / asthma, supporting self management and significant event analysis.

APPENDIX I

NES GPN Programme: Standards for Learning Environment		
Learning Environment Type		
1. General Practice	Participant Expectations	Education Team Standards
1.1 Learning Relationships within the General Practice specific to the NES GPN Programme Participant	<p>While working in the general practice as a participant on the GPN Programme the Participant can expect to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their role within the General Practice Team (GPT), as participant and GPN employee. • Their relationship with Practice Sponsor & Preceptor to support their work-based learning. • The role of NES in the work-based aspects of the learning programme, that of the NES Education Supervisor. 	<p>General Practice Team (GPT) is responsible for understanding the participant's role as participant and practice team member as described in the NES GPN Programme Learning Contract.</p> <p>Practice Sponsor & Preceptor are both responsible for facilitating communication with participant and other members of the GPT to support learning.</p> <p>NES is responsible for developing a clear strategy for establishing and maintaining communication with NES Education Supervisor and the Practice Sponsor & Preceptor.</p>
1.2 Practice Teamwork	<p>Participant can expect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel part of a GPT that values the contribution of GPN in delivering health care. • Approach members of GPT for support. • Learn within an effective team working environment. 	<p>Practice Sponsor is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of GPT roles. • Promoting a culture of support for participant. • Promoting the benefits of teamwork.
1.3 Flexibility in Relation to NES Programme	<p>Participant can expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from Practice Sponsor in undertaking the programme of learning. • To be flexible to meet the demands of both the employing practice and the learning programme. 	<p>The Practice Sponsor is responsible for supporting the participant while considering both the participant's needs and the practice service needs.</p> <p>The GPN Education Supervisor is responsible for negotiating delivery of Facilitated Learning Sessions but balancing both the participant's and the GPN Education Supervisor's practice's service needs.</p>

1.4 Learning Ethos	<p>The participant can expect to learn within an environment which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes learning. • Uses National & Local Guidelines, for example in relation to evidence informed practice, patient safety and person-centred care. • Promotes equality and diversity. 	<p>The GPT has a responsibility to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote learning to deliver a high standard of health care. • Use National & Local Guidelines for example in relation to evidence informed practice, patient safety and person-centred care. <p>The general practice placement and NES education providers are responsible for promoting equality and diversity.</p>
1.5 Physical Facilities for Learning	<p>The participant is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake work-based learning in a safe physical environment. • Have access to well maintained & quality equipment, IT facilities and consulting rooms to complete the programme of learning and deliver safe practice. 	<p>The practice is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing a learning environment audit and practice profile. • Providing well maintained and quality equipment, IT facilities and consulting room space for learning and safe practice.
2 Education Providers	Participant Expectations	Education Team Standards
2.1 Characteristics of GPT and NES GPN Education Team	<p>The participant can expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NES GPN National Co-Ordinator to manage the programme and participants' progress using reports forwarded by participant, Preceptor and Education Supervisor. • GPN Education Supervisor to supervise their work-based learning programme. <p>Participant can expect the characteristics of the GPN Education Supervisor to include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of up to date GPN • appropriate teaching and learning skills • timely organisational skills • motivated • highly experienced • currently employed in general practice 	<p>Supported by NES GPN Programme Board, NES National Co-Ordinator is responsible for managing the programme and monitoring participant learning environments.</p> <p>NES National Co-Ordinator is responsible for providing relevant participant information to GPN Education Supervisor.</p> <p>NES is responsible for supporting GPN Education Supervisor to develop and maintain the following characteristics;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of up to date GPN • appropriate teaching and learning skills • timely organisational skills • motivated • highly experienced • currently employed in general practice • a participant-centred attitude

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a participant-centred attitude • fair and objective in assessments <p>Participant can expect the Preceptor to be an experienced member of the PCT able to provide clinical supervision and work place support highlighting any learning issues to the Education Supervisor.</p> <p>Participant can expect fair, objective and timely assessment of performance on the programme from GPN Education Supervisor and NES National Co-Ordinator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fair and objective in assessments <p>GPN Education Supervisor employing practice provided with trainer bursary to provide protected time for participant Facilitated Learning Sessions.</p> <p>Personal learning development will be provided by GPN Education Supervisor network and peer evaluation.</p> <p>Practice Sponsor, in partnership with NES, will select the Preceptor to provide work place clinical supervision and support. GPN Education Supervisor is responsible for providing Preceptor with regular communication and support.</p>
2.2 Knowledge of learning programme	<p>Participant can expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NES GPN National Co-Ordinator to understand the content and structure of the programme to make decisions on progress. • GPN Education Supervisor to have knowledge of the learning programme and assessment structure to support their progress. • Practice Sponsor & Preceptor to understand the programme content and assessment structure to support learning. • To be provided with programme handbook detailing programme content and assessment structure. 	<p>NES GPN National Co-Ordinator is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme monitoring and providing an annual report for the NES Programme Board who are responsible for monitoring the programme quality. • Providing GPN Education Supervisor with annual update training and regular communication. • Offer an induction for Preceptor to understand the programme content and assessment structure to support their participant and provide a GPN Programme Handbook for Preceptors.
2.3 Feedback	<p>Participant can expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NES GPN National Co-Ordinator to monitor progress including feedback. • Education Supervisor to provide feedback that is constructive and sensitive, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses, to support the participant to progress. 	<p>NES GPN National Co-Ordinator is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring participant progress and referrals • Providing annual updates to support GPN Education Supervisor to provide feedback that is constructive and sensitive, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses, to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preceptor to be able to support, observe and supervise clinical practice providing regular and constructive feedback to the participant. 	<p>support the participant to progress.</p> <p>GPN Education Supervisor is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing fair and honest feedback to the participant • Communicating regularly with the Preceptor using notes and informal meetings. <p>Preceptor is responsible for providing regular and constructive feedback to the participant.</p>
3. Participant	Participant Expectations	Education Team Standards
3.1 Identification of learning needs	<p>The participant can expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A practice environment appropriate to the participant's learning needs. • Information on the learning environment standards in the programme handbook. • To assess learning needs after reflecting on programme learning outcomes and develop individual learning plans with GPN Education Supervisor. • To identify any local learning needs, not in the NES learning outcomes, and highlight to the GPN Education Supervisor and Preceptor. • To identify learning needs in the year following successful completion of the programme. 	<p>GPN Education Supervisor will be responsible for supporting participant to develop individual learning plans to support successful programme completion.</p> <p>GPN Education Supervisor and Preceptor will be responsible for addressing additional local learning needs where possible. (GPN Education Supervisor responsible for informing NES GPN National Co-Ordinator for programme review)</p> <p>GPN Education Supervisor is responsible for undertaking a learning and development interview with the participant at beginning and end of programme to deliver a participant-centred approach.</p>
3.2 Autonomy	Participant can expect clinical support from the Preceptor and GPN Education Supervisor however autonomous practice will be increasingly encouraged throughout the GPN Programme.	The GPN Education Supervisor and Preceptor are responsible for monitoring participant progress in decision making ability in order to assess participant readiness for more autonomous practice.
3.3 Raising concerns	Participant can expect to: Be able to raise concerns about practice placement experience.	Preceptor and GPN Education Supervisor have a responsibility to be open and willing to listen to any participant concerns.

	Receive guidance from the NES GPN National Co-Ordinator on standards as described in NES NMAHP Quality Standards for Practice Placements (2008) and the GPN Learning Standards (2012)	The NES GPN National Co-Ordinator is responsible for providing guidance for participants and GPN Education Supervisors in difficulty with the learning environment, referring to standards as described in NES NMAHP Quality Standards for Practice Placements (2008) and the GPN Learning Standards.
3.4 Service commitment	Participant can expect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet the employer's service commitments while undertaking the programme however this should be balanced against the learning required in the work-based curriculum. To undertake reasonable workloads within a time frame commensurate with participant ability. 	The GPN Education Supervisor has responsibility for supporting the participant to balance completion of programme learning activities with the needs of their service commitment e.g. during influenza vaccination period competencies related to this will be completed. Practice Sponsor and Preceptor have a responsibility to monitor the participant workload to avoid unnecessary stress for the participant.
4. Facilitated Learning Sessions	Participant Expectations	Education Team Standards
4.1 Organisation	Participant can expect Facilitated Learning Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be arranged according to content and individual circumstances (face to face, telephone or VC). Times and venue to be negotiable between GPN Education Supervisor, Practice Sponsor and participant to suit service commitments. (Weekly/monthly) An average of 4 hours / month can be expected by the participant.) Conducted as face to face in either the participant's practice, the GPN Education Supervisor's practice or an independent venue. To be pre- planned to include shadowing clinical activity and 	Education Supervisor has a responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange time and venue according to content and individual circumstances. These can be face to face, telephone or videoconferencing. Negotiate with Practice Sponsor and participant to arrange best times to suit service commitments. (Weekly or fortnightly. No more than 1 month should elapse between Facilitated Learning Sessions. An average of 4 hours / month can be expected by the participant.) To discuss with participant each tutorial's most appropriate style: face to face in either the participant's practice or GPN Education Supervisor's practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • / or protected learning time • Not to be cancelled unless there is good cause to avoid disruption to service commitments. (Participant cancellation without good cause will result in reduced tutorial time.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • or an independent venue. • To pre- plan Facilitated Learning Sessions to include shadowing clinical activity and / or protected learning time. • To avoid cancellation unless there is good cause to avoided disruption to service commitment.
4.2 Needs Led	<p>Participant can expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated Learning Sessions to be structured in order that learning outcomes are met. • GPN Education Supervisor to provide opportunities for participant led content. 	<p>NES GPN National Co-Ordinator is responsible for providing a tutorial programme in the participant programme handbook.</p> <p>GPN Education Supervisor will individualise the tutorial programme to meet individual learning plans and provide opportunities for participant led content.</p>
4.3 Effective	<p>Participant can expect Facilitated Learning Sessions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stretch and challenge their learning and nursing practice. • Require preparation work. • Add to their portfolio of evidence. <p>Participant can expect an evaluation of their overall programme experience and specific aspects of their learning experience including work based Facilitated Learning Sessions.</p>	<p>GPN Education Supervisor will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Facilitated Learning Sessions to meet individual learning needs to present learning challenges. • Guiding participants to prepare adequately for Facilitated Learning Sessions. • Communicating with Preceptor to inform them of the tutorial programme and how it links to participant clinical skills and work-based activities. • Assessing participant clinical skills and providing formative feedback on tutorial activity. <p>Preceptor will be responsible for confirming participant clinical skill and other work-based activity for portfolio.</p> <p>The Practice Sponsor and Preceptor can expect to be invited to evaluate their experience of supporting a participant on the NES GPN Programme.</p>

APPENDIX II

Gaining Credit for Your Learning at Higher Education Institutions in Scotland

This explanation about having your learning recognized by an academic institution was adapted from the Flying Start website for the NES Education Programme

(<http://www.flyingstart.scot.nhs.uk/get-connected.aspx>)

Purpose

Academic level and credit can be allocated to learning which sits outside formal qualification programmes. The process of allocating level and credit is known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The purpose of these guiding principles is to help you make a claim for RPL from Higher Education Institutions [HEIs] for the learning you have experienced whilst undertaking the NES General Practice Nursing Programme. This can help you gain access into further learning programmes, or gain credit towards further learning.

Background

The NES General Practice Nursing Programme uses the workplace as the learning environment. Although it offers a structured and integrated approach to your professional development, it does this through workplace learning. Queen Margaret University- Edinburgh has formally credit rated the NES GPN Programme by reviewing documentation and is satisfied that the programme is appropriately designed and managed. It is recommended that participants who successfully complete the programme should be considered to have achieved the equivalent of 60 credits at SCQF level 10. If you want to have your NES General Practice Nursing Programme learning recognised by a university towards another programme of learning, then you will need to go through their RPL process to gain credit against learning programmes you wish to take part in. Successful participants will receive a copy of the verification of credit rating by Queen Margaret University-Edinburgh with the result of the credit rating process and the NES GPN Programme Leader can provide further documentation if required.

All universities in Scotland can assign credit to learning via RPL processes. While there are some differences between different HEIs, this document outlines some of the core principles common to all organizations.

What does RPL involve?

An RPL claim for credit involves the comparison of an individual's learning to the aims and/or learning outcomes of the qualification or learning programme for which credit is being sought. The RPL process for the award of credit will determine the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level and the number of credit points that can be awarded.

The outcome of an RPL claim for credit may be the award of credit points within a qualification or learning programme, or for entry to a programme of study, possibly at an advanced level. The process of RPL for credit (also known as summative recognition) can help you to:

- gain entry to a programme of learning at an HEI
- gain credit towards a qualification or programme of learning and so allow you to join at an advanced level, shortening the period of study
- gain credit within a qualification or a programme of learning you have already started.

If you decide that you would like to claim RPL for your NES General Practice Nursing Programme, then the first step in the process is to contact the University you wish to gain credit from. RPL mostly requires a fee paid to the university and requires you to register for a specific programme or course of learning.

NES General Practice Nursing Programme and RPL

RPL claims involve:

- the identification of the **level** of learning which has taken place
- the allocation of **credit points** for the learning which has taken place.

What level of learning is the NES General Practice Nursing Programme?

NES General Practice Nursing Programme was designed as a development programme for registered nurses newly employed in General Practice. As such, it is undertaken by individuals with existing academic qualifications at different levels on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework [SCQF].

The Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is Scotland's 'national language' for describing all types of learning and qualification. It is a 12-level framework which groups qualifications together according to their level of difficulty or complexity. Each level is defined by a set of descriptors, which can be applied to learning wherever it takes place. As a result, it is possible to see how academic, general (school-based) and vocational qualifications compare with each other in terms of difficulty. The level descriptors are also used to assess the level of non-certificated learning completed as part of any RPL claim.¹

As a nurse undertaking NES General Practice Nursing Programme, you may already have completed a qualification at SCQF Level 9, 10 or 11. However, you may be seeking to make an RPL claim for learning at a higher – or lower – level. The important thing when claiming RPL is that you can evidence learning relevant to the aim and level of the learning programme which you wish to enter. This is the copy of the verification of credit rating by Queen Margaret University-Edinburgh and your Certificate of Completion from NES.

How much credit is possible for the learning completed via NES General Practice Nursing Programme?

The amount of credit which you might be allocated as part of an RPL claim depends on a range of factors. All credit is allocated in the form of credit points, with one credit point equating with 10 notional hours of learning.

Total learning hours

¹ Provide link to SCQF Framework and level descriptors on SCQF Website (www.scqf.org.uk)

The successful completion of NES General Practice Nursing Programme is a notional 600 hours of effort and has been credit rated at 60 credit points.

HEIs and allocation of credit for learning

There are also differences between HEIs in relation to the amount of credit that their institution allows to be awarded for RPL towards specific learning programmes. For example, some will allow a maximum of 60 credits to be awarded towards a degree through RPL, whilst others have a maximum of 40 credits. It is worth checking this with the individual universities that you are considering studying at, prior to applying for RPL.

How to Use RPL

As mentioned above, credit gained for learning via RPL can be used in a number of ways:

- to get a place on an academic programme. You may not have the required formal qualifications to gain a place but can, instead, demonstrate that you have gained the necessary knowledge and skills through undertaking the NES General Practice Nursing Programme. It should be noted that currency of learning is considered as well and this is normally within 5 years of completion.

Example 1

Alistair has a diploma-level, (SCQF Level 9), qualification in nursing but is keen to gain admission to a Masters-level programme at his local university. The university requires him to demonstrate evidence of SCQF Level 10 learning. As he is working through NES General Practice Nursing Programme he can map his learning activities to the SCQF Level Descriptors for Level 10 study and makes sure that the evidence of learning he includes in his portfolio meets the required level. He intends to use his NES General Practice Nursing Programme portfolio as evidence of having met the entrance qualification for his chosen Masters degree.

- to allow you to gain credit towards a programme of study and to join at an advanced level. This means that you have to undertake a shorter period of study in order to complete your academic qualification.

Example 2

Sheena qualified with an honours degree, (SCQF Level 10), in nursing and now wants to start studying for a Masters degree. The programme she selects has a work based learning module included as the first period of study. Sheena submits her evidence of credit rating by Queen Margaret University, the NES GPN Programme Certificate of Completion and Portfolio as evidence of having already met the learning outcomes of the module and successfully gains exemption from the initial part of the course.

- to gain credit within an academic programme that you have already started. Again, this means that you would have a shorter period of study in order to complete your academic qualification as you will demonstrate that you have already completed some of the learning required.

Example 3

Alida started a Masters degree, (SCQF Level 11). Having progressed through NES General Practice Nursing Programme, she realises that the work she has undertaken can be submitted as evidence of having completed

one of the modules that is included in her Masters programme. She maps the module learning outcomes against the evidence she has produced in her NES General Practice Nursing Programme portfolio and successfully gains exemption from the module. She may also be asked to demonstrate having achieved SCQF level 11 attributes by providing additional evidence.

The guiding principles presented below will support you if you wish to make a claim for RPL for credit.

Generic Principles

If you wish to make a claim for RPL for the learning you have undertaken whilst on the NES General Practice Nursing Programme, you should be aware that:

- Learning must match the content of the learning outcomes
- Learning must match the level of the learning outcomes
- Learning must be current i.e. is normally within 5 years

Principle 1

Identify the learning programme you wish to gain credit against and investigate the RPL processes offered by the HEI(s) you choose.

Before beginning any RPL claim, you need to be clear about which academic programme of study you wish gain credit for. It is worth seeking as much information as possible before you proceed with your application. Different HEIs offer different RPL options and you need to be clear about these before you apply. You will be required to submit evidence to support your claim: verification of credit rating by Queen Margaret University, the NES GPN Programme Certificate of Completion and Portfolio.

Principle 2

Make arrangements to submit an RPL claim at the HEI you have chosen

Once you have decided that you want to proceed with a RPL claim for a specific course, then it is essential that you contact the HEI as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements. Most universities will have a dedicated RPL co-ordinator who will be your initial point of contact when seeking support and advice in relation to your claim. The HEI should inform you of exactly what is required and this will inform your decision about whether this is the course of action you want to take. If you decide to proceed, it will also enable you to access support with your RPL claim at an early stage.

Principle 3

The HEI you have chosen should provide guidance and support for the RPL process. This should include guidance on the following:

- *how to evidence your level of learning against the learning outcomes of the programme you have chosen, or against SCQF Level Descriptors.*
- *how to submit your verification of credit rating by Queen Margaret University, the NES GPN Programme Certificate of Completion and Portfolio in support of your claim.*
- *information on the processes and procedures you need to follow in order to submit your claim, including any costs involved and the possible time required to process a claim*
- *access to an identified support person at your selected HEI*

Principle 4

Complete the RPL claim according to the processes and procedures required by your chosen HEI. All HEIs are required to have RPL processes and procedures in place. These will, normally, outline your responsibilities in relation to making your RPL claim. It is important that you know and understand these processes and procedures. HEIs will also indicate the support that you can expect to receive whilst preparing your claim.