Modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC

EFN Evidence Report

Nursing Education - Moving from 10 to 12 years Entry Requirement
Executive Summary

Modernisation of Directive 2005/36/EC is essential if the mobility of health professionals is to be enhanced whilst maintaining the quality of professional qualifications. Patient safety and high quality healthcare is of prime concern in this context. To this end, the Commission proposed the increase of the entry requirement to nursing education from 10 to 12 years. The current evidence report prepared on behalf of the 34 National Nurses Associations members of the EFN, demonstrates clear support for the Commission proposal. Indeed, 25 Member States have already set mechanisms for ensuring a minimum of 12 years general education or equivalent for the admission to nursing education for nurses responsible for general care. The EFN stresses this move is necessary to assure EU citizens’ rights to safe and quality healthcare across the Member States.

Nurses, as the largest group of health professionals, are responsible for ensuring the delivery of safe and high quality care in hospitals and in the community. Since the 1960s, when the original content of the Directive was drafted, knowledge in health and nursing has increased exponentially; for example, intensive care units were at that time just being introduced. It is accepted that healthcare has become more complex and hospitalised patients are sicker. In order for the healthcare system to cope effectively, adequate numbers of adequately prepared nurses are needed. This has led Member States to invest in the education of general care nurses and support a move into higher education. Indeed, there is mounting evidence showing that a 10% increase in the proportion of nurses holding a higher education qualification is associated with a 5% decrease in the likelihood of patients dying within 30 days of admission to hospitals.\(^1\)

The EFN understands a minority of political voices are cautious about this change, particularly as regards implications for costs, recruitment and retention of nurse applicants. This evidence report is developed to set these minds at ease. The Member States’ move to a 12 year general education requirement for entry to nursing education is shown in the

\(^1\) Aiken L et al. “Educational Levels of Hospital Nurses and Surgical Patient Mortality,” Journal of the American Medical Association, 290(12): 2003
current report to have improved recruitment of especially younger applicants with potentially longer career paths in nursing.

Historically, the nurse shortage has been complicated by continuing portrayals of nursing as a weaker option, not being in the same league as other professions and academic disciplines. The 12 year general education requirement for entry to nursing education, accompanied by a move to higher education, alleviates the academic boundaries between healthcare professionals and makes nursing a more attractive career option. Degree programmes are accepted to have better completion rates, while better patient outcomes and reduced length of stay in hospitals associated with graduate nurses make higher education a cost-effective option. Recent evidence from the largest European Workforce study on nursing shows an effect of higher educational level on patient outcomes adjusted for case-mix.

Assuring a nurse workforce that is large enough and possesses the right knowledge and skills for the changing health and illness patterns of our times is nothing short of an imperative. A minimum of 12 years general education for entry to nursing education would help reduce the educational disparity among nurses and other healthcare professionals, improve recruitment and retention of youngsters into nursing, upgrade the skill level of the nurse workforce, and ensure EU citizens have access to high quality and safe healthcare.

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4 RN4Cast. Extracted from the International Conference “Ensuring tomorrow’s health: workforce planning and mobility”, 7-9 December 2011 Brussels
Key Message

One of the minimum training requirements for nurses responsible for general care:

“a minimum of 12 years’ general education or equivalent for the admission to nursing education for nurses responsible for general care in order to meet higher education entry requirements”.
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Belgium

In Belgium, there are two levels of nursing education: the bachelor nurse and the diploma nurse. The Bachelor degree is provided at nursing schools at university level with **entry requirements of 12 years** and prior exams for university admission.

The diploma nurse education is based on vocational programs at secondary school with different levels and certificates depending on the French, Flemish or German communities.

However, as regards the admission requirements described in the tables below, the educational programs for the nursing education in Belgium require a minimum of 17.5 years old before starting the nursing studies, that implies at least 12 years of general education.
Furthermore, the European Quality Higher Nursing education Agency (AEQS), as detailed in its report on the evaluation of Nursing Bachelor education⁵, is convinced that as a result of the new demands in the delivery of healthcare and the societal challenges, there is a urge need to prepare professionals with a higher level of education as well as the opportunities offered by the Bologna process are highlighted as an ideal framework to finally position the nursing education at a higher level. As regards the numbers of applicants, during 2008-2009,

8358 students started the nursing education, from which 6887 started the Bachelor degree. Concerning specifically the nursing degree, the experts pointed out that the total number of students applying to it has been constantly increasing since 2003. The tendencies and recommendations of this report pointed out that the need to invest in the nursing degree and orient it towards the developments promoted in the Bologna Process including the education based on competences and output indicators.
The Danish Nurses Association provided the EFN with the legal evidence pushed forward under the regulative Act, approved by the National Board of Health, from 2000 stating the change into 12 years of general education for the admission requirements for the nursing education. The Act on medium-cycle higher education stated in its first paragraph the general aim of ensuring a high level of professionalism in education, creating greater consistency between programs, in order to promote the development of the existing medium-term higher education and to promote the establishment of new course in line with the developments in society and changing skills requirements.

Currently, the Danish nursing education is planned on the basis of the Academic regulations as a pursuant to the Ministerial Order on the Bachelor of Science in Nursing6. Since then, nursing schools offer the Bachellor level for the Danish nursing students.

In Denmark, the general nurse is educated at further educacional level (admission equivalent to university admission requirements equal to a minimum of 12 years of general education). Furthermore, as part of the larger opportunities for the nurses in Denmark, nurses are also entitled to continue their studies as masters candidates and PhD students in Nursing awarded by the Faculty of Health Sciences.

All nurses in Denmark hold the title sygeplejerske (certified nurse) and practice under this title prior authorised by the National Board of Health under the Nurses Act.

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6 Ministerial Order on the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Programme, Act no.29 of 24 January 2008.
The Finnish general education system is composed of nine-year basic education (comprehensive school), preceded by one year of voluntary pre-primary education; upper secondary education, comprising vocational and general education; and higher education, provided by universities and polytechnics.

Nurses’ education has been in transformation from the beginning of 1990’s. Nurses’ education was organised as college-level training. Since 1993, nurses’ professional education started as an experimental training in the Polytechnics giving a higher vocational diploma. At that moment, nurses’ education was regularized in nine Polytechnics/Universities of Applied Sciences in 1996. The college level training was intended to be linked to the Universities of Applied sciences. When this connection was made the number of applicants for the nursing studies suddenly doubled, as informed by the Finish Nurses Association.

The duration of polytechnic degree studies is generally 210−240 study points (ECTS), which means 3.5 - 4 years of full-time study. This education is arranged as degree programmes. The entry requirement is a certificate from an upper secondary school or the matriculation certificate, a vocational qualification or corresponding foreign studies (different entry levels but at least 12 years of general education as shown in the table below). A total of 611 students started the Nursing Degree programme in 2010.

Data available, from 2002-2010, shows how the number of applicants to the Bachelor degree of nursing has constantly been increasing


A statistical report (2011) from the National Institute for Health and Welfare in Finland analysed the flows of nurses working in municipalities in the years 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2009 and 2010. As a reference note, the education of the public health nurses differs in longer duration with the registered nurse. From 1990 to 2010 there was an increase of 24100 nurses and midwives from which the largest number correspond to the public health nurses (higher education). The extract of the report mentioned above shows that there is a
clear tendency from the students to choose for higher education and to invest in better career opportunities.

FORMAL EDUCATION IN FINLAND

References:
- Ministry of Education and Culture
  http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattikorkeakoulutus/opiskelu Ja_tutkinnot/?lang=en

EFN – Evidence on upgrading the entry requirements of the Nursing education - January 2012
GERMANY

The system of nursing education in Germany consists of two tier systems:

- A 3 year course based on secondary education which entry requirements are 10 years and which final qualification is a nursing diploma.

- Since 2004 (through a model clause⁷), a Bachelor degree at university level with entry requirements for Higher Education (at least 12 years of general education).

As presented by the German Nurses Association (DBfK), nowadays within the 30 universities offering nursing education at Bachelor level, many students reveal they would not have entered to the nursing degree if it were accessible only through non-academic education. In addition, the universities themselves state that they would have not launched the courses if there were not have received enough interest in doing so.

Although the two different entry requirements still coexist, the general increase to 12 years for the access of the profession would be possible through an intermediate step of 2 extra years of education. This change would make nursing a more attractive profession, would attract different profiles than today and will increase the competences of the nurses in correlation with the increasing patients' needs are and the complexity of the delivery of healthcare.

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⁷ Higher Education
GREECE

Greece was one of the first countries in Europe to require by law, **since 1948, 12 years of general education** as admission requirements to the nursing studies – the same as for the entrance to any other higher school or university and still this presupposition is in force.

The Article 11 of the Law (683/07-May-1948, Gazette No 124, Issue A) refer:

“Presuppositions for entering a Nursing School.

a..............

b. High School certificate (12 years of general education) or equivalent officially recognized school for entering the Schools of Nursing......”

Undergraduate nursing education in Greece is two dimensional. Students can obtain a degree as a registered nurse through both university-based degree studies and Technological Educational Institutes (TEI) studies that differ significantly in both the provision of clinical experience and theoretical background and which require at least 12 years of admission requirements. The university also offers master’s degrees and PhD programs. The higher degrees provided by universities give access to highly valued qualifications in the market which provides better opportunities for the nurses who hold them.

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### Basic Nurse Training within the European Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Greece</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Qualification Speciality</td>
<td>Registered General Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Basic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Qualifications</td>
<td>National baccalaureat (12 years of education) Adaption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Requirements &amp; Entry Experience</td>
<td>National pan-Hellenic examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>MINIMUM - 17 MAXIMUM - n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandatory Components (Hours) for Qualification</td>
<td>CLINICAL - 1700 THEORETICAL - 2000 TECHNICAL - at least 300 (optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title of the Award</td>
<td>Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title Awarded by</td>
<td>University of Athens / Ministry of Education Registration as nurse by prefectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of the Trainee</td>
<td>STUDENT - yes APPRENTICE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Greece</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Qualification Speciality</td>
<td>Registered General Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Basic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>4 years (7 semesters of theoretical and clinical education and one semester of supervised practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Qualifications</td>
<td>National baccalaureat (12 years of education) Adaption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Requirements &amp; Entry Experience</td>
<td>National pan-Hellenic examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>MINIMUM - 17 MAXIMUM - n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandatory Components (Hours) for Qualification</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of the Award</td>
<td>Degree of Technological Education Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title Awarded by</td>
<td>Ministry of Education/TEI Registration as nurses by prefectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of the Trainee</td>
<td>STUDENT - yes APPRENTICE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ICELAND

The nursing education system in Iceland started at **university level in 1973**, including also a requirement of a final exam at the end of the secondary school. This was equally to 14 years of general education before entering the nursing education. Iceland was the first country where in moving the nursing education at a university level.

Until 1986 the diploma education for nursing was offered at the Icelandic nursing school. Although the entry level to this school was not a final exam at a secondary school/grammar school, the number of applicants with this level passed was so high that they were prioritized. The experience showed that this change resulted in more qualified students of nursing.

Applications to entry to the nursing education at university (14 years of prior education) have been frequently twice the amount of open slots. In the nursing programs there is currently a “numerus clausus” to limit the number of students that can continue their studies following the first semester. This number is calculated based on the number of vacancies in hospitals and institutions on the possibilities of clinical placements.

Nursing and the registration of nurses are regulated by the act of nursing. Nursing studies are currently being offered by two Icelandic universities, the University of Iceland and the University of Akureyri. Both schools offer four year Bachelor degree and Master Programs. The University of Iceland also offers a three year PhD program.
Concerning the number of applicants to the nursing education, the first major development was the introduction of the 4-year Registration/Degree Programmes in 2002. The Nursing and Midwifery Registration Degree education programme was placed at level 8 on the National Qualification Authority of Ireland (NQAI) framework of qualifications. This saw the ratio of applicants per place rising to a then first time high of 5.3 per applicants per place. Since 2002, the demand for nursing and midwifery education programmes has remained consistently high amongst school leavers and even more so for mature applicants (see below graph and table).

In addition the application process of an interview and written assessment changed and was replaced with the final year results of secondary school exams (the Irish Leaving Certificate), after the 12 years of general education. This meant that for the first time applications to nursing was through the Central Applications Office (Applications to all degree courses made through here). This change removed obstacles in the path of young people who were seeking a career in nursing. In 2001, there were 4.3 applications for each place available, compared to 3.3 in 2000 representing an increase of 25%.

The transition of the nursing and midwifery application process to an integrated application system, then moving it to the Central Application Office, followed by the professional opportunities given through the introduction of the 4 year registration/degree programme in higher education institutions, are the main factors that appear to have contributed towards an increased demand for nursing and midwifery in Ireland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of applicants</th>
<th>Total Number of places available</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
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<td>4011</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>1:4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>4034</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>1:4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>5591</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>1:4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5013</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1:3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>6578</td>
<td>1547</td>
<td>1:4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2002</strong></td>
<td><strong>8780</strong></td>
<td><strong>1640</strong></td>
<td><strong>1:5.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>7507</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>1:4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Number of Applicants</td>
<td>Number of Places</td>
<td>Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8299</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8547</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>1:5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>8866</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1:4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8640</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1:4.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>8119</td>
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<td>1:4.3</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>9457</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>1:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9014</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>1:5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8977</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>1:5.7</td>
</tr>
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</table>

↑ = an increase in the number of places available in 2006
↓ = a decrease in the number of places available in 2009

Note the increased number of applicants in 2002, year in which the 4 years Degree was introduced.
Since the transfer of nursing education to the university level there is only one entry level to the nursing studies requiring **12 years of general education** and a public exam. All the basic nursing education is now run by the university according to a national program.

The shift of nursing courses to the university was a gradual process and in 1996 all the courses were in the University although the old schools remained open until 1998 in order to allow the students to complete the course.

**Appendix 1 BASIC NURSE TRAINING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>Italy</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| NURSE QUALIFICATION e.g. nurse specialty | Diploma di Infermiere  
Diploma of Nurse |
| LEVEL | First Level University Degree |
| DURATION | Three years |
| ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS | High School Diploma (5 years)  
18 years old |
| ENTRY REQUIREMENTS e.g. medical, dental reports, police checks  
references (character/employers) | Selection multiple choice test (general culture)  
Medical certification (psycho-physic status) |
| AGE | MINIMUM 18 y. o.  
MAXIMUM |
| MANDATORY COMPONENTS (HOURS) FOR QUALIFICATION | CLINICAL  
3000  
TECHNICAL -  
1600 |
| TITLE OF THE AWARD e.g. Certificate/Diploma etc. | Diploma |
| TITLE AWARDED BY | University |
| STATUS OF THE TRAINEE | STUDENT  
APPRENTICE X  
EMPLOYEE |
The education for nurses in Montenegro was officially established in 1957, when after eight years of primary school education students used to enroll High School for Vocational Training in duration of 4 years. Upon completing the High School education until 1972, the diploma would be obtained with the title general care nurse.

- (eight-year primary school education – entry in primary school at the age of 7 + 4-year Vocational High School training = title nurse.)

In the year 2009 on the initiative of the National Association and within the Educational Reform in Montenegro and harmonization with the Directive EU 2005/36, it was accepted that students with education on 4-year High School level should get a title health care technician – general care course and it was also accepted to cancel the specialist education, while adopted high school enrolment after 9-year primary school education.

- (nine-year primary school education – entry at the age of 6 + four-year Vocational High School Vocational = health care technician )

Medical nurses /technicians from Montenegro didn’t have possibilities to go for a higher school degree in Montenegro until the year 2005. Nurses were getting a 2-year Bachelor degree in ex-Yugoslav Republics, and mostly in Belgrade. The education at general and specialist courses used to last 2-2,5 years. The title was Nurse with 2-year Higher School/Bachelor degree with general care or adequate specialist course (2-year higher school/bachelor degree nurse – with pediatric, obstetric course etc.)

- (eight-year primary school education + Vocational High School training + 2,5 – year higher school/bachelor degree (bachelor degree of lower level) = 2 – year Higher school degree/2-year bachelor degree nurse/health care technician)

Higher Medical Schools was established in Montenegro in the year 2005 – three-year applied studies course (bachelor degree) within Medical School. This course is entered by candidates after completed Medical High School and Grammar School at the age of 18 years old. Upon completion of 3-year course they get the title of nurse. Approximately, 50 students a year are enrolled.

- Nine-year primary school education + Vocational high school training or grammar school of general education (total of 12 years of general education) + three-year higher school education on bachelor degree level for general care nurse course.)
In 1976 the Parliament in Norway invoked a law stating that nursing education must be at the college level with a 3 year study period. The entry-level changed in 1981 from ten to twelve years, requiring high school exams. In addition, the requirements to nursing educators were raised in order to achieve increased nursing competency. In the 1980’s the nursing colleges developed a professional education with clear and precise profile. From 2002 all nursing students are required to complete a Bachelors’ degree.

The Norwegian Nurses Organisation has experienced the following:

- Increasing the entry level to nursing education will change the category of applicants. Nursing education at the college/university level provides young people with career possibilities and will be able to compete with other professions. Nursing needs smart students that have achieved good results and grades from their previous education. If nursing education requires 10 years at the entry-level, ambitious students that will not apply for nursing school they will seek education at a higher level.

- Just ten years of schooling before entering nursing education will not achieve the necessary requisite skills and abilities. Requiring twelve years of schooling at entry-level enables the nursing education to teach a higher level of theoretical knowledge, knowledge based practice.

- Increased theoretical knowledge provides the ability to recognize subtle nuances of situations, prevention and promotion of health

- A high level of knowledge provides an increased flexibility and therefore a need for fewer employees.

- An entry-level of twelve years increases professional responsibility and accountability and include: decision making increases, providing and independent professional nursing making informed decisions about health care
EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations

POLAND

As a result of the entry into force of the Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, it was highlighted the need for upgrading the level of the Polish nurse education to reach the harmonized minimum educational requirements at EU level. After long negotiations between the European Commission and the Members States and the intense lobby done by the nursing associations, the Polish Ministry of Health finally launched the long awaiting bridging courses for the 36,000 nurses that in 2009 where awaiting to increase their professional qualifications to be in compliance with the EU Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

The EFN strongly supported at that particular moment the initiative from the Ministry of Health and also the use of Social Cohesion Funds in giving career opportunities and better working conditions for the Polish nurses.

This initiative was launched under the so called Project System and the nurses enrolling the project were interviewed. The results of the survey conducted among the graduates of 2009 who participated in the bridging courses showed that 86.4% of respondents increased motivation for career development and completion of further professional qualifications, including continuing education at master's degree. The results of these studies can be found in the Report regarding the Project System 2008-2010⁹.

The Ministry of Health (Department of Nurses and Midwives) is responsible for the implementation of the system project “Professional training of nurses and midwives as part of bridging studies”. The project is co-funded by the European Union as part of the European Social Fund (Human Capital Operational Programme 2007-2013). The project has been released by 61 universities accredited by the Ministry of Health in the aspect of providing nursing and midwifery training. A total of 8827 nurses and midwives started their training in bridging studies in autumn 2010/2011.

Moreover, at the end of 2011, the Ministry undertook additional recruitments for nurses and midwives to study in the academic year 2011/2012.

PORTUGAL

Portugal opted to upgrade the nursing education requirements and also the duration of the studies in 1999. Since then, although currently Portugal is facing tremendous economic difficulties, the high demand to enter the nursing programmes continues despite knowing well in advance the difficulties in finding a first job as nurses in the country.

Nowadays, some recruitment strategies are jeopardising the capacity of the nursing workforce in Portugal, as for example German companies recruiting Portuguese nurses to work in Geriatric Homes/Clinics offering a starting salary that is the double of the one that it is offered in Portugal (1200 euros is the starting salary of a newly qualified nurse in the public sector). Young nurses are leaving Portugal looking for better opportunities and conditions offered abroad.

Currently in Portugal, Nursing is the degree offering more places to the students in public universities as well as in the private sector. And despite the situation in which 19% of the nursing graduates since 2007 still couldn’t find a job as nurses and the highly problems in terms of unemployment, students are still choosing the Portuguese education and Nursing remains one of the courses with a higher number of students. **Regardless the nursing degree is among the most expensive degrees it remains the fourth course with more students in 2009/2010 in Portugal.**

In the history of Portuguese nursing, the **year of 1975** is always mentioned as it was then that the educational programmes for auxiliary nurses were abandoned. Since then, **Portugal only offers one pre-registration educational level for all nurses.**

In 1988, the education of nurses was integrated in the National Higher Education System, under the direction of the Ministry of Education, and in 1999, it is created the **degree programme (licenciatura) of 4 years.**

To access the Higher Education System all applicants **must have completed twelve years of secondary education** and enter a national competition where they are ranked by the grades they have obtained and positioned according to their choices (each can indicate six possible courses/schools).

As such, since then – 1999 - all nursing students must respect these rules.

In a report of 2010, about the previous ten years of national competition to access Higher Education, the National Direction of Higher Education, states that in 2009 the higher education course with more places available was nursing: 1807.
In the table and graphs below we illustrate the evolution of available places for first year student nurses in the national competition and number of graduates in each year. We stress the fact that 2002 was an atypical year, as the students enrolled in 1999, were able to choose if they wanted to graduate after three of four years of course. All of the nurses who had only three years of education were able to enrol in an educational programme of one year to obtain equivalence to the degree.

In the past four years it has been increasingly difficult for newly graduate nurses to find their first job, and this fact has captured the attention of the media (newspapers and TV), but despite this the nursing courses continue to have an huge demand.

Some examples of the media coverage of the national competition to access higher education and the unemployment of nurses are mentioned in the references.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Nursing graduates</th>
<th>Total of Graduates</th>
<th>Total of student places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>1835 0</td>
<td>1835 1228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>1819 0</td>
<td>1819 1360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>1385 0</td>
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EFN – Evidence on upgrading the entry requirements of the Nursing education - January 2012
The admission requirements to enter the nursing education are 12 years since 1953. The evidence from the professional associations’ side is that this change affected positively the nursing education as it turned out to be one of the most demanded careers in the health field. Since this change, the universities have continued with the system and have not downgraded the admission requirements. In 2011 – Around there were 14,800 applications for nursing (there is a multiple application choice option and applicants may sign out to 3 different degrees) and the final admission was 5,600 new students for the country as a whole.

The upgrade of the nursing education in Spain has had a very positive effect to social recognition of the professionals, better professional opportunities and it has an undoubtedly improvement in the safety and quality of care. No negative effect has been described so far.

References:

- [http://www.msc.es/organizacion/sns/planCalidadSNS/docs/SENCEA.pdf](http://www.msc.es/organizacion/sns/planCalidadSNS/docs/SENCEA.pdf)
- [http://minerva.uca.es/publicaciones/asp/docs/tesis/ignaciogarcia.pdf](http://minerva.uca.es/publicaciones/asp/docs/tesis/ignaciogarcia.pdf)
- Servir a la comunidad y garantizar la calidad : las enfermeras lideran cuidados innovadores. Nursing. 2009; 27(3).
- [http://dspace.uah.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10017/2700/Tesis_De%20la%20pr% C3%A1ctica%20a%20la%20teor%C3%ADA.pdf?sequence=1](http://dspace.uah.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10017/2700/Tesis_De%20la%20pr% C3%A1ctica%20a%20la%20teor%C3%ADA.pdf?sequence=1)
All pre-registration (basic) nurse education in UK, both diploma and degree, is situated at university level with entry requirements of 12 years of general education or equivalent to enter higher education.

Policy changes in UK health care over the past decade have led to a consequent shift in the delivery of nurse education to ensure the development and sustainability of a knowledgeable nursing workforce. One of the most recent radical and important initiatives is Modernising Nursing Careers, which outlined four key priority areas for nursing, all of which have implications for nurse education. From September 2013 the UK will move to an all graduate (degree only) nursing profession and the nursing diploma is being phased out. By 2015 all nurses registering will be graduated at degree/bachelor level and the UK will have no other grade of qualifying nurse. There are many opportunities for those interested in nursing to gain the required learning and qualifications to participate at this higher level, including a traditional school (A Level) route, vocational qualifications to a similar academic level and ‘Access’ courses to higher education for mature entrants.

Nurse education has been transformed over the last decade and continuing change is likely. Nurse educators are responsible for meeting the quality assurance standards of both local stakeholders and of the national regulatory body (NMC), and, in addition to clear requirements for ensuring quality in professional competence; the student experience, retention and progress are important aspects of this process.

Currently there are several scientific literature sources that explore how the age of starting the nursing studies is a determinant factor for a future successful professional performance, and several results indicated that it would be expected a student with better entry qualifications and who is also willing to seek academic support to be highly successful in the present academic setting\(^\text{10}\).

Results from one of the first British studies which considered both academic performance and completion rates for pre-registration diploma students revealed that education and age were significant predictors of academic achievement: entrants with a minimum of two “A levels” and mature women with recent study experience did particularly well. Younger recruits with modest educational qualifications on entry performed less well in their assessments of theoretical knowledge. Younger students tended to leave more regularly,

and well-qualified entrants showed a greater tendency to complete, although these relationships were not statistically significant\(^{11}\).

A highly relevant study was also carried out into the relationship between entry age, entry qualifications and academic performance on the first 18 months of a Diploma in nursing course in the UK. This was in light of increasing academic expectations in the United Kingdom arising from the demands of the Diploma in Higher Education/Registration course (Project 2000). Although old now, this study is important to the modernisation review due to the fairly substantial proportions of both unqualified (DC test) and mature entrants being admitted onto the course, as the work offers insight into a sample which is now no longer available in the UK due to systemic change. Results indicated that the performance of most mature students, whether qualified or not, was above average, with the qualified group securing the best results of any of the four groups. Among the 17-21 age group, while the qualified performed as expected, the unqualified performed the worst of any of the four groups, registering both a high discontinuation rate and low overall mean scores for the programme. Thus, increasing age positively correlated with academic performance. If continued recruitment of unqualified younger students is planned, then a more vigorously targeted policy of academic support and guidance for these students will be required. Without this, it seems likely that poor performance and high wastage among this group will continue\(^{12}\).

Contemporary papers have continued to support the need for nurses who have received sufficient schooling and are prepared for higher levels of study, as the UK heeds both global and national recommendations in devising its own position. The World Health Organisation (2009) clearly identifies that contemporary nursing must incorporate 12 years of primary and secondary education and the nursing must become all graduate.

*The future of nursing and midwifery education lies in good preparation at the professional, first-degree level. This level of education is being successfully provided in many countries and research has demonstrated that a more highly educated nursing workforce not only improves patient safety and quality of care but saves lives\(^{13,14}\).*

In the UK his is reflected by the NMC in their required standards for approved Education institutions as cited below.

\(^{11}\) JULIE TAYLOR A*, FIONA IRVINE B, CAROLINE BRADBURY-JONES C, HUGH MCKENNA D, 2009 On the precipice of great things: The current state of UK nurse education School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Dundee, 11 Airlie Place, Dundee DD1 4HJ, Scotland, UK


\(^{14}\) WHO (2009) Global standards for the initial education of professional nurses and midwives
Our standards aim to enable nurses to give and support high quality care in rapidly changing environments. They reflect how future services are likely to be delivered, acknowledge future public health priorities and address the challenges of long-term conditions, an ageing population, and providing more care outside hospitals. Nurses must be equipped to lead, delegate, supervise and challenge other nurses and healthcare professionals. They must be able to develop practice, and promote and sustain change. As graduates they must be able to think analytically, use problem-solving approaches and evidence in decision-making, keep up with technical advances and meet future expectations\(^{15}\). Nursing and Midwifery Council, (2010).

\(^{15}\) NMC (2010) Standards for Pre-registration Nursing Education (http://standards.nmc-uk.org/PreRegNursing/statutory/background/Pages/more-background-and-context.aspx)
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