

**EFN**

European Federation of Nursing Associations
Fédération Européenne des Associations Infirmières

ENNO

European Network of Nurses Organizations

Recommendations for a European Framework for Specialist Nursing Education

Adopted on November 2, 2000 in Paris, France.

Purpose

Whereas in many countries within EU there is a specialist nursing practice requiring a post-basic nursing education that is varying from one country to another, the European Network for Nurses Organisations has developed a framework for specialist nursing education, in order to harmonise the post basic nursing education and then to facilitate the free movement of specialist nurses.

Preamble:

The field of nursing knowledge and its associated skills have become too vast and complex for any one person to master in full, and acknowledges that specialisation within nursing has now become a necessity, in order to provide quality care and ensure patient and consumer safety and wellbeing.

Early in its development, professional nursing recognised that certain population needs and particular settings for nursing practice require practitioners with more specific and specialised knowledge and skills than could effectively and efficiently be gained through an educational program for general practice.

Benefits of specialisation in any occupation are said to accrue to the recipient (patient/client/ consumer), to the profession, to practice, and to practitioner. The development of nursing specialties is believed to be critical in stimulating the growth of nursing knowledge and expertise and then to improve the quality of care provided to the population. The 1987 ICN definition that specialisation "*... implies a level of knowledge and skill in a particular aspect of nursing which is greater than that acquired during the course of basic nursing education ...*" acknowledges that specialisation is a path whereby nursing practice is deepened and refined.

The regulation concerning the nursing profession and free movement within Europe is the EU Directive 77/452/EEC considering the equivalencies for the practice and education of the nurse responsible for general care, but doesn't take account of the specialist and post-basic * educated nurse. The Directive 89/48/EEC and Directive 92/51/EEC, as amended in 1997, and supplemented by the Directive 1999/42/EC on the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications are the only directives appropriate for the specialist nurses. It is based on the consideration of the education, training and professional experience of the practitioner.

Specialist Nurse:

A specialist nurse is a nurse formally educated and practically trained beyond the level of generalist nurse and authorised to practice as a specialist nurse with advanced expertise in a branch of nursing.

Specialised practice includes advance nursing and/or clinical skills, and related tasks, and advisory, research, teaching and administrative activities in the field of the specialty
Specialist nursing education is a formally recognised post-basic program of study which follows on from general nursing education and training and provides the knowledge and experience needed to ensure competence in the specialisation concerned.

Further education, training, and authorisation are determined in the light of the tasks, training, education, and activities of post-basic specialists in other branches of the profession and in the light of the rules and regulations applicable to them.

Titles for specialist nurses mostly include the designation specialist nurse combined with the name of the specialisation.

Recommendations and Principles

- The specialty defines itself as nursing and subscribes to the overall purpose, functions, and ethical standards of nursing;
- The specialty practice is sufficiently complex and advanced that is beyond the scope of general nursing practice.
- There is both a demand and a need for the specialty service.
- The focus of the specialty is a defined population that demonstrates recurrent problems and phenomena that lie within the discipline and practice of nursing
- The specialty practice is based on a core body of nursing knowledge that is being continually expanded, updated and refined by research and experience
- The specialty has established educational and practice standards that are congruent with those of the profession and are set by a recognised nursing body/ies.
- The specialty adheres to the licensure/registration requirements for the general nurse.
- Specialty expertise is obtained through a professionally approved advanced education program that leads to a recognised qualification. The program is administered by or in collaboration with a specialist nurse.
- The specialty has a Credentialing process determined by the profession or in accordance with the national practice for other professions. Sufficient human and financial resources are available to support this process.
- Specialist nurses are organised and represented within a specialty association or a branch of the national nurses' association and /or nursing authoritative body in order to develop and control the specialty education and practice.

Specialist Nursing Education:

Specialist nursing education is a formally recognised post-basic program for nurses previously recognised as registered nurses within EU regulation (Directive 77/452/EEC), with a minimum of one year of nursing experience , that:

- (a) Takes place in an institute of higher education (University or equivalent) while assuring adequate access to practice and /or clinical resources for the clinical practice;
- (b) Is continued from year to year (that is , is not a refresher course or seminar), and is regularly updated;
- (c) Is recognised by an appropriate authority;
- (d) Has specified admission requirements;
- (e) Has a full-time teaching staff or faculty including nurses qualified by education and experience (preferably with a masters or doctoral degree) and by request other professionals recognised for their expertise;
- (f) Is developed, controlled and administered by or in collaboration with the nursing profession, including specialists.

Length of the Program:

This will vary with the content of basic nursing education but may be equivalent to at least one year , with a minimum of 720 theoretical hours (classroom and study*) and a minimum of 50% of the total duration dedicated to clinical and/or practice training.

Qualification/Graduation:

Upon qualifying, the nurse will be provided with a certificate, diploma, or degree appropriate to the education designating him/her as a specialist nurse.

Glossary:

Post-basic: Additional education beyond the level of general care nursing education , considered as the basic one.

Study hours: Includes all types of theoretical hours that are not classroom hours (personal work, technical and lab training, library, research)

References:

Australian national review of specialist Nurse education, 1997

Advisory Committee for Training in Nursing, Recommendations on continuing and specialist education and training,1994

Council of Europe: Recommendations on further training for nurses, 1983

International Council of Nurses, *Nursing regulation guidebook: from principle to power*, 1991

Directive 77/452/EEC

Directive 89/48/EEC

Directive 92/51/EEC

Directive 1999/42/EC

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