GETTING INTO NURSING & MIDWIFERY
SUCCEED IN YOUR FUTURE HEALTHCARE CAREER
IS NURSING/MIDWIFERY FOR ME?
A career in midwifery or nursing is not for everyone. Flexibility and adaptability are essential. You’ll be required to work shifts, which may change at short notice. At times, you’ll be in high demand, and have to make difficult decisions in prioritising patient care. As well as caring for each patient, you will be required to provide support to patients’ families, often at emotional or stressful times.

Compassion is a key requirement for a career in nursing or midwifery - you must be able to empathise with others, regardless of how difficult they are being! Whilst nurses and midwives spend the majority of their time on practical tasks, they are required to go through rigorous training, around fifty per cent of which is academic. Memorising common drugs, doses and treatments is key - so those who aren’t fans of academia may wish to steer clear of a career in this field!

PAY SCALES
The starting salary for a registered nurse is £21,478. Nurse Team Leaders start on around £25,783, and those in the nursing profession may have the opportunity to work their way up to nurse consultant - a position that comes with a salary of between £39,239 - £67,805. Midwives also start on £21,478. This can rise to £25,783 and upwards. Midwife consultants can earn in the region of £47,088.

COURSES
Whether you want to become a nurse or a midwife, you’ll need to complete a degree in that particular field. An undergraduate degree will take three or four years full-time, depending on which institution you choose to study at. If you already have a degree in a field which is related to healthcare, you may be eligible to apply for a masters in nursing, rather than undertaking a full undergraduate degree. This usually takes two years to complete, if you are studying full-time. If you have completed a degree in nursing, and want to specialise in midwifery, you may be eligible to apply for a fast-track course, which will take around 18 months to complete.

BRANCHES OF NURSING
There are four branches of nursing - adult, paediatric, learning disability, and mental health. All branches of nursing offer career opportunities both in hospitals and in the community.
There are plenty of nursing schools to choose from (72 to be exact!) – so make sure that you apply to the institutions that provide the best match for you, your interests, and your needs.

Nursing courses in the UK are arguably some of the best in the world. Several universities, including; Surrey, Southampton, East Anglia, Ulster and Chester have a one hundred per cent employment rate upon graduation (The Telegraph Newspaper’s top nursing degree courses). Seventy per cent of students at East Anglia University also leave with either a 1st or a 2:1.

If you would like the opportunity to travel during your degree programme, look into the courses you are applying to carefully. Some, but not all, institutions offer the chance to do an elective placement overseas – for example, Birmingham, Keele and Queen’s University Belfast all offer these opportunities.

There are fewer universities offering midwifery courses than nursing (only 54 institutions), which makes demand for places high. Edinburgh is listed as the top university for studying midwifery in the UK, according to The Guardian newspaper nursing and midwifery league table 2015. Bournemouth and Kingston University are among several establishments offering international electives as part of the course.

Whether you are applying for nursing or midwifery, you may also want to look at factors such as the location of the university, transport links, university accommodation, student societies and the local hospitals, especially those used by the universities for teaching purposes.

When applying to study nursing or midwifery, both academic and non-academic factors are taken into consideration. There are no national minimum entry requirements for either discipline, so the following is just a guide – do make additional checks with the higher education providers that you are applying to.

In terms of qualifications, most institutions require at least five GCSEs at grade C or above (usually including English language or literature and a science subject). If your GCSE results weren’t what you hoped for, don’t panic! It may be better for you to emphasise your AS level qualifications and obtain a good reference from a teacher.

As with most university courses in the UK, A levels are the most popular route into studying nursing or midwifery. The majority of universities require two or three A levels. A science subject is usually preferred.

Getting a place on a nursing or midwifery course can be tough. On a Gap Medics pre-midwifery programme, aspiring midwives can observe natural and surgical births under the guidance of professional midwives. Get your dream career off to the best start possible with our tips on entry requirements and finding work experience. Each week, students receive a new hospital placement and dedicated midwife mentor. Our destinations abroad provide unique insights into midwifery, with some destinations offering students the opportunity to spend time in the antenatal clinics and neonatal wards in addition to the delivery room.

Future nurses will receive relevant shadowing experience, supported by experienced nurses. Each week, students are assigned to nurse mentors in a wide range of hospital departments. Popular departments include surgery, internal medicine, paediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology, however, other hospital departments are available at each of our overseas destinations.

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—Katarina Diamante
NHS FUNDING FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COURSES IN THE UK

Both trainee nurses and midwives may be eligible for financial help from the NHS while studying.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS CAN APPLY FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Tuition fees paid in full
- A £1,000 grant each year
- A means-tested bursary of up to £4,395 per year, or up to £5,460 in London.

It is also possible to apply for additional student loans to boost your income.

As mentioned earlier, non-academic factors are also very important when it comes to applying for nursing or midwifery school. Assuming you have obtained the required grades, you will still need to work hard to make sure your application stands out from the crowd.

Finding work experience in UK hospitals is a great starting point. It can be difficult to organise, so here are some tips:

- Get in touch with the education department at your local NHS trust
- Speak to hospitals and clinics directly
- Visit the careers centre at your school or college
- Use your contacts! Are there any nurses in your family? Do your parents or friends know anyone who works in healthcare? Ask if you can shadow them, or one of their colleagues for a few days.

Getting work experience overseas is a great method for developing your understanding of healthcare in the global context. Overseas nursing and midwifery placements also offer the opportunity for you to witness cases that you might not see at home. For example, tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue fever are much more prevalent in developing countries. An awareness of the economic, social and environmental factors affecting healthcare in other regions will really help you to stand out from the crowd. Leaving your comfort zone and exploring diverse interests is also likely to impress admissions officers. For more information about getting healthcare work experience overseas, check out the information on our placements towards the back of this brochure.

Volunteering is also a good idea; universities regard it as an important indication of your level of commitment to the profession. You can find out more information about volunteering by contacting organisations such as Do It, Community Service Volunteers (CSV), Youth Action Network, UK Volunteering Forum and St John’s Ambulance.

Getting a part-time job caring for elderly, disabled or vulnerable people will also really help to show your dedication to a career in healthcare, and in turn, help boost your university application.
APPLYING TO UCAS

UCAS
The standard method of application for an undergraduate degree in midwifery or nursing is via UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). The first step is completing a UCAS form, with information about yourself, and where you want to study. As part of your application, you will need to submit a personal statement and a reference, usually from a teacher. Your UCAS form can be submitted online - the fee is £12 if you are applying for only one course, or £23 if you are applying to multiple courses, universities or colleges.

WHEN TO APPLY
The UCAS application deadline for students applying for nursing and midwifery is 15th January 2015. You can apply for up to five courses.

PERSONAL STATEMENT
The purpose of writing a personal statement is to convince nursing and midwifery schools that your application deserves consideration. It is your first chance to impress, so take the time to make sure it’s perfect!

Where should you begin? Research and planning is key. Think carefully about the things you would like to include. These should range from academic achievements to extra curricular activities - anything that will benefit your application. You only have a limited amount of space, so only include things you really want the university to know about you.

Next you should explain why you are applying to study nursing or midwifery. What is it about this career path that interests you? You might want to discuss past motivations, future goals, and how studying nursing or midwifery will help you to achieve these goals.

Link your passion to your experience; highlight why you chose to do work experience in a specific hospital department, or what it was that made you want to volunteer for a particular organisation. What did you gain from it and what skills did you develop?

Talk about how this has furthered your interest in healthcare and prepared you for future study. Show that you have done research into this field. Illustrate your knowledge; demonstrate that you have thought your decision to study nursing or midwifery through fully.

Discuss what qualities make you suitable for this specific career - these can range from personality traits to your academic background, as long as they help you to convey why you are a suitable candidate.

Make sure you include your hobbies and interests outside of the classroom. Most nursing and midwifery schools are seeking well-rounded individuals with a range of different attributes. For example, having a part-time job can really convey your maturity and show you can take responsibility. Even something like playing an instrument is worth mentioning - it can illustrate your dedication and commitment. These are all attributes that the admissions officer will look for when selecting candidates for interview.

When concluding your personal statement, you should bear a few things in mind. There is no excuse whatsoever for bad grammar - all forms are submitted online so your computer should automatically spell check it for you - but remember to check and double check again to be sure! Once you have completed your personal statement, ask somebody else to proofread it for you - ideally a teacher. Your personal statement must not exceed 47 lines and must not be over 4000 characters. Stick to these guidelines and keep revising your statement until you are completely happy with it. It will be the only chance you get to give the admissions officer an insight into your reasons for choosing nursing or midwifery, so make the most of it!
STUDENT PROFILES

STEPH CHAPMAN, 18, TOOK PART IN A MIDWIFERY PLACEMENT IN IRINGA, TANZANIA, WITH GAP MEDICS, AND IS NOW IN HER FIRST YEAR OF MIDWIFERY AT NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY.

KATY ELLIS, 17, JOINED US IN MOROGORO, TANZANIA, WHERE SHE TOOK PART IN A NURSING AND MIDWIFERY PLACEMENT. SHE IS CURRENTLY STUDYING FOR HER A LEVELS, AND HOPES TO GO ON TO STUDY MIDWIFERY AT UNIVERSITY.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN PURSUING A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE?
Katy: From the age of four I have always been interested in pursuing a career in healthcare, ranging from a paramedic, to a paediatric nurse and now a midwife. I have always had a passion for doing what I can to help people and so I believed that the best way to do this was to aspire to work within a medical profession.

WHAT IS YOUR FONDEST MEMORY FROM YOUR TIME IN IRINGA?
Steph: It is so hard to single out one particular thing! The students and staff were great, the placement was fantastic and the scenery was incredible, but a particular highlight for me was witnessing a C-section delivery of twins (boy and girl). When scrubbing up for theatre, neither we nor the doctors knew whether we would see one live baby or two, as the fetal heart rates were so difficult to hear. It was therefore a delight to see two such healthy (and particularly large) babies after initial uncertainty.

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE?
Katy: One of my many favourite experiences was seeing one of the women in labour smile as I went over and held her hand as she gave birth. The doctors in the hospital take a very different approach towards the patients so even doing something as small as that and making the patient feel a lot calmer made my day. Another one of my favourite experiences was the first time I saw a baby being born. I wouldn’t know how else to describe the experience other than incredible.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?
Steph: My mentor on labour ward was so knowledgeable, and would always take time to explain the procedures she was carrying out and any complications that might occur. We also attended Global Health Tutorials in the evenings, which consolidated our hospital based learning.

HOW DID YOU FIND THE APPLICATION PROCESS? DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR ASPIRING MIDWIVES THAT ARE HOPING TO APPLY TO UNIVERSITY?
Steph: I hadn’t realised how tough the application process would be. When I was invited to interview days, I was required to undertake Maths, English and Science tests, alongside group assessments before being selected to attend an individual interview. Having had the Gap Medics experience behind me, I had so much to talk about (perhaps with too much enthusiasm!) and my interviewers were really interested in the cultural differences I had noted. My main piece of advice for aspiring student midwives is to get as much experience as possible in as many healthcare settings as you can.

HOW DID YOUR GAP MEDICS PLACEMENT OVERSEAS PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR COURSE?
Steph: Travelling, making new friends, and being taken out of my comfort zone all combined to give me a newfound confidence and resilience. My Gap Medics experience also confirmed my belief that I wanted to be a midwife. After everything that I was able to witness on the labour ward (from post partum haemorrhages and stillbirths to normal deliveries), I have a greater emotional resilience, which will definitely aid me when I am on placement in the future.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?
Katy: Now I’m 100% sure midwifery is the career for me, I’m studying five A-levels in order to be able to go to university to study midwifery. I’m also going to keep trying to pick up more work experience in the next few years, however it’s safe to say nothing will compare to Gap Medics.

Weeks later, I still can’t stop talking about it, it made a huge impact on me as a person, and inspired me to pursue nursing.

- Kayleigh Mands

STEPH CHAPMAN, 18, MIDWIFERY - IRINGA

KATY ELLIS, 17, MIDWIFERY - MOROGORO

- Launching Medical Care
WHO ARE GAP MEDICS?

Gap Medics is a specialist company dedicated to providing hospital work experience placements abroad to students in years 11-13.

Our short-term nursing and midwifery programmes in Tanzania, Thailand, Croatia and Poland are available all year round, to give you a taste of what being a nurse or midwife is really like before you start your clinical training.

We understand that securing hospital shadowing experience can be tough - that's where we come in! Obtain hospital work experience that will benefit your application to university, learn about tropical diseases and work closely with nurses, midwives and other healthcare professionals, whilst having the adventure of a lifetime and making friends from around the world.

At our Head Office in Newcastle, we all have a detailed knowledge of our programmes, so please feel free to give us a call or drop us an email if you have any questions: info@gapmedics.com

BENEFITS

Hospital shadowing experience
Professional mentoring
An insight into healthcare overseas
A talking point on university applications
An advanced understanding of your future career
Observe up to 10 births a day
The adventure of a lifetime

THAILAND
Dazzling temples, colourful night markets, and mouth-watering street food is just a few of the many attractions synonymous with the cheerful city of Phitsanulok – our programme base in northern Thailand. When you are not exploring the historically-rich city centre, you can spend the weekends venturing through the unspoiled jungle on the back of an elephant!

WARSAW
Just two hours from the UK and with flights from £40, the dynamic city of Warsaw, situated in the centre of Poland, offers culture, convenience and a real community vibe. Grab a hot chocolate in the beautiful old town, hang out at one of the city's many parks, and in the winter, enjoy the Christmas market and ice rink!

CROATIA
Pula is located beneath seven hills, on the southern tip of Croatia’s Istrian peninsula. Turquoise sea, rugged beaches and pavement cafes make this an idyllic location, with spectacular Roman ruins adding to its charm. Friendly locals and a laid-back beach town vibe make Pula a sure-fire hit with visitors!

TANZANIA
Peruse the traditional markets of Tanzania, where you can have dresses and trousers tailor-made by local craftspeople. If you’re up for an adventure, there are guides in town who can lead you on a mountain trek. If you decide to join us for the Safari Weekend adventure, you will meet a local tribe and spot lions, giraffes and zebras in their natural habitat!

HOSPITAL PLACEMENTS

The focus of our programmes is to provide you with a well-structured hospital placement. We have excellent knowledge of the healthcare systems in our host countries and work closely with local hospitals to ensure that you get the best possible shadowing experience.

Whilst on placement you will be assigned your own specific mentor who will guide you every step of the way, explaining cases to you and answering any questions you might have. A typical day might involve shadowing your mentor on ward rounds before heading to theatre to observe surgical procedures. You can even request to be on call at evenings and weekends!

We work with nurses and midwives across a range of different specialisms to suit your interests. Popular departments include paediatrics, internal medicine, surgery and obstetrics and gynaecology. Our students frequently observe complications during childbirth, surgery as a result of road traffic accidents, the treatment of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and dengue fever, and much more.

To help you understand the social, cultural and economic factors behind what you see in the hospital each day, we also offer Global Health Tutorials several times a week. These tutorials are run by experienced healthcare professionals, and are a great opportunity to learn more about healthcare practice in the region where you are working.
WHO ARE GAP MEDICS?

SLEEPING & EATING
We provide safe, secure and social student accommodation at all of our destinations. Designed to make sure you get the most out of your overseas experience, our houses offer large social spaces, supportive staff teams, extensive gardens and great food!

Not only are our houses designed for your safety, they also make a great base for exploring the local area, and for making friends from all over the world. Each Gap Medics house has a full-time, experienced caterer to keep everyone well fed, and a housekeeper to make sure you come home to a clean and tidy house at the end of each day (not that we’re saying a house full of students wouldn’t be...!)

SAFETY & SUPPORT
Gap Medics was born in response to the ever-growing demand from pre-university students looking for relevant overseas experience. We have had extensive experience in providing successful healthcare placements overseas.

In 2014 alone we’ve had over 2000 students travel with us, who have had the time of their life whilst on placement. We really know what we’re doing - and our student feedback shows that we are doing it well! When selecting new destinations for our programmes, we make extensive visits to the country in question to ensure that we are satisfied that it meets our safety expectations. We monitor government travel advice from the British and Foreign Commonwealth Office each day to ensure that we have the latest information regarding all of our host countries.

Each of our houses has a full staff team who are there for our students around the clock. As well as organising activities in the evenings and at weekends, they are also there to make sure that your hospital placement is running smoothly, and help with any issues or questions that you might have. Our accommodation is exclusive to Gap Medics students. There are security staff at each property 24/7, to ensure that only our staff and students have access to the house. The houses also all have walled gardens, to ensure privacy at all times.

I LEARNED AND OBSERVED MORE THAN I COULD HAVE DREAMED OF
-Karoline Hübert Sohberg