



WHO Europe Cancer Nursing Curriculum

WHO European Strategy for Continuing Education for Nurses and
Midwives

2003

Keywords

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Introduction

This Cancer Nursing curriculum has been prepared for WHO Europe as one of several post-qualifying curricula, requested by some Member States, to assist them in their progress towards implementation of the WHO European Region Continuing Education Strategy for Nurses and Midwives (WHO 2003). The Cancer Nursing curriculum document therefore commences with a description of the context for the Continuing Education Strategy.

Context

The WHO European Region Continuing Education Strategy for Nurses and Midwives is set firmly within the context of the Second WHO Ministerial Conference on Nursing and Midwifery in Europe, which addressed the unique roles and contributions of Europe's nurses and midwives in health development and health service delivery (WHO 2001). At that Conference of Ministers of Health of Member States in the European Region, the Munich Declaration "Nurses and Midwives: A Force for Health" (WHO 2000a) was signed, and this key document, together with the WHO European Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery Education (WHO 2000) form the context for the Continuing Education Strategy.

The need for a Continuing Education Strategy

Nurses and midwives together constitute the largest proportion of the health care workforce in all Member States of the WHO European Region, numbering approximately six million at the start of this new century. The service they provide covers 24 hours of every day of the year. It is imperative that they are competent to provide the highest quality of nursing and/or of midwifery care. In order to do this, their initial nursing and midwifery education must be such that the people of their nation can be assured of their competence to practise on entry to their professions of nursing and midwifery, and that the foundation has been laid for them to continue to learn throughout their professional lives. Maintenance and further development of competence is essential to the ongoing provision of high quality nursing and midwifery care. In the rapidly changing health care services of today, with the knowledge explosion and the impact of technology upon health care, many nurses and midwives are increasingly called upon to work in expanded, specialist and/or advanced practice roles. The WHO European Strategy for Continuing Education for nurses and midwives has been developed in order to assist Member States to ensure the continuing competence of their nursing and midwifery workforce. In some cases this will be by developing new knowledge for specialist fields of clinical nursing and midwifery practice, in others by deepening their knowledge of an existing field of practice, and in yet others by gaining new competencies in the field of nursing and/or midwifery education, management or research.

The Continuing Education Strategy does not stand alone. Firstly, it builds upon the firm foundation provided by the WHO European Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery Education (WHO 2000), in which the link between initial and continuing education is clearly stated:

The initial programme of education must prepare nurses and midwives who are not only competent to practise in today's health services, but who value and are committed to maintaining that competence. This they will achieve through continuing to update their knowledge, skills and

attitudes, in order that they can continue to meet the changing health priorities and needs of the people of the Member States (WHO 2000).

Secondly, its principles are in harmony with continuing education developments in nursing more generally in Europe and worldwide and with the growth of specialization in nursing. The International Council of Nurses (ICN) considered specialization as implying a deeper level of knowledge and skill in a specific aspect of nursing than would be acquired in initial nursing education (International Council of Nurses 1987 and 1992). The European Commission's Advisory Committee on Nursing (Commission of the European Communities 1994) recommended that specialist educational preparation was necessary in order to prepare qualified nurses to continue to meet the changing and increasingly complex needs of patients for whom advanced technology was enabling new treatment regimes, with resulting advanced practice roles for nurses. ENNO, the European Network of Nursing Organizations (2000) advocates a European Framework for Specialist Nursing Education, in recognition of the reality that the field of nursing knowledge and skills has become too vast and complex for any one individual to master in full. If quality of care is to be ensured, then specialization within nursing is essential, and they cite European Directives 89/48/CEE and 92/51/EEC, as amended in 1997, as the directives which are appropriate for specialist nurses (European Network of Nursing Organizations 2000).

The aim and purpose of the Continuing Education Strategy

The key aim of the strategy is to ensure fitness for purpose of each Member State's nursing and midwifery workforce. Ongoing competence to practise can only be achieved by a commitment to lifelong learning on the part of all nurses and midwives. However, that personal and professional commitment can only be realized if each Member State accepts its obligation to ensure, or set in place plans to ensure that opportunities for continuing education are provided, and that the requirement for nurses and midwives to maintain their competence is regulated under legislation, in order to support safe, up-to-date and evidence-based practice.

The purpose of the Continuing Education Strategy is therefore twofold; it is both visionary and pragmatic. It provides the vision that will help shape the philosophy of continuing education in nursing and in midwifery, often termed continuing professional development, and it outlines and/or confirms some fundamental guiding principles. If followed, these principles should enable Member States to set up or further develop existing systems of continuing education. In turn, this will enable nurses and midwives to maintain their competence and so feel confident that their knowledge, skills and attitudes are "fit for purpose" in the multiprofessional team in the health care services of which they are an essential part.

Background to the Continuing Education Strategy

Of crucial importance to the implementation of the Continuing Education Strategy is the implementation by Member States of the WHO education strategy for initial nursing and midwifery education. Of equal importance is the belief, which underpins both strategies, that education and practice are very closely related. Education and practice must move ahead together, in mutual respect and partnership, with shared values and goals. This is essential to the provision of an appropriate quality of cost-effective and efficient nursing and midwifery care and of health promotion for all the people of the Member States of the WHO European Region. This progress and partnership must be achieved within the changing structures of health care priorities

and provision in the different Member States, many of which are undergoing major political, economic, social and demographic change and are in the midst of health care reforms. Although some of these differences can be significant, the shared values were clearly demonstrated at the Second WHO Ministerial Conference on Nursing and Midwifery in Europe (WHO 2001) when, in The Munich Declaration (WHO 2000a), Ministers of Health stated their belief that:

Nurses and midwives have **key and increasingly important roles** to play in society's efforts to tackle the public health challenges of our time, as well as in ensuring the provision of high quality, accessible, equitable, efficient and sensitive health services which ensure continuity of care and address people's rights and changing needs (WHO 2000a).

In the "Munich Declaration" which was issued by Ministers at the Conference all relevant authorities were urged to "step up their action" in order to strengthen nursing and midwifery by:

- ensuring a nursing and midwifery contribution to decision-making at all levels of **policy** development and implementation;
- addressing the **obstacles**, in particular recruitment policies, gender and status issues, and medical dominance;
- providing financial incentives and opportunities for **career advancement**;
- improving initial and continuing **education** and access to higher nursing and midwifery education;
- creating **opportunities for nurses, midwives and physicians to learn together** at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, to ensure more cooperative and interdisciplinary working in the interests of better patient care;
- supporting research and dissemination of information to develop the **knowledge and evidence base** for practice in nursing and midwifery;
- seeking opportunities to establish and support **family-focused community nursing and midwifery** programmes and services, including, where appropriate, the Family Health Nurse;
- enhancing the roles of nurses and midwives in **public health, health promotion and community development** (WHO 2000a).

Of the above actions, those of direct relevance to the Continuing Education Strategy are the need to improve continuing education and access to higher nursing and midwifery education; to create opportunities for nurses, midwives and physicians to learn together at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in order to ensure more cooperative and interdisciplinary working in the interests of better patient care; to support research and dissemination of information in order to develop the knowledge and evidence base for practice; to provide financial incentives and opportunities for career advancement; and to ensure nurses and midwives contribute to decision-making at all levels of policy development and implementation.

On a worldwide basis, at the Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly in May 2001, delegates from the 191 countries present stressed the crucial and cost-effective role of nurses and midwives in reducing mortality, morbidity and disability in populations, in caring for those who are ill and in promoting healthier lifestyles (WHO 2001a).

If nurses and midwives are to fulfil these key roles to their maximum potential, if they are to work effectively in partnership with others in the health care team, then it is imperative that they build systematically upon their initial nursing and midwifery education, continuing their professional education in ways which ensure they maintain competence to meet the needs of the people of their nations for health care.

The health care context

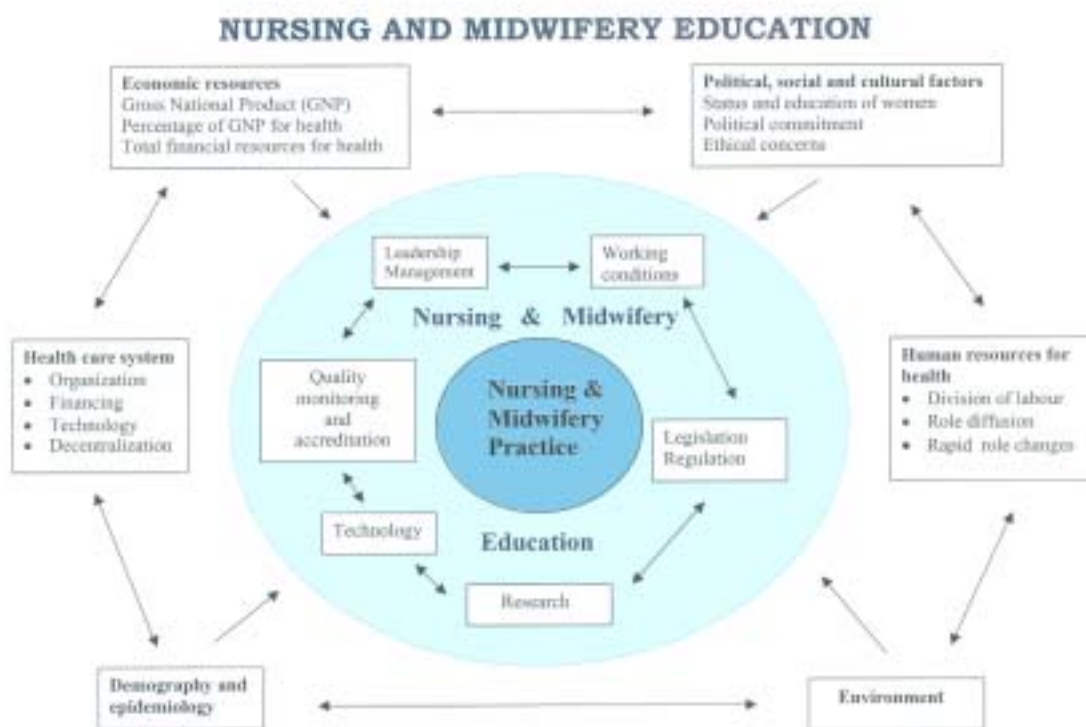
As the Continuing Education Strategy was being prepared, all governments across Europe continued to face a wide range of complex health problems. Although in each Member State the existence and the severity of these problems varies, they include environmental pollution; the increasing gap between the rich and the poor; unacceptable levels of maternal and child morbidity and mortality; and a resurgence of diseases thought to have been conquered such as, for example, tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid fever and malaria. There are increases in the level of chronic illness, including cancer, cardiovascular diseases and mental health disorders; in lifestyle-related problems such as unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, smoking, alcohol and substance misuse and in sexually transmitted diseases. In some parts of the Region, wars and ethnic conflict continue to cause intense suffering, increasing numbers of refugees and homeless people and disruption to society's essential infrastructures. There are also the major challenges for health care systems which are inherent in the changing demography, i.e. the steady increase in the proportion of elderly people in the population which, in some Member States, is compounded by a gradual decrease in the proportion of those who normally contribute to the gross domestic product through working.

The future is likely to see continuing reforms of the health sector. These include a greater involvement of citizens and the community in decision-making about care; more people cared for at home and therefore a growing demand for community-based health services; a steady increase in the availability of new treatments and therapies; increasing costs of providing care; and more and more ethical challenges. However, whatever the reforms and changes, care which is centred upon the individual will remain the starting point of the health care organization and of the work of all nurses and midwives.

Continuing advances in practice, in the evidence base and in the quality of care required make it imperative that the capabilities of the nursing and midwifery workforce are regularly updated, and that there is a commitment by Member States to ensure provision of appropriate continuing education. Effective implementation of the role of the nurse and of the midwife as outlined in the Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery Education is the essential first step. Effective implementation, or setting in place of plans to achieve implementation of the Strategy for Continuing Education is also essential if the workforce is to be prepared for the necessary specialist and advanced practice roles which the developments outlined above demand. Member States will be required to regularly evaluate and, if necessary, update their existing continuing education provision, to keep pace with the priority of maintaining a nursing and midwifery workforce which is fit for purpose, and which remains fit for purpose.

Just as "health care does not take place in isolation from political, economic and cultural realities" (WHO 1996), so nursing and midwifery education and practice do not take place in isolation from the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of the Member States; neither must they be seen in isolation from the various stages of health care reform and the dynamic nature, or otherwise, of progress. Figure 1 depicts that complexity.

Figure 1. The dynamic context of nursing and midwifery education
Adapted from WHO 1996



Likewise, nurses and midwives do not practise in isolation from their colleagues in the other health care professions. Although each profession contributes unique knowledge and skills to health promotion, the care of patients and to the health care system as a whole, there is a need for much more multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary work, in a spirit of recognition and respect for each other's authority, responsibility, ability and unique contribution. Thus, nurses and midwives must continue to build upon their initial professional education so as to continue to take their full part as members of the multiprofessional health care team, sharing both in decision-making and, when appropriate, in taking responsibility for leadership of the team and for the outcomes of the work of the team.

The Member States of the WHO European Region need well prepared, up-to-date, competent nurses and midwives, who participate in lifelong learning and who are able to work confidently, maintaining professional standards of care as the sound basis for multiprofessional collaboration and partnership with patients, healthy individuals, families and communities.

The Cancer Nursing Curriculum

All Member States are reminded that this is a sample curriculum. It should be used as guidance and be adapted as necessary to meet the Member State's specific priorities and needs for Cancer Nursing.

1. Cancer Nursing

Cancer is a major health problem worldwide and a significant cause of mortality and morbidity in all age groups, although a higher proportion of older people, in comparison to the other age groups, suffer from cancer. In many countries, cancer prevention and treatment is a national health care priority. Developments in scientific knowledge and advances in technology, coupled with increased patient knowledge about their disease and its treatment have led to an increase in the public's expectation in relation to cancer care. These developments are already having a profound effect on the requirement for the delivery of cancer services in Europe and worldwide; a requirement will continue and will grow until a cure can be found for this disease. There is therefore a need to provide multidisciplinary specialist cancer care in order to meet the demands imposed by the dynamic and complex nature of cancer and its management, and the often devastating effect of the diagnosis of cancer on patients and their families. Survival rates from cancer vary across countries and an important factor in this is the variability in knowledge of the disease, of treatment practices and availability of technology.

Cancer nurses, as key members of the multidisciplinary health care team, have a responsibility to ensure that patients in their care receive the highest standards of evidence-based nursing care. Given the rapid increase in knowledge and availability of major surgery and other forms of treatment and of palliation, cancer nurses require specialist educational preparation in order to provide that quality of care to the cancer patient and their families (Commission of the European Communities 1994). Literature from a number of countries provide evidence that patient care is improved and health care costs reduced when appropriately educated nurses provide care. This curriculum therefore aims to increase knowledge and awareness amongst cancer nurses and offers a model for the development of cancer nursing.

1.1 Definition of Cancer Nursing and the Cancer Nurse

Cancer nursing can be defined as nursing which is concerned with the care of cancer patients of all ages, whatever type of cancer they suffer from, and whatever the stage of their illness. The cancer nurse has successfully completed specialist post-qualification education in cancer nursing, which builds upon initial generalist nursing education. This enables the nurse, in addition to her/his generalist role, to work in a specialist role with individuals and families experiencing and/or affected by cancer, in whatever setting they may be, i.e. hospitals, hospices or the community. The cancer nurse provides health education about cancer prevention, prepares patients for the different forms of treatment, including surgery, and cares for them following their treatment or surgery. The cancer nurse also cares for patients for whom it has been recognized there is no cure and who are receiving palliative care.

2. The Cancer Nursing course

2.1 Aims

The aims of the course and of the curriculum are to:

- provide an advanced educational experience which will develop the student's intellectual and imaginative abilities in order to facilitate the development of independent judgement and problem-solving skills;
- provide an educational framework that will encourage the student to develop her/his skills of analysis and critical awareness in order to stimulate an enquiring and creative approach to both the theory and practice of cancer nursing;
- develop the student's ability to respond to changing needs in cancer care in an analytical way;
- develop the student's critical awareness of relevant research findings and facilitate integration of these findings into cancer nursing practice.

2.2 Structure, length and mode of delivery

The curriculum is structured in modules or units of study, several of which combine both theory and practice elements. The length of the course must be sufficient to enable the student, on successful completion, to achieve the specified competencies or learning outcomes, the academic award and the specialist nurse qualification relevant to the course, and is normally of 40 weeks. Each week of the course is calculated as comprising 30 hours, which gives a total of 1200 hours. The preferred mode of delivery is full-time. Flexibility to deliver the course in a part-time mode or by distance/on-line learning should be open to negotiation, depending upon each Member State's resources.

The course is based on the philosophy of the cancer care nurse as a reflective, lifelong learner (Figure 2, Section 2.6). It emphasizes the importance of the integration of theory and practice, which should be evidence-based.

2.3 Entry Requirements

Course participants will be nurses who have successfully completed an initial nursing education programme, as described in the WHO European Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery Education entitled "Nurses and midwives for health: A WHO European strategy for nursing and midwifery education" (WHO 2000) or its equivalent. They should have a minimum of two years post-qualifying experience.

2.4 Competencies or learning outcomes

The competencies or learning outcomes of the course have been developed to demonstrate achievement of both theoretical and clinical learning in the following areas:

- Specialist clinical practice
- Care and programme management
- Clinical practice leadership

- Clinical practice development.

These are detailed in the Continuing Education Strategy (WHO 2003) and are based upon the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC 1998) standards for specialist education and practice. Underpinning knowledge will be delivered in the theoretical component of the course and the students will be expected to integrate and apply this knowledge in cancer nursing practice.

On successful completion of the course, the student will be competent to:

- assess, plan, provide and evaluate holistic, culturally sensitive and evidence-based nursing care for patients with cancer, seeking to understand their physical, psychological and spiritual needs;
- demonstrate an understanding of how personal and professional attitudes, values and beliefs in relation to cancer may influence the care that patients and their families receive;
- appraise the physical, psychological, social and environmental issues that contribute to the onset of cancer, utilizing appropriate epidemiological evidence;
- demonstrate an understanding of the role of the immune system and of genetics in cancer;
- participate in health education activities to promote cancer prevention and early detection;
- describe approaches to the diagnosis and staging of cancer;
- explain the principles and application of commonly used cancer treatments;
- explain the requirements for safe preparation and administration of chemotherapeutic agents;
- demonstrate safe and effective practice in administering, recording and disposing of chemotherapeutic and other drugs used in the care of the cancer patient;
- assess the effects of all forms of treatment and initiate action according to ward or unit protocols;
- complete nursing documentation accurately and in a timely fashion;
- discuss the potential impact of cancer and its treatment on patients and their families;
- assess the needs of the patient and family regarding their stress and coping mechanisms when faced with the diagnosis of cancer;
- demonstrate understanding of the principles of cancer clinical trials and ensure the patient understands sufficiently to provide informed consent;
- analyse professional, legal and ethical issues in cancer nursing and their potential implications for nursing practice;
- apply knowledge of patient's rights in professional clinical practice;
- discuss the contribution of nursing research to patient care and utilize relevant research in practice;
- critically analyse theories relating to therapeutic communication and practise effective communication skills in the care of patients with cancer and their families;
- contribute effectively as a member of the multidisciplinary team;

- apply appropriate teaching and learning principles in the education of patients, their families and of less experienced colleagues;
- articulate clearly the role of the cancer nurse in promoting high standards of care for cancer patients in both the curative and palliative stages of the disease.

2.5 Curriculum Content

The curriculum will be delivered in a series of eight modules. In order to complete the course, the student must successfully complete all modules. While all of the modules offer the knowledge needed to develop a reflective and competent cancer nurse, Modules one, four, five and seven specifically focus on generic transferable knowledge and skills which are applicable for all nurses working in a specialist role. These modules form the “core curriculum” and feature as part of all the other WHO European Specialist Nursing curricula.

2.6 Teaching/learning and assessment strategies

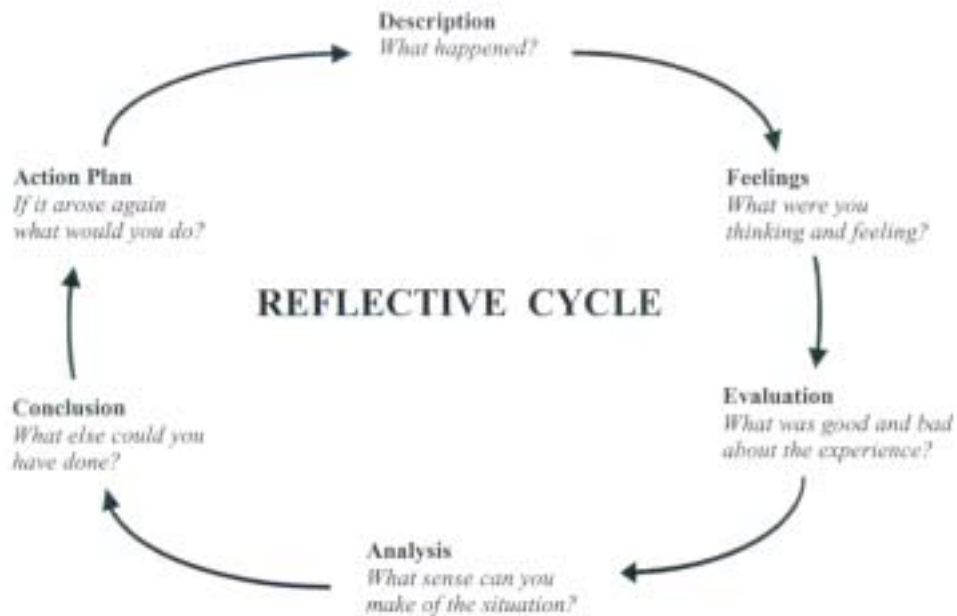
These strategies will stimulate learning at all six levels of cognitive skills, as described by Bloom (1956) in his seminal text. The teaching/learning and assessment strategies employed in the course should be congruent with the principles of andragogy, the rationale for which is that teachers and students will bring to the course existing competencies – relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes – to contribute to a mutually educative process. Overall, emphasis will be placed on interactive approaches. Active student participation, facilitated by nurse teachers (who have a role both in the university setting and in clinical practice) and by mentors (in practice/clinical areas) is considered to be the optimum way of achieving learning outcomes. There will continue to be a place for the didactic lecture, but it is envisaged that this will constitute a relatively minor proportion of the curriculum. The latest educational technology available in the particular Member State, including where feasible on-line or E-learning and video-conferencing, should be used to enhance teaching and learning.

A key objective will be the use of “reflection” as a means of learning from and developing expert practice (Figure 2). This will require the student to maintain a reflective diary/journal for the duration of the course. Case studies, critical incidents and care scenarios will form the focus for a reflective, problem-solving approach to learning.

Assessment methods should be supportive of the adult learning approach, should promote the integration of theory and practice, be research/evidence based and include a variety of methods. Assessment will enable the measurement of the student’s progress and achievement in relation to the prescribed competencies/learning outcomes of the cancer nursing course.

The success of the teaching/learning and assessment strategies will depend critically on the availability and deployment of appropriately qualified and prepared nurse educators who are committed to the philosophy of adult learning approaches. In addition, such interactive and problem-solving approaches must be supported by an environment which is conducive to learning. This must include attention to the provision of adequate space, library facilities and other technological resources, all of which should be borne in mind at the planning stage.

Figure 2. The Reflective Cycle
Gibbs, 1988



2.7 Supervision of practice

Clinical practice should be undertaken under the auspices of a suitably experienced cancer nurse, who will ensure that the students gain the relevant experience during the period of clinical practice. The clinical practice assessment should be designed to demonstrate achievement of the clinical learning outcomes.

Supervisors are responsible for guiding students through clinical practice periods as well as making an assessment of the student's competence to practise by the end of the clinical experience. The course leader should retain responsibility for the student throughout this period and should liaise with the student and supervisor as appropriate.

2.8 Optimum student intake and teacher/student ratio

As interactive adult teaching/learning and assessment strategies will be used throughout the course, which will include the requirement for clinical supervision, the optimum intake per course is likely to be 30 students. The ideal teacher-student ratio should not exceed 1:10, i.e. one teacher per ten students.

2.9 Accreditation with ECTS points

Each module is assigned credit points using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The ECTS system has been chosen because the European Community Directives guide nursing and midwifery education for all European Union (EU) countries and those accession countries which

become members of EU (European Commission 1989). Credits are “a numerical value allocated to course units (modules) to describe the student workload required to complete them” (European Commission 1995). In other words the number of points does not reflect only the direct contact hours, e.g. while the student is attending a lecture, seminar, practical skills demonstration or tutorial and is in direct contact with the teacher, but also includes the number of hours during which the student is expected to devote to independent study or practising of skills. Credit points take into account the learning in both the university, i.e. the theory component of a module, and in practice placements. The total number of ECTS credits for an academic year is 60. Their apportionment per module reflects the length of that module, calculated in weeks and number of hours. A week is taken as comprising 30 hours, and 20 hours equates to one ECTS credit point. Thus, a two-week, 60-hour module earns three credit points and a 16-week, 480-hour module earns 24 credit points. The overall length of the course is 40 weeks or 1200 hours which equate to 60 ECTS credit points. Further information on this system and its application to nursing education can be found in Section 8 of the Guidelines prepared to assist Member States with implementation of the initial Education Strategy (WHO 2001b).

2.10 Quality control and evaluation

External audit will be essential to evaluate the quality and standards of the course, as evidenced by the curriculum design, the teaching/learning strategies, the marking of student assessments and the results in both academic work and in practice learning outcomes. Curriculum evaluation should be carried out by teachers, students and also by those providing the service, i.e. cancer nursing managers and existing cancer nurses.

3. Teachers and mentors

The types of teaching/learning and assessment strategies considered essential for this curriculum are challenging for teachers, mentors and students. It is therefore important, if they are to be effectively delivered, that only qualified nurse teachers and mentors are involved. The setting up of structures to ensure peer group support and close liaison between teachers and mentors will be particularly important in the early years, as there may be no role models either in education or in practice.

Teachers of the cancer nursing course must:

- hold a degree at an academic level equivalent to the requirements for university or equivalent institute teachers in the country;
- hold a teaching qualification in order to apply appropriately the full range of research-based teaching, learning and assessment strategies within the theory and clinical components of the curriculum;
- hold the qualification to which the programme leads, or be able to provide evidence of updating of knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to critical care nursing;
- teach and/or work within critical care nursing;
- take responsibility for the clinical supervision of the nurse on practice placement, and share this responsibility with their clinical mentor.

The cancer nurse who is acting as mentor must be experienced in cancer nursing and must hold the appropriate academic qualification.

4. Location of the course

The theoretical component of the course should be delivered in a university or equivalent institute. Practice elements will take place in cancer care settings.

5. Qualification on successful completion of the course

On successful completion of the curriculum the nurse will receive the specialist qualification and postgraduate academic award of “Cancer Nurse”. The specialist qualification will be formally recorded in accordance with the country’s legislative and regulatory system for nursing and nurses.

6. Cancer nursing curriculum overview – Modules one to eight

An overview of the curriculum, and descriptions of the modules which comprise the curriculum are given in the following pages. It should be noted that a number of concepts and subjects introduced in one module are revisited and further developed in another. As knowledge and experience are gained, students will be able to view these concepts and subjects from different aspects and build upon their earlier learning and experience.

CANCER NURSING CURRICULUM

OVERVIEW

Module One

INTRODUCTORY
MODULE
Concepts, Practice
and Theory

2 weeks – 60 hours
ECTS credits – 3

Module Two

CANCER NURSING I
The Basic Science
of Cancer

4 weeks – 120 hours
ECTS credits – 9

Module Three

CANCER NURSING II
Prevention and Early
Detection of Cancer

6 weeks – 180 hours
ECTS credits – 9

Module Four

INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

2 weeks – 60 hours
ECTS credits – 3

Module Five

DECISION-MAKING

2 weeks – 60 hours
ECTS credits – 3

Module Six

CANCER NURSING III
Developing Cancer Nursing
Clinical Practice

14 weeks – 420 hours
ECTS credits – 21

Module Seven

LEADERSHIP AND
MANAGING RESOURCES

2 weeks – 60 hours
ECTS points – 3

Module Eight

CANCER NURSING IV
Survivorship

8 weeks – 240 hours
ECTS points – 12

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Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE ONE

Title: Introductory Module
 Concepts, Practice and Theory

Duration: 2 weeks – 60 hours

ECTS credit points: 3

Module Content Summary

This module introduces the student to the key concepts which have shaped the cancer nursing curriculum. The approach will encourage the student to build upon, integrate and expand their existing knowledge, skills and experience using the new knowledge and experiences which will be gained as a result of studying the curriculum. The close relationship between the practice of nursing and the theoretical and research knowledge related to nursing will be explored using examples from cancer nursing. The teaching and learning strategies will encourage the nurse to get to know her fellow students and to share professional knowledge and experiences. The value of debate about the relevance of the theoretical content to cancer nursing practice will be explored.

This module will take place in the university setting or equivalent institutional setting.

Syllabus

The Cancer Nurse
Typical care scenarios
The competency-based and research-based curriculum
Concept of competence
Androgogy – appropriate teaching and learning strategies for students and for adult patients
Facilitation of learning
Problem-solving
Teamwork
Debating as a form of constructive challenge
Analytical and critical thinking and its relationship to the practice of cancer nursing
Continuing professional development/lifelong learning

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to demonstrate:

- understanding of how previous learning and experience can inform and enrich the new knowledge and skills necessary for the practice of cancer nursing;
 - knowledge of a variety of teaching and learning strategies which may be appropriate to the education of nurses and of patients and their carers;
 - an understanding of competence and its relevance in nursing practice and in the team approach to care;
 - an analytic and critical approach to discussion and constructive debate about nursing issues;
 - a commitment to lifelong learning and continuing professional development.
-

Reading List

WHO publications
National and international literature covering the syllabus
Where accessible - on-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lecture (key concepts)	Case studies
Reflective exercises	Seminars
Group work	Debate and discussion

Assessment Methods

Dates on which assignments are due:

Format of assignment:

Examination – multiple choice and short answer questions – 50% of whole

Short essay – approximately 600 words – 50% of whole

The student will choose a concept from those listed in the syllabus and discuss the relevance of the chosen concept to her personal understanding, at this early stage of the course, of what will be expected of her as a qualified Cancer Nurse.

Examination: Mark awarded	%
Essay: Mark awarded	%
Aggregate mark for module (out of 100).....	%

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Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE TWO

Title: Cancer Nursing I
The Basic Science of Cancer

Duration: 4 weeks – 120 hours

ECTS Credit points: 6

Module Content Summary

This module will enable the student to gain a deeper understanding of the biological processes involved in the development and spread of cancer, and to appreciate the significance of an understanding of the basic science of cancer to specialist nursing practice.

75% of this module is based in the university or equivalent institute setting.
25% is based in a cancer laboratory or pathology department setting.

Syllabus

Integrating basic science of cancer into nursing
Cell biology
Transformation of cells and carcinogenesis
Tumour markers
Introduction to cancer genetics
Pathology and tumour staging
Epidemiology of cancer
Metastases and the metastatic spread
Systematic manifestations of cancer

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to demonstrate:

- explain the processes involved in the transformation of a normal cell to a cancer cell, i.e. carcinogenesis;
 - describe the impact of genetic research and developments on contemporary cancer care;
 - discuss how epidemiological studies contribute to cancer care and prevention strategies;
 - demonstrate an understanding of tumour staging;
 - describe the varied systemic manifestations of cancer;
 - describe the processes involved in the development of metastases and subsequent spread of tumour cells throughout the body.
-

Reading List

WHO publications
National and international literature covering the syllabus
Where accessible – on-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lectures	Laboratory demonstrations
Use of video	Seminars
Group work	Laboratory observation

Assessment Methods

Date on which assignment is due:

Format of assignment:

Examination – multiple choice and short answer questions – 100% of whole

Total mark for module%

**WHO Regional Office for Europe
Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE THREE

Title: Cancer Nursing II
Prevention and Early Detection of Cancer

Duration: 6 weeks – 180 hours

ECTS Credit points: 9

Module Content Summary

This module will enable the student to develop their understanding of the principles of prevention and early detection of cancer, and of effective methods of health promotion and education, utilizing appropriate teaching/learning strategies for patients and their families facing a potentially life-threatening situation.

66% (4 weeks) of this module will be based in the university or equivalent institute setting
34% (2 weeks) will be practice based.

Syllabus

Concepts and approaches in health promotion and health education
Cancer risk factors in lifestyle behaviours, employment and life circumstances
Prevention and early detection strategies
The evidence base for prevention and early detection
Barriers to cancer prevention and early detection
Individual risk assessment
Principles and techniques of screening
Working with health, social care and employers in promoting cancer prevention

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to demonstrate:

- an ability to undertake effective health promotion and health education in cancer prevention and treatment;
 - knowledge of the variety of risk factors in relation to cancer;
 - an understanding of the statistical evidence for the effectiveness of screening;
 - methods for instigating and evaluating screening programmes; and
 - effective team working in multidisciplinary and interagency teams promoting cancer education.
-

Reading List

WHO publications
National and international literature covering the syllabus
Where accessible – on-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lecture	Case studies
Reflective practice	Tutorials
Multiprofessional and interagency Seminars	Group work

Assessment Methods

Dates on which assignments are due:

Format of assignments:

Submission of two essays – each of 1000 to 1500 words – each 50% of whole

Essay One – A plan for the design, implementation and evaluation of a health promotion session with a specific risk group.

Essay Two – Screening – A critical review of the evidence.

Essay One: Mark awarded%

Essay Two: Mark awarded%

Aggregate mark for module (out of 100%)%

**WHO Regional Office for Europe
Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE FOUR

Title: Information Management and Research

Duration: 2 weeks – 60 hours

ECTS Credit Points: 3

Module Content Summary

This module will enable students to extend their knowledge in relation to applied aspects of information management and research. It will develop their understanding of approaches to information management and the research process, ethical issues in relation to obtaining informed consent from participants in research, confidentiality and security of data and the communication of results of relevance to practice. The research component will have a particular focus on studies and evidence which contribute to knowledge within the field of cancer nursing.

80% of this module will be based in the university or equivalent institute setting.
20% of this module will be practice-based.

Syllabus

Sources/types of information, knowledge and evidence
Analytical and critical thinking, critical appraisal and constructive questioning of practice
The research process, research design and methods
Basic statistics – interpreting demographic and statistical data, summarizing data and drawing conclusions
Identifying and measuring outcomes
Information management and information technology
Documentation – structure and standardization
National and local information systems
Report writing
Core/minimum data sets
Ethical issues, confidentiality and security of data/records

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to demonstrate the ability effectively to:

- analyse different sources of information and apply as appropriate to practice;
 - seek out and interpret relevant statistical data and research of relevance to cancer nursing;
 - set measurable outcomes for nursing practice;
 - appraise and appropriately utilize developments in information technology;
 - maintain accurate, clear and timely records;
 - maintain confidentiality of data;
 - utilize knowledge and information gained through the practice of nursing in an ethical manner.
-

Reading List

WHO publications

National and international literature covering the syllabus

Where accessible – On-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lectures

Group work

Student-led seminars

Discussions

Case study presentations

Mentor support

Assessment methods

Date on which assignment is due:

Format of assignment:

Essay – either a critical review of a research study relevant to cancer nursing or an analysis and critique of epidemiological data related to the incidence of national cancer care priorities (100% of whole).

Mark awarded.....%

**WHO Regional Office for Europe
Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE FIVE

Title: Decision-making
Duration: 2 weeks – 60 hours
ECTS Credit Points: 3

Module Content Summary

This module will enable students to extend their knowledge of decision-making processes, typology and skills in preparation for their future role as cancer nurses.

66% of this module will be based in the university or equivalent institute setting.
34% of this module will be practice-based.

Syllabus

Decision-making – theories, processes, skills
Diagnostic reasoning, therapeutic, clinical
Concepts of accountability, responsibility and autonomy in decision-making
Critical thinking in practice
Ethical issues and involvement of the patient and carer in decision-making
Strategic decision-making
Prioritizing care
Rationing care
Legal aspects in relation to practice

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of clinical decision-making;
- analyse and describe examples of decision-making in relation to her/his care of patients with cancer;
- describe the exercise of accountability and responsibility in relation to her/his care of patients with cancer;

- differentiate between strategic and clinical/ethical decision-making in nursing;
 - discuss the rationale for involving patients and carers in decision-making about their care, ways of doing so and the implications of such involvement;
 - state the key principles which guide the rationing and the prioritization of care in the student's country;
 - outline the law in relation to nursing in her/his country and the implications for cancer nursing.
-

Reading List

WHO publications

National and international literature covering the syllabus

Where accessible – On-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lectures

Group work

Student-led seminars

Discussions

Case study presentations

Mentor support

Assessment methods

Date on which assignment is due:

Format of assignment:

Examination – multiple choice and short answer questions – 100% of whole

Mark awarded.....%

**WHO Regional Office for Europe
Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE SIX

Title: Cancer Nursing III
Developing Cancer Nursing Clinical Practice

Duration: 14 weeks – 420 hours

ECTS Credit points: 21

Module Content Summary

This module will provide the student with the underpinning knowledge and opportunities to apply that knowledge in supervised, evidence-based practice of cancer nursing. By the end of the module the student will be able to practise autonomously, in the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing interventions. The student will be encouraged to reflect on current cancer care nursing practice, to further develop an analytical approach to evidence-based patient care and to assist with supervision and clinical teaching of cancer nurses who are commencing on the course.

20% of this module will be based in the university or equivalent institute setting
80% will be practice based, i.e. will take place in a cancer care ward or unit within a hospital, or in a hospice, and may also include the patient's own home.

Syllabus

Evidence-based practice in cancer nursing
Holistic care of patients with cancer and of their families
Principles of surgery in cancer management and related nursing management
Principles of radiotherapy, chemotherapy and brachytherapy in cancer management and related nursing management
Principles of genetic therapy in cancer management and related nursing management
Safe handling and administration of cytotoxic drugs
Safe disposal of radioactive contaminated materials
Symptom management and supportive care
Oncological emergencies
Complementary therapies
The clinical supervision and mentoring role
The expanding role of the cancer nurse in the multidisciplinary team

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to demonstrate the competencies expected of a nurse who has successfully completed the cancer nursing course, and will therefore be able to:

- provide competent nursing care for cancer patients, working independently and/or within the multidisciplinary team;
 - accept accountability and responsibility for her/his own professional judgment and actions;
 - demonstrate management and leadership skills in practice, including the ability effectively to contribute to the management of change;
 - explain the rationale for the main treatment modalities used in cancer therapy;
 - critically appraise own communication skills in patient care;
 - analyse the concept of holism applied to cancer nursing;
 - reflect and critically evaluate her/his own practice;
 - analyse professional and legal issues in cancer care and apply these to clinical practice;
 - apply knowledge of patient's rights in professional clinical practice;
 - apply knowledge of ethical theories and principles in the consideration of ethical dilemmas and their legal implications in clinical practice;
 - undertake supervision and mentoring of a junior colleague, applying principles of adult learning theories;
 - give evidence of a commitment to own learning and continuing professional development.
-

Reading List

WHO publications
National and international literature covering the syllabus
Where accessible - on-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lectures
Reflective exercises
Group work
Mentor support

Case Study presentations
Student-led seminars
Problem-based learning
Tutorials

Assessment Methods

Dates on which assignments are due:

Format of assignment:

A clinical portfolio which will include in-depth analysis of a specific area of evidence-based cancer nursing practice – 50% of whole

Assessment in practice of demonstration of achievement of the competencies of a cancer nurse – 50% of whole

Clinical Portfolio – Mark awarded	%
Competency assessment – Mark awarded	%
Aggregate mark for module (out of 100%)	%

**WHO Regional Office for Europe
Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE SEVEN

Title: Leadership and Managing Resources

Duration: 2 weeks – 60 hours

ECTS Credit Points: 3

Module Content Summary

This module will enable students to explore aspects of leadership and of management which have relevance in cancer nursing practice. Key principles of effective multidisciplinary team working will be analysed and applied to cancer nursing practice, and students will gain an understanding of the complex nature of organizational change.

50% of this module will be based in the university or equivalent institute setting.
50% of this module will be practice-based.

Syllabus

The concept of leadership - theories, processes and skills
Management – theories and processes
Managing human resources
The patient and her/his family as a resource
Care management
Organization and management of the cancer nursing service
Delegation of duties and responsibilities
Budgetary control
Time management
Management of change
Working as a multidisciplinary team member
Working with statutory, voluntary and private agencies involved in cancer care service provision
Standard setting and quality assurance systems

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of leadership principles and processes and their application in cancer nursing practice;
 - demonstrate an understanding of management principles and processes and their application in to the organization and management of the cancer service;
 - analyse the relative merits of different methods of work load measurement, in relation to the different cancer nursing care settings;
 - utilize staffing protocols in scheduling adequate staffing cover in the different cancer nursing settings, reporting when safe levels cannot be achieved;
 - demonstrate knowledge of different methods of care management and of effective delegation;
 - appropriately manage her/his time both when on duty and when studying;
 - show awareness of how the cancer nursing service budget is managed;
 - play a full part in maintaining standards and in contributing to quality assurance monitoring;
 - demonstrate in practice the team member role of the cancer nurse.
-

Reading List

WHO publications
National and international literature covering the syllabus
Where accessible – On-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lectures	Discussions
Practice in scheduling work rotas	Mentor support

Assessment Methods

Date on which assignment is due:

Format of assignment:

Essay of 1000–1500 words focusing on analysis of one concept from the syllabus and its application to practice in the cancer care environment – 100% of whole

Mark awarded.....%

**WHO Regional Office for Europe
Cancer Nursing Curriculum**

MODULE EIGHT

Title: Cancer Nursing IV
Survivorship

Duration: 8 weeks – 240 hours

ECTS Credit points: 12

Module Content Summary

This module will enable the student to explore the concepts of survivorship and of living with cancer and will develop the student's awareness of how specialist cancer nursing practice can contribute to the quality of survivorship for patients in hospital, community and/or the hospice setting.

50% of this module will be based in the university or equivalent institute setting
50% will be practice-based, i.e. will take place in a cancer care ward or unit within a hospital, or in a hospice and may also include the patient's own home.

Syllabus

Defining survivorship in cancer care
Social context of cancer
Quality of life issues in cancer nursing
Assessment of psychological morbidity in patients with cancer
Assessment of family support
Truth-telling in caring for patients with cancer
Sexuality and fertility
Managing delayed morbidity
Principles of rehabilitation
Symptom control in the palliative phase of care
Rehabilitation in the palliative care setting
Dignity in death
Terminal care

Competencies or Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- explain the significance of survivorship issues in cancer nursing care;
 - reflect upon the implications of cancer survivorship on social, economic and family circumstances;
 - demonstrate awareness of own potential and limitations in supporting cancer survivors and their families;
 - discuss the issues surrounding truth-telling in regard to the diagnosis and prognosis for a cancer patients;
 - describe, and utilize in care planning the cancer support initiatives available in the hospital, hospice and community settings;
 - describe the role of supportive care, both physical and psychosocial in the rehabilitation process;
 - work effectively as a member of the multidisciplinary team and with other agencies, voluntary and statutory, which support patients with cancer;
 - ensure patient and family privacy, symptom control and support as the patient's death approaches.
-

Reading List

WHO publications
National and international literature covering the syllabus
Where accessible – on-line and distance learning materials

Teaching/learning Strategies

Lectures
Reflective exercises
Critical incident analysis

Student-led seminars
Taking part in patient and family led seminars

Assessment Methods

Dates on which assignments are due:

Format of assignment:

Essay One – approximately 1000 words – the concept of survivorship – an exploration of the literature, with reference to its application in cancer nursing practice –50% of whole

Essay Two – Evidence-based practice in symptom control to promote optimum quality of life in the terminally ill cancer patient and a peaceful death – 50% of whole

Essay One – Mark awarded%

Essay Two – Mark awarded%

Aggregate mark for module (out of 100%)%

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Glossary

For more detail on all these terms, please refer to the Guidelines to the WHO European Strategy for initial education for Nurses and Midwives (WHO 2001b)

Academic level

The level of difficulty of a subject. For example level one is commonly used to describe the first year studies in a baccalaureate degree, with levels two, three and four describing second, third and Honours year respectively. Masters level describes postgraduate studies at Masters degree. Doctoral level describes study at Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Science level. In general, the higher the level of difficulty, the more requirement there is for demonstration of analytical, critical, evaluative and innovative thinking.

Accreditation (of an institution, programme or curriculum)

A process, based on a system of external peer review, and using written standards, by which the quality of a university's activities and its educational programmes are assessed and, if satisfactory, approved. (Refer to the initial Strategy)

Accreditation of prior learning

Procedures, which are subject to quality control, whereby nurses or midwives are awarded credit towards an academic award on the basis of learning achieved prior to the point of registering for the award and/or commencing the course of study. The term includes two types of accreditation of learning: (a) accreditation of prior certificated learning (APL), e.g. credit for successful completion of a course which had not at that time been credit-rated; and (b) accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). The latter requires presentation by the nurse or midwife of evidence of learning from experience and of how that meets the learning outcomes of the course of study on which the nurse or midwife is entering.

Advanced Practice

This reflects a relative developmental position, where practice is progressive or is in some way ahead in terms of its development.

Authority

The rightful power to take action. This subsumes the right to make decisions on what action is appropriate.

Clinical Supervision

A clinically focused professional relationship between a practitioner and appropriately prepared clinical supervisor.

Competencies

Broad composite statements, derived from nursing and midwifery practice, which describe a framework of skills reflecting knowledge, attitudes and psychomotor elements.

Competent

A level of performance demonstrating the effective application of knowledge, skill and judgment.

Continuing education

Education that builds on initial professional or vocational education.

Credit points

See Accreditation of prior learning.

E-learning

E-learning means electronic learning, (just as e-mail means electronic mail). E-learning is a form of distance learning. Course materials are on-line, students communicate with their lecturers via e-mail, lecturers give feedback via e-mail, assignments are sent in via e-mail and comments returned to students via e-mail. Systems may be set up to enable several students and their lecturers to communicate via “chat rooms”, i.e. where questions and discussions can take place through e-mailing.

Fitness for purpose

Employers are primarily concerned about whether nurses and midwives are able to function competently in clinical practice. The speed of change in the context and content of health care makes it difficult to define fitness for purpose. Its meaning cannot be fixed. Fitness for purpose depends on the commitment of employers and of practising nursing and midwives to constant professional updating (Adapted from UKCC 1999).

Health care reform

Any intended change towards improvement of health care of the acutely and chronically ill, rehabilitation, case-finding, health promotion and maintenance, prevention of disease and disability and health education.

Licence

See Registration

Mentor

An appropriately qualified and experienced person who, through example and facilitation, guides, assists and supports individuals in learning and in acquiring new attitudes. The term is particularly used in relation to supporting learning in practice settings.

Multiprofessional team/Multidisciplinary team

A team of health care professionals from different disciplines, e.g. nurses, midwives, physicians, physiotherapists, who work together towards a common goal which enables them to make the best use of their knowledge, skills and experience in providing patient care.

Network

A grouping of individuals, organizations and/or agencies organized generally on a non-hierarchical basis around some common theme or concern.

On-line learning

See E-learning

Patient

The real person who is the end-user in all our health systems. S/he is the human being who is meant to benefit from our efforts, but who, if reduced to a mere statistic, demonstrates that the heart has gone out of the profession. User(s) of health care services, whether healthy or sick (WHO 2000).

Peer review

Scrutiny of the work, activities or output of individuals or a group by other individuals or groups who have qualifications and experience that are directly comparable to those of the people being scrutinized.

Practice placement

The clinical area to which nurses and/or midwives are allocated in order to undertake the practice components of their education. These clinical areas may be in hospital or community settings.

Programme

This term is synonymous with course, i.e. a course of study, and denotes the entire course, in all its elements. It may be a full-time or part-time programme or course, e.g. a degree, or a short course.

Promote health

The process of enabling individuals, families and communities to increase control over the determinants of health and thereby improve their health. An evolving concept that encompasses fostering lifestyles and other social, economic, environmental and personal factors conducive to health.

Prospective Analysis Questionnaire

A questionnaire, based on the Prospective Analysis Methodology (PAM), which is a process that facilitates decision-making, interchange of ideas and opinions, and recognition and development of a need to change. (Refer to the initial Strategy)

Resources

Human resources, money, materials, skills, knowledge, techniques and time needed or available for the performance or support of action directed towards specified objectives.

Registration

A method of ensuring a record is maintained of those who are *bona fide* nurses and/or midwives, i.e. they have successfully completed the initial nursing and/or midwifery education programme which is required in their country. In several Member States it is necessary to regularly renew this registration. In order to do so, nurses and midwives must provide evidence of successful completion of continuing education relevant to their area of practice.

Specialist Nurse

A nurse who has successfully completed a post qualification course of study in a specific clinical field and who applies higher levels of judgement, discretion and decision-making in clinical care

in order to improve the quality of patient care, meeting the needs of patients within the specialty and in the specific area of practice.

Standard

Statement of a defined level of quality or competence which is expected in a given set of circumstances. In nursing and midwifery, the statements identify and define the criteria which influence the quality or competence of the nursing/midwifery service, and clarify what is expected in relation to the structures, processes and outcomes. A means of measuring the degree of excellence of an educational programme and of comparing the degree of excellence of one programme with that of others.

Strategies

Broad lines of action to be taken to achieve goals and objectives incorporating the identification of suitable points of intervention, the ways of ensuring the involvement of other sectors and the range of political, social, economic, managerial and technical factors, as well as constraints and ways of dealing with them.

Video-conference

The use of video to bring groups together for discussions and a sharing of views. Groups in geographically separate areas can be connected via video link and can see and hear each other.

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