



EFN Policy Statement on Clinical Mentors

In 2024, in the context of the WHO–EU Nursing Action, EFN conducted a survey of the EFN Members to explore the education and training requirements of clinical mentors in the EU and Europe (*for more information read the [EFN \(2025\) Policy Brief on Nursing Students Mentorship](#)*). The data collected revealed the existence of many ongoing initiatives across several EFN Member States to ensure the development of adequately qualified clinical mentors (general care nurses, specialist nurses, and Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs)), however it also revealed that clinical mentors are facing major challenges which prevent them from providing adequate supervision and mentoring to nursing students. Meanwhile, in many European countries, Clinical Mentors are responsible for delivering clinical supervision not only to nursing students, but also to newly registered nurses and other members of the nursing staff, which creates additional challenges.

Among the key challenges, the EFN Members mentioned the shortage of nurses, the lack of incentives or other forms of institutional support, insufficient education and training provided to clinical mentors, the generational gap between mentors and students, difficulties with using new technologies, and inadequate ratios of mentors to students. For the EFN, it is key to tackle these challenges at both EU and National level, in order to comply with the Directive 2013/55/EU requirements, and to improve the attractiveness of the nursing profession and the retention of nursing students.

Therefore, the EFN is calling on the EU Institutions and the EU and European Member States to:

1. Tackle the nursing shortages by improving retention and recruitment via concrete, EU–supported measures, including the development of EU Framework legislation on Safe Staffing Levels, with stipulated nurse–to–patients ratios, that recognised nursing shortages as an Occupational Health and Safety Hazard. Adequate staffing levels are a prerequisite for effective clinical mentorship.
2. Provide clinical mentors with adequate incentives and resources, financial rewards or other forms of compensation, protected time with and for learners in order to reflect on the learning process, adequate supervision and guidance, as well as adequate institutional support, and better recognition of their role in mentoring tomorrow’s frontline nurses, while they continue to provide high–quality bedside nursing care. Importantly, incentives should reflect not only the critical role played by Clinical Mentors in supervising nursing students, but also newly registered nurses and other members of the nursing staff.

3. Mentors should be appropriately qualified and competent in both clinical practice and relevant theory, as such, ensure that clinical mentors can undergo adequate education and training before mentoring nursing students, following the successful example of countries like Denmark, Norway, Malta, and Germany, which have put in place high-quality education frameworks, either through national regulation or collective bargaining, to ensure the availability of highly qualified clinical mentors (*For more information read [EFN \(2025\) Policy Brief on Nursing Students Mentorship](#)*). Clinical mentors should learn how to lead by example, how to communicate and dialogue empathetically in order to build trust with learners and create a healthy, collaborative, learning and working environment, and how to bridge the generational gap on the use of new technologies.
4. Develop and implement high-quality, paid Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for clinical mentors that account for the evolving demands of nursing care, and for technological developments impacting on nursing education and nursing clinical practice (such as digitalisation and AI). Such CPD opportunities would benefit from structured peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities for clinical mentors.
5. At the EU and National level, develop legal and policy frameworks that ensure adequate and evidence-based mentorship capacity to ensure the continued provision of high quality, clinical, nursing education, in line with the Directive 2013/55/EU requirements.
6. At the EU level, the European Commission should unlock adequate funding by means of the [Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#), the [EU4Health programme](#), and the next [Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#), to support Member States in developing the necessary number of highly qualified clinical mentors.

EFN is using the ICN definition of a nurse:

A nurse is a professional who is educated in the scientific knowledge, skills and philosophy of nursing, and regulated to practice nursing based on established standards of practice and ethical codes. Nurses enhance health literacy, promote health, prevent illness, protect patient safety, alleviate suffering, facilitate recovery and adaptation, and uphold dignity throughout life and at end of life. They work autonomously and collaboratively across settings to improve health, through advocacy, evidence-informed decision-making, and culturally safe, therapeutic relationships. Nurses provide people-centred, compassionate clinical and social care, manage services, enhance health systems, advance public and population health, and foster safe and sustainable environments. Nurses lead, educate, research, advocate, innovate and shape policy to improve health outcomes.

This Policy Statement was discussed and amended by the EFN Nursing Students Forum.

Further readings:

- De Raeve, P. (2025) Navigating the EU nursing workforce crisis: Stop talking, start acting! Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Navigating-the-EU-nursing-workforce-crisis-July-2024.pdf>
- EFN Policy Statement on Transferring CPD Credits across the EU (2024). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-Transferring-CPD-Credits-across-the-EU-Oct.-2024.pdf>
- EFN Policy Statement on Co-designing the EU Health and Care Workforce Strategy (2024). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-EU-Workforce-Strategy-Oct.-2024.pdf>
- EFN Policy Statement on Building and Sustaining a Resilient Nursing Workforce in the EU and Europe (2022). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/EFN-Policy-Statement-on-Building-and-Sustaining-a-Resilient-EU-Nursing-Workforce-in-the-EU-and-Europe-April-2022.pdf>
- EFN Report on Newly Registered Nurses Leaving the Profession (2024). Available at: <https://efn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EFN-Report-on-Newly-Registered-Nurses-leaving-the-profession-June-2024.pdf>
- RCN (2025) The Nurse Educator Workforce in Higher Education in England: Capacity, Challenges, and Trends. Available at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/Royal-College-Of-Nursing/Documents/Employment-and-pay/The-Nurse-Educator-Workforce-in-Higher-Education-in-England.pdf>
- Paul De Raeve*, Patricia M Davidson, Andreas Xyrichis and Pamela F Cipriano. The Ticking Time Bomb in the European Union Has Exploded: The Importance of European Council Recommendations on the Healthcare Workforce. *Iris J of Nur & Car.* 5(1): 2024. IJNC.MS.ID.000601. DOI: 10.33552/IJNC.2024.05.000601
- International Council of Nurses (2025). International Nurses Day 2025: Caring for nurses strengthens economies. Available at: https://www.icn.ch/sites/default/files/2025-04/ICN_IND2025_report_EN_A4_FINAL_0.pdf

Please contact Dr Paul De Raeve, Secretary General of the European Federation of Nurses Associations, for more information. Email: efn@efn.eu – Tel: +32 2 512 74 19 – Web: www.efn.eu

EFN Policy Statement on Clinical Mentors – April 2026

