

Developing Employability Skills and Professional Identity for a Career as a Diabetes
Specialist Nurse in the UK

Student Name

Course Title

Institutional Affiliation

Date

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1.0 Introduction

The UK is in the “grip of a rapidly escalating diabetes crisis,” with the number of people affected topping five million for the first time ever. Further studies indicate that 90% of all these cases fall under Type 2 diabetes, a condition involving production of small amounts of insulin, or general resistance to insulin (Berbudi et al., 2020). Evidently, the condition is more prevalent among adults, minorities, and those from areas with higher levels of deprivation. As a result, the surging levels of diabetes within the UK population has serious socioeconomic implications to both the individuals, their families and the society as a whole. There are call for the government and healthcare stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that would help people in the UK to better manage diabetes. As Hao et al. (2025) pointed out, management of diabetes transcends beyond the basic glycaemic control to encompass patient education, behaviour modification, psychosocial support, and prevention of complications. Against this backdrop, I am interested with the role of a Diabetes Specialist Nurse (DSN) as it will set me to a path of supporting the diabetes patients and contribute towards the quest of managing and containing this chronic illness.

2.0 Job Description and Person Specification

A recent vacancy was posted at the National Health Service (NHS) platform, calling for a Band 6 Registered Nurse (See Appendix 1). The job advert emphasises on the need for the applicant to be passionate about diabetes care, strong communication skills, and leadership potential. In light of this, the nurse would be hired to spearhead the delivery of better diabetes self-management services (West London NHS Trust, 2026). This would mean that the nurse would not only deliver specialist services, but they would also conduct training for healthcare professionals, and support patients with diabetes through structured programs. The scope of operation would therefore not be limited to the hospital, but will instead include home visits, community, and social care centres.

To qualify for the role, the applicant must be a registered nurse under the Nursing and Midwifery Council, have some post-registration clinical experience, understand diabetes management, be capable of taking leadership roles, be willing to enforce all the guidelines issued by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence. These requirements bring out the severity of the matter, signalling that the role of healthcare givers transcends beyond basic hospital activities. In the case of DSNs, advanced roles such as empowering diabetes patients to effectively self-manage takes the centre stage.

3.0 Analysis of Employability Skills Required for the Role

The healthcare sector is a very practical field that requires application of different theories to solve real-life problems. For the case of the DSN role, there are a set of employability skills that would set the applicant up for success. Among these skills is clinical and cognitive competence, which encompasses using evidence-based strategies to make

better informed decisions. Within the case of diabetes care, healthcare practitioners have to assess and monitor blood glucose patterns and how they are influenced by different conditions and lifestyle changes (Jyotsana et al., 2024). Besides, to effectively adhere to the guidelines by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence, one needs competence in pharmacology and pathophysiology. This would ensure that simple errors such as misadministration of insulin would be avoided.

The other significant skills for this job are “transferable employability skills”. Johnson (2010) highlights that transferable skills are those that can be applied in any role, regardless of the nature of the job. For a DSN, these skills include effective communication, team work, digital literacy, time management, and interprofessional collaboration. Evidently, based on the job description, the DSN would conduct training for healthcare professionals, and support patients with diabetes through structured programs. Similarly, the scope of operation would not be limited to the hospital, but will instead include home visits, community, and social care centres. All these highlight the need for better communication, team work and coordination with physicians, dietitians, podiatrists, and endocrinologists. All these align with Yorke’s theory of employability, which highlights that graduate employability extends beyond comprehension of subject matter, to include transferable skills and personal attributes (Otermans et al., 2025).

Accountability, empathy, integrity, and reflective capacity are key factors that influence professional identity in nursing. The theory of Emotional Intelligence indicates that self-awareness, self-control and empathy play an important role in patient outcomes when managing long-term conditions (Sharma & Goel, 2025). Therefore, DSNs must walk a fine line when addressing patients’ emotional distress, anxiety, and potential non-adherence. Thus, employability, in this position, goes beyond technical competence to include ethical integrity and psychological resilience.

4.0 Evaluation of My Current Skills

4.1 Strengths

In light of the above, it is prudent to evaluate whether I have the required skills set to pursue a career as a DSN at Ealing. To begin with, within the field of health and social care, I have acquired a comprehensive theoretical insight into the management of chronic diseases, promotion of health, and social determinants of health through academic research. This knowledge aligns with the diabetes prevention and education strategies, especially when focusing on socioeconomic inequalities.

My analytical ability enables me to interpret research findings and critically appraise clinical guidelines, which is essential for evidence-based practice. Moreover, I have developed strong written and verbal communication skills through delivering academic presentations and collaborating in group work. These competencies are transferable to patient education and interdisciplinary collaboration

Notably, my self-assessment indicates strong empathy and cultural awareness, and I understand the complex behavioural and social dimensions of diabetes management. This reflects a developing professional orientation towards person-centred care.

4.2 Areas for Development

At the moment, I do not have an NMC registration and direct clinical nursing experience. The lack of practical experience in insulin administration and pharmacological management represents a significant skills gap. Besides, to ensure medication safety and development of advanced patient assessment skills, structured clinical exposure is essential.

Moreover, I need to develop leadership skills within clinical setting, especially when organizing multidisciplinary care. Although I demonstrate strong scholarly knowledge, practical application of theory into safe practice requires supervised placement experience and formal clinical training.

4.3 Reflective Assessment Framework.

The SWOT analysis and Gibbs Reflective Cycle have helped me understand that I have strengths in communicating and analytical thinking, and weaknesses in clinical practice. This self-reflection is consistent with the lifelong learning theory and the growth mindset model presented by Dweck, which confirms my desire to learn skills through systematic progress instead of viewing them as imperfections and vulnerabilities (Prodyanatasari et al., 2023).

5.0 Health and Social Care Experience and Qualification

My academics studies have equipped me with foundational knowledge of safeguarding, health inequalities, and community health frameworks. Furthermore, long-term condition management modules have enhanced my knowledge on diabetes epidemiology and prevention methods.

Using Marmot's work on social determinants of health, I understand that the prevalence of diabetes is strictly associated with socioeconomic deprivation, lifestyle, and access to healthcare services (Marmot, 2017). Such awareness broadens my perspective on diabetes care beyond purely clinical care.

Although I am not registered as a nurse, my educational background offers me good theoretical framework upon which clinical competence can be developed.

6.0 Developing My Personal Brand and Professional Identity

6.1 Personal Brand Strategy

Personal branding, as developed by Tom Peters is based on the idea of strategically expressing professional value rather than engaging on self-promotion (Holt, 2025). In the nursing context, this involves demonstrating competence, integrity, and commitment to patient care in an authentic and evidence-based manner. Consistent with this view, I will develop a professional LinkedIn profile focused on managing chronic diseases and diabetes treatment. The platform will not only be a digital resume, but a reflective practice space in which I

document continuing professional development (CPD), significant learning experiences, and progressive clinical development.

Systematically maintaining a CPD portfolio will further demonstrate my commitment to lifelong learning, which is a core requirement of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). Through structured documentation of competencies, training achievements, and reflective accounts, I will evidence accountability and professional progression. Moreover, my curriculum vitae will be aligned with NHS competency frameworks, with particular emphasis on transferable skills relevant to diabetes education, patient empowerment, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

6.2 Formation of professional identity

The development of professional identity involves practising evidence-based practice (EBP) and integrating it into everyday clinical work. In nursing, professional identity evolves through education, clinical socialisation, and the reflective integration of personal and professional values. It is shaped not only by technical competence but also by moral accountability and relational practice. My commitment to diabetes care reflects a deliberate professional focus rather than a general interest. The increasing prevalence of chronic diseases requires nurses who are both clinically competent and socially responsive. By focusing on diabetes management, I aim to contribute to improved patient outcomes, a reduction in preventable complications, and enhanced patient self-management capabilities. This focus represents both a clinical aspiration and a values-based commitment to health equity.

6.3 Unique Selling Proposition

My distinctive professional strength lies in the combination of clinical ambition and public health awareness. While many practitioners acquire field experience in acute clinical settings, I come with another level of analytical knowledge about health disparities and social factors that impact diabetes prevalence and mortality. This two-way thinking will make me consider patient care in a holistic approach, not just physiological but also behavioural, socioeconomic, and educational aspects of disease.

By integrating specialist nursing practice with a population health perspective, I aim to contribute not only to individual patient care but also to service improvement initiatives that address systemic inequalities in diabetes management.

7.0 Networking Strategy

According to social capital theory, purposeful relationship-building and participation in communities of practice support professional development (Kreuter & Lezin, 2002). To empower this growth, I will be a member of professional organisations like Diabetes UK, take part in professional workshops like CPD, and attend special forums revolving around diabetes management.

Mentorship from experienced Diabetes Specialist Nurses will be crucial in translating theoretical knowledge into contextualised professional practice. These networks not only give technical advice but also help with role modelling in professional conduct, leadership, and ethical decision-making. Moreover, networking in the NHS will enhance professional visibility and expose me to emerging evidence-based practices, thereby strengthening both competence and employability.

8.0 Five-Year Strategic Action Plan.

Year 1:	Get enrolled in a recognised Nursing degree programme and undergo compulsory safeguarding and basic life support.
Years 2-3:	Find clinical placements in an endocrinology or primary care-based diabetes exposure. Take part in insulin management training and attend insulin CPD.
Year 4:	Registered nurse and apply to Band 5 nursing positions that have diabetes exposure.
Year 5:	Take postgraduate certification on diabetes care and seek posts Band 6 Diabetes Specialist Nurse development posts.

All stages are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound to be structured on the way to specialist competence.

9.0 Acknowledging My Skills to Employers.

To communicate my skill sets successfully, I will develop a tailored NHS-style CV in aligned with the competency-based recruitment models. In addition, I will draft a powerful personal statement to demonstrate my commitment to diabetes care, supported by a well-documented CPD portfolio.

In the interviews, I will employ the STAR technique to present clear examples of communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. My credibility will be further strengthened through professional references and reflective evidence.

10. Conclusion

The Diabetes Specialist Nurse position requires high clinical qualification, good communication skills, reflective ability, and professional ethics. Although I now have a theoretical base and competencies to be transferred to the workplace, I need to take formal steps to clinical development and registration by NMC.

I hope to become a skilled specialist in a position to handle the increasing strain of diabetes in the UK through a strategic five-year plan, targeted networking and a conscious personal branding process. By integrating public health awareness with clinical expertise, I aspire to contribute meaningfully to patient empowerment and improved long-term outcomes in diabetes care.

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West London NHS Trust

Band 6 Diabetes Specialist Nurse

This job is now closed

Job summary

This role seeks a Band 6 Registered Nurse with a passion for diabetes care, strong communication skills, and leadership potential. As a Community Diabetes Specialist Nurse in Ealing, you'll deliver specialist services, educate healthcare professionals, and support patients with Type 2 diabetes through structured programs.

You'll work across various settings, including home visits, and foster collaboration between acute, community, and social care teams. With an active NMC registration and diabetes qualification, you'll help shape service development, introduce innovative practices, and empower non-specialist staff to improve diabetes management.

The position offers opportunities to enhance both clinical expertise and leadership experience.

For questions about the job, contact:

Matron
Adamma Okwu
a.okwu@nhs.net



The logo for the NHS West London NHS Trust. It features the NHS logo (a blue square with the letters 'NHS' in white) above the text 'West London' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font, and 'NHS Trust' in a smaller, bold, blue sans-serif font below it.

Figure 1: Diabetes Specialist Nurse (Band 6) advertisement, West London NHS Trust (2025). Screenshot taken 2 March 2026.

Main duties of the job ? The collection of statistical data and activity as required/requested to contribute to e.g. performance report ? To attend regular meetings with the Matron /Team Leader to undertake PDP and appraisal ? To attend and contribute to the Integrated Diabetes Service and multi-disciplinary team meetings across the primary and secondary care setting ? To represent the Integrated Diabetes Service and/or Specialist Services at appropriate meetings locally, regionally and nationally. ? To assess and support local GP practices and provide specialist support to improve the standards and delivery of diabetes care ? To support and up skill GPs ,Pharmacist & Practice Nurses in delivering Level 1 & 2 care in their clinical networks ? To maintain a clinical case including patients who are housebound ? To promote national guidance and policy such as NICE Guidelines and proposed changes to working practices in order to identify patients with diabetes and improve their care. Organize and implement health promotion in the local community through public awareness days	Date posted 17 October 2025 Pay scheme Agenda for change Band Band 6 Salary £44,485 to £52,521 a year per annum inclusive of HCAS Contract Permanent Working pattern Full-time Reference number 222- ICS-434-A Job locations Featherstone Road Clinic Southall Middlesex Hartington Road
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Figure 2: Diabetes Specialist Nurse (Band 6) advertisement, West London NHS Trust (2025). Screenshot taken 2 March 2026.