

THE NMC TEST OF COMPETENCE 2021 FOR ADULT NURSING HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION:

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Test of Competence 2021 (ToC 21) for adult nursing in the UK. It focuses on the main themes, key proficiencies, and associated skills and procedures outlined in the blueprint, aiming to guide applicants in their preparation.

PURPOSE OF THE TOC 21:

The ToC 21 is designed for internationally educated nurses applying to join the NMC register who do not hold an NMC-approved qualification. It evaluates their competence against the NMC's Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses (2018).

STRUCTURE OF THE TOC 21:

The ToC 21 comprises two parts:

1. **Computer Based Test (CBT):** A multiple-choice exam assessing theoretical knowledge.
2. **Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE):** A practical exam evaluating clinical skills in a simulated environment.

CONTENT MAPPING:

The ToC 21 blueprint aligns with the seven platforms outlined in the NMC Standards of Proficiency:

1. Being an Accountable Professional
2. Promoting Health and Preventing Ill Health
3. Assessing Needs and Planning Care
4. Providing and Evaluating Care
5. Leading and Managing Nursing Care and Working in Teams
6. Improving Safety and Quality of Care
7. Coordinating Care

Each platform further details specific proficiencies, with some designated as **Patient Safety Proficiencies (PSP)**, which must be demonstrated competently in the OSCE.

KEY THEMES AND PROFICIENCIES:

1. Being an Accountable Professional:

- **Professional, legal, and ethical conduct:** Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the NMC Code, relevant legislation, and ethical frameworks. They must also display an understanding of mandatory reporting duties and the principles of candour and transparency. "(PSP)"
- "1.1 Understand and act in accordance with the Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates, and fulfil all registration requirements (PSP)"
- **Resilience and self-awareness:** Applicants should demonstrate resilience, emotional intelligence, and an ability to reflect on their practice.
- "1.5 Understand the demands of professional practice and demonstrate how to recognise signs of vulnerability in themselves or colleagues and the action required to minimise risks to health"
- **Effective Communication:** Communication skills are paramount and assessed across all platforms. This includes active listening, responding to verbal and non-verbal cues, using appropriate questioning techniques, and adapting communication to individual needs. "(PSP)"
- "1.11 Communicate effectively using a range of skills and strategies with colleagues and people at all stages of life and with a range of mental, physical, cognitive and behavioural health challenges (PSP)"

2. PROMOTING HEALTH AND PREVENTING ILL HEALTH:

- **Health promotion and disease prevention:** Applicants should be knowledgeable about health promotion principles, epidemiology, and the wider determinants of health. They must also be able to effectively communicate health information to individuals and groups.
- "2.1 Understand and apply the aims and principles of health promotion, protection and improvement and the prevention of ill health when engaging with people"
- **Behaviour change and lifestyle factors:** Applicants should be able to discuss the impact of lifestyle choices on health and utilize evidence-based approaches to support individuals in making positive changes.
- "2.7 assess motivation and capacity for behaviour change and clearly explain cause and effect relationships related to common health risk behaviours including smoking, obesity, sexual practice, alcohol and substance use"
- **Infection prevention and control:** Understanding and applying infection control principles, including standard precautions, aseptic technique, and antimicrobial stewardship, is crucial. "(PSP)"
- "2.12 Protect health through understanding and applying the principles of infection prevention and control, including communicable disease surveillance and antimicrobial stewardship and resistance (PSP)"

3. ASSESSING NEEDS AND PLANNING CARE:

- **Holistic assessments:** Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of human development, anatomy and physiology, common health conditions, and their impact on individuals. They should be able to conduct comprehensive, person-centred assessments to inform care planning. "(PSP)"
- "3.3 Demonstrate and apply knowledge of all commonly encountered mental, physical, behavioural and cognitive health conditions, medication usage and treatments when undertaking full and accurate assessments of nursing care needs and when developing, prioritising and reviewing person centred care plans (PSP)"
- **Capacity and safeguarding:** Assessing an individual's capacity to make decisions and recognizing signs of risk and vulnerability are critical aspects of safe and effective care. "(PSP)"
- "3.9 Recognise and assess people at risk of harm and the situations that may put them at risk, ensuring prompt action is taken to safeguard those who are vulnerable (PSP)"
- **Interpreting investigations:** Applicants should be able to interpret results from routine investigations, such as vital signs, blood tests, and ECGs. They must be able to respond appropriately to abnormal findings, taking prompt action or escalating concerns as necessary. "(PSP)"
- "3.12 Interpret results from routine investigations, taking prompt action when required by implementing appropriate interventions, requesting additional investigations or escalating to others (PSP)"

4. PROVIDING AND EVALUATING CARE:

- **Person-centred care delivery:** Applicants must demonstrate skills in providing care that prioritises safety, dignity, comfort, and individual needs. "(PSP)"
- "4.1 Demonstrate and apply an understanding of what is important to people and how to use this knowledge to ensure their needs for safety, dignity, privacy, comfort and sleep can be met, acting as a role model for others in providing evidence based person-centred care (PSP)"
- **Managing common conditions and symptoms:** Applicants should be proficient in managing common physical and mental health conditions, including pain, anxiety, and deterioration. They should also be able to effectively utilise therapeutic communication techniques and approaches. "(PSP)"
- "4.4 Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to support people with commonly encountered mental health, behavioural, cognitive and learning challenges, and act as a role model for others in providing high quality nursing interventions to meet people's needs (PSP)"
- **End-of-life care:** Applicants should demonstrate knowledge and sensitivity in providing compassionate end-of-life care, including symptom management, supporting families, and respecting cultural and spiritual beliefs.
- "4.9 Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to prioritise what is important to people and their families when providing evidence-based person-centred nursing care at

end of life including the care of people who are dying, families, the deceased and the bereaved"

- **Medication administration:** Safe and accurate medication administration is essential, including calculating dosages, understanding different routes of administration, and recognizing potential adverse reactions. "(PSP)"
- "4.14 Understand the principles of safe and effective administration and optimisation of medicines in accordance with local and national policies and demonstrate proficiency and accuracy when calculating dosages of prescribed medicines (PSP)"

5. LEADING AND MANAGING NURSING CARE AND WORKING IN TEAMS:

- **Leadership and teamwork:** Applicants should understand the principles of effective leadership, team dynamics, and performance management. They should be able to delegate and supervise effectively, promoting a positive and collaborative working environment.
- "5.1 Understand the principles of effective leadership, management, group and organisational dynamics and culture and apply these to team working and decision-making"
- **Interprofessional collaboration:** Applicants must be able to effectively collaborate with other healthcare professionals, respecting their roles and scopes of practice to ensure seamless patient care.
- "5.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and scope of practice of all members of the nursing and interdisciplinary team and how to make best use of the contributions of others involved in providing care"

6. IMPROVING SAFETY AND QUALITY OF CARE:

- **Safety culture and risk management:** Applicants should understand health and safety legislation, risk assessment processes, and the importance of a safety culture within healthcare settings. "(PSP)"
- "6.1 Understand and apply the principles of health and safety legislation and regulations and maintain safe work and care environments (PSP)"
- **Quality improvement and audit:** Participating in audit activities, identifying areas for improvement, and utilizing improvement methodologies are essential skills for enhancing the quality of care.
- "6.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of improvement methodologies, participate in all stages of audit activity and identify appropriate quality improvement"
- **Incident reporting and learning:** Understanding the importance of incident reporting, near-misses, and learning from errors is crucial for promoting patient safety and continuous improvement.

- "6.8 Demonstrate an understanding of how to identify, report and critically reflect on near misses, critical incidents, major incidents and serious adverse events in order to learn from them and influence their future practice"

7. COORDINATING CARE:

- **Interagency working and policy:** Applicants should understand the principles of interagency collaboration, the impact of healthcare policies, and the complexities of integrated care delivery.
- "7.1 Understand and apply the principles of partnership, collaboration and interagency working across all relevant sectors"
- **Managing complex needs:** Applicants must be able to effectively coordinate care for individuals with complex needs, ensuring continuity of care and maximizing independence.
- "7.5 Understand and recognise the need to respond to the challenges of providing safe, effective and person-centred nursing care for people who have co-morbidities and complex care needs"
- **Advocacy and equity:** Advocating for vulnerable individuals, promoting equitable access to healthcare, and making reasonable adjustments to care are crucial responsibilities. "(PSP)"
- "7.9 Facilitate equitable access to healthcare for people who are vulnerable or have a disability, demonstrate the ability to advocate on their behalf when required, and make necessary reasonable adjustments to the assessment, planning and delivery of their care (PSP)"

ANNEXES A AND B:

These annexes outline specific communication skills, therapeutic approaches, and nursing procedures relevant to the various platforms. Applicants should review these annexes carefully to understand the practical skills required for both the CBT and OSCE.

CONCLUSION:

The NMC ToC 21 assesses a broad range of knowledge, skills, and professional values essential for safe and effective adult nursing practice in the UK. Using the blueprint as a guide, applicants should ensure their preparation covers all seven platforms, paying particular attention to Patient Safety Proficiencies and the practical skills outlined in Annexes A and B.