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You are a valued part of a huge network of active RCN members and, now that you are stepping into your career as a registered nursing associate (RNA), the RCN is here to support you in promoting excellence in practice and shaping health policy. We'll provide you with the tools and resources you need to help you deliver high-quality patient care.

As both a professional body and trade union, the RCN has a unique strength in providing members with a powerful voice. Sometimes that voice takes the form of individual support and guidance, or representation at times when members feel most vulnerable and alone. At other times, that voice can contribute to the wider nursing community through our networks, forums, and campaigns.

We'd like to show you how you can stay connected with the RCN, find support and resources when you need them, have your voice heard and become more active as a member.

At the RCN, we pride ourselves on the member support that we offer, and we have developed and provided dedicated resources to support our members as they live and work through challenging times.

Looking after yourself, your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing is important to us, as you progress through your career.

We know that the skills, values, behaviours, knowledge and understanding that you have gained as a trainee nursing associate (TNA) will provide you with a comprehensive base to continue your development.



Introduction

As an RNA you are an integral part of the nursing team, working with people of all ages, in a variety of settings. Your role contributes to the core work of nursing, releasing time for registered nurses to focus on more complex clinical care.

Whether you choose to work within the NHS, independent sector, or social care, you will continue to learn new skills as you develop and grow in your role.

This guide will support you in self-managing your transition from a TNA to RNA.

Top Tips

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Employment checklist	<p>Have you received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">your job description?your contract of employment? See the RCN advice guide on contracts: rcn.org.uk/contractsdetails of working patterns – days/shifts/times? <p>If a new employer, they will need to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">your nursing qualificationRNA NMC PIN. <p>Check if the employer will require an additional form of identification, such as a driving licence.</p> <p>Are preceptorship plans arranged? And do you have all the relevant documentation to support future learning, training and development?</p> <p>Create/maintain an e-portfolio that collates and records learning and development through preceptorship.</p> <p>Plan opportunities to develop practice supervisor skills.</p> <p>Have you received the information about your induction to the organisation, if you need one?</p> <p>Update your work details with the RCN at: rcn.org.uk/log-in</p> <p>Engage with networks and forums of choice and consider how these inform and support your current role and ongoing professional development.</p> <p>When you first apply for registration with the NMC, and every time you undergo revalidation in the future, you will be asked to complete a declaration to confirm that you have in place, or will have in place when you practise, appropriate indemnity arrangements. rcn.org.uk/get-help/indemnity-scheme</p>
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Standards of proficiency for registered nursing associates

(nmc.org.uk)

The standards of proficiency for RNAs are set out by the NMC and are grouped under six platforms. It is important that you understand them because they:

- represent the knowledge, skills and attributes that all RNAs must demonstrate when caring for people of all ages and across all health and care settings
- reflect what the public can expect RNAs to know and be able to do in order to deliver safe, compassionate and effective care
- provide a benchmark for those who plan to return to practice after a period of absence.

The six platforms

1. Being an accountable professional

2. Promoting health and preventing ill health

3. Providing and monitoring care

4. Working in teams

5. Improving safety and quality of care

6. Contributing to integrated care



The foundation of good practice

Exploring the six platforms in more detail

1. Being an accountable professional

RNAs provide safe and compassionate care that's based on a person's unique needs. They act professionally at all times, make informed decisions and take responsibility for their actions.

2. Promoting health and preventing ill health

RNAs support people in managing their health so that they can have a good quality of life at every age. They help to tackle the big issues that affect public health, including issues that particularly matter to individuals.

3. Providing and monitoring care

RNAs monitor a person's health needs, and work with them and their family or carers to deliver care.

4. Working in teams

RNAs work well with a wide variety of colleagues in different roles, ensuring they communicate effectively with nurses and other health and care professionals.

5. Improving safety and quality of care

RNAs help monitor and improve the quality of care a person receives. They identify any risks to safety and take action to manage these, ensuring a person's best interests, needs and preferences are put first.

6. Contributing to integrated care

RNAs play a key role in the provision of care, alongside a range of other professionals and carers.

For a more detailed breakdown of the NMC's standards of proficiency for a registered nursing associate, head to: nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-nursing-associates

Every year, you will need to pay a fee to remain on the NMC register. You must pay your annual fee before your retention date or your registration will lapse, and you will automatically be removed from the register. It is therefore vital you know when this date is. It will correspond with the month your application was submitted, so please check this. You will also receive emails from the NMC reminding you of your renewal. Please ensure these emails are not going into your spam folder and that the NMC has your most up-to-date email address.

Further information can be found at:



Overview of preceptorship

The NMC defines preceptorship as 'a period to guide and support all newly registered professionals to make the transition from student to develop their practice further'.

Preceptorship should be supported by an experienced practitioner, known as a preceptor, whose role is to promote the confidence of the newly registered nursing associate and facilitate learning and development. The preceptor role focuses on enabling the nursing associate to refine their skills, values and behaviours within the context of their first nursing post and to underpin their future professional practice. This is supported by learning from best practice in providing effective patient-centred care and will develop a foundation for lifelong learning.

The RCN provides useful information and resources to support preceptorship:



Supporting you along the way

Appraisal is an important part of your ongoing development within your organisation. You should have a performance appraisal and development review at least once a year. There may be a requirement within your organisation for a meeting at six months to review your progress and to prepare for your annual appraisal.



Whilst your employer has a legal duty to protect your health, safety and welfare at work, there is much you can do to care for yourself. As a nursing professional, it is important you take the time to consider factors that impact upon your own health.

Resources are available to assist you on the RCN website:

rcn.org.uk/healthy-workplace/Healthy-you/Achieving-and-maintaining-a-healthy-weight

rcn.org.uk/healthy-workplace/healthy-workplaces/Health-and-safety/Rest-rehydrate-refuel

rcn.org.uk/healthy-workplace/Healthy-you/Time-and-space

As an RCN member, you can also access free, confidential advice, representation and support at: rcn.org.uk/get-help/member-support-services or you can call RCN Direct on: 0345 772 6100.

We know that for some, the COVID-19 pandemic severely interrupted training, clinical placements and academic routes. In an effort to help you through this challenging time, we have created resources focused on protecting your wellbeing and offering employment and clinical guidance. rcn.org.uk/covid-19

There are many active RCN members in the workplace. Some hold official roles, and many others get active through their branch, professional forum or through the RCN's social media groups. Use the relevant links below to find out how you too can get involved.

What it means to be an RCN rep: rcn.org.uk/get-involved/rcn-reps

Find out what is happening in your area: rcn.org.uk/get-involved/countries-and-regions

Discover and join a forum: rcn.org.uk/get-involved/forums

As an RCN member you can work with us to create positive change for the nursing profession; improve conditions in your workplace and help raise awareness of our campaigns. Find out how you can take action today at: rcn.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns

As a registered nursing associate, understanding your responsibilities in promoting inclusion and implementing equality of opportunity is important, not just to ensure that you keep within The Code (NMC, 2018), but it is critical to your colleagues and to your patients too. The RCN offers resources to guide and support you. rcn.org.uk/diversity-and-inclusion

Download the RCN Inclusion Café booklet to learn more about workplace incivility and boost your knowledge of the protections that you have against facing discrimination in the workplace. rcn.org.uk/inclusion-cafe





Interested in funding for education opportunities?

We know that patients deserve the best possible experience and care, delivered by well trained and high performing professionals like you.

The RCN Foundation offers grants to nurses, midwives and nursing support workers to engage in development and learning activities. These opportunities will enhance your skills and knowledge to transform your patients' care.

Visit our website to see what we offer, tips for applying and how you can make a difference to nursing and patients through RCN Foundation funding.

rcnfoundation.org.uk

Registered charity number: SC043663
(Scotland) 1134606 (England and Wales)
Registered Company: 7026001



Appendix 1

Gibbs 1998 Reflective Model

Gibbs's Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1998) helps you to understand and practise your reflective skills. Use the template to reflect on a recent event in which you demonstrated a reflected ability to improve or demonstrate the need for further learning or development.

Reflective title

Name

Date

Description: what happened?

Feelings: what were you thinking and feeling?

Evaluation: what was good and bad about the experience?

Analysis: what sense can you make of the situation?

Conclusion: what else could you have done?

Action plan: if the situation arose again, what would you do?

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes
excellence in practice and shapes health policies

Visit us online
www.rcn.org.uk

For advice and support
www.rcn.org.uk/get-help
0345 772 6100

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