

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Standards and requirements



Bord Altranais agus
Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann
Nursing and Midwifery Board
of Ireland



These standards and requirements were originally published in March 2005 as *Requirements and Standards for Public Health Nurse Registration Education Programmes* (First edition).

This document was re-issued in October 2015 for the relaunch of the NMBI website. This involved reviewing the content, updating dated references and redesigning the document. However, the standards and requirements themselves reflect what is in the 2005 edition.

About NMBI

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) is the independent, statutory organisation which regulates the nursing and midwifery professions in Ireland. For more information about our role and functions, visit www.NMBI.ie/What-We-Do.

Nurses Rules 2010

This programme is governed by the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 and by the Nurses Rules, which provide titles of recognised qualifications under the Register of Nurses and Midwives. For more information on the Act, and on the Nurses Rules, visit the What we Do/Legislation section of NMBI's website, www.NMBI.ie.

Approval of Higher Education Institutions and associated Health Care Providers

Details of approval of HEIs and associated HCPs along for provision of such programmes are published on our website. For more information, visit www.NMBI.ie/Education/Higher-Education-Institutions.

Glossary

A full glossary of all the terms used in this and other NMBI publications is published on our website on www.NMBI.ie/Standards-Guidance/Glossary.

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INTRODUCTION

These Standards and Requirements are intended to facilitate the development of nurse education programmes for public health nursing post-registration education programmes. The education programme for post-registration public health nursing may not be delivered without prior approval by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI).

Public health nurses comprise of the largest and one of the longest established professional groups in the community care programme with an ethos founded on the principles of primary health care. Primary care has traditionally been defined as first line care with the focus on diagnosis and treatment of illness and is generally associated with general medical practice, thus, is considered an integral component of primary health care. Public health nurses are employed by the Health Services Executive (HSE) and usually work from local Health Centres. They provide primary, secondary and tertiary care to individuals, families and communities across the lifespan to a geographic area. They are key health and primary care practitioners who have been trained and educated as public health workers using a partnership and empowerment approach with individuals, families and communities.

Public health nurses provide a range services to people in a local community including child health visits and school visits, care on discharge from hospital and visits and care for older people. Public health can be viewed as a way of looking at health that takes the population as the starting point. With a population perspective, it is possible to identify and address the wider determinants of health such as poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, transport, education, crime and the environment. Thus, public health is viewed as a creative process harnessing political intervention to create circumstances to enable people to live healthy lives, whilst community led initiatives support the organised social and policy framework Healthy Ireland (Department of Health, 2014)

Minimum entry requirements

Before admission to the programme of education and training leading to registration in the Public Health Nurses Division of the Register, the name of the candidate for registration must already be entered in the General Division of the Register of Nurses and the candidate must have two years clinical experience in nursing. Unless the candidate's name is registered in the Midwives Division of the Register, the candidate must complete an NMBI approved module or unit of study on Maternal and Child Health as part of the programme.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The purpose of the education and training programme is to enable students acquire the knowledge, skills, competence and confidence to critically analyse and reflect on public health needs and care provision and to be able to develop the competencies required to practice public health nursing.

The registration education programme enables the student to:

- Practice as a competent, accountable, autonomous public health nurse, assessing, planning, and implementing interventions on the basis of research, evidence and evaluation
- Work in partnership to support and empower individuals and their carers/families/groups and communities to influence and use available services, information and skills to the full and to participate in decisions concerning their care
- Acknowledge individuals/families/groups and communities' rights to make their own decisions about their health and social well being and to set their own priorities
- Lead/co-ordinate and/or participate in all types of community health needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of health education programmes and care intervention
- Assess, plan, implement and evaluate maternal and child health care in a primary care context and within the nurse's scope of practice
- Encourage community participation and work in partnership with voluntary workers in health enhancing activities
- Work collaboratively within the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary environment to maximise their contribution to health improvement in the local community
- Be able to identify health inequalities and take action with communities, populations and others to address issues of health, social inequalities and social exclusion demonstrating an increased focus on public health within contemporary practice
- Develop, implement and evaluate health promotion and health education strategies
- Demonstrate an awareness of policy development and strategic planning in health services
- Act as a resource of expertise in public health within an interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary setting, demonstrating the nursing contribution to public health both within and outside the profession
- Apply leadership skills to improve the health and well being of individuals/ families/ groups/ communities across a care pathway
- Develop competence in the ability to analyse health policy and the political, social, economic and environmental factors influencing health at a National, European International level.

COMPETENCIES FOR ENTRY TO THE REGISTER

Competence is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and is defined as the ability of the registered nurse to practice safely and effectively, fulfilling his/her professional responsibility within his/her scope of practice.

All five Domains of Competence represent the level the student must reach on completion of the education programme for entry to the Register held by the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI). The Domains of Competence represent a broad enabling framework to facilitate the assessment of student nurses' clinical practice. Each domain consists of performance criteria and their relevant indicators. These indicators will be developed at local level appropriate to the division of the Register and the specialty.

The Domains of Competence represent a broad enabling framework to facilitate the assessment of post-registration student public health nurses' clinical practice. Each domain consists of performance criteria and their relevant indicators. These indicators will be developed at local level.

A team and partnership approach will be applied when assessing the student public health nurse as the assessor will consult with colleagues in determining the students' competence. Public Health Nurse Managers and third-level institutions will agree on the assessment process.

Student public health nurses are deemed to be either competent or not and where competence has not been achieved the student public health nurse will be given opportunities to develop competence. There are no ratings in the verification of competence.



Domain 1- Professional/Ethical Practice

		Indicators
1.1	Practices in accordance with legislation affecting nursing practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrates accurate and comprehensive knowledge of ethical principles practising public health nursing in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct, within the scope of professional nursing practice and consistent with legislation. Fulfils the duty of care in the course of public health nursing practice, informed by the best available evidence. Implements and contributes to the development and/or critical review of philosophies, policies, protocols and standards of practice to improve health and social well-being. Responds appropriately to instances of unsafe or unprofessional practice. Integrates knowledge of the rights of clients and groups in the health care setting. Protects and advocates for the rights of individuals/families/groups and communities. Ensures confidentiality and security of written, verbal and electronic information that may be used in a professional capacity. Discloses information only to those who have a right and a need to know. Advises/supports a community to respect and promote the rights, dignity, values, culture and beliefs of individuals/families/groups/ communities. Practises in a way that acknowledges the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals/ groups/ communities.
1.2	Practices within the limits of own competence and takes measures to develop own competence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determines own scope of practice utilising the principles for determining scope of practice in the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework document. Recognises own abilities and level of professional competence and reflects on this. Accepts responsibility and accountability for consequences of own actions or omissions. Clarifies unclear or inappropriate instructions. Makes effective use of supervision and a wide range of learning activities to improve/develop knowledge and practice. Formulates decisions about appropriate care interventions within the scope of professional nursing practice utilising the Decision-Making Framework in the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework document. Assesses, reflects on, develops and improves own practice on the basis of research, evidence and evaluation. Assumes accountability for practice and strives to attain the highest standards of practice.

Domain 2 - Holistic Approaches to Care and the Integration of Knowledge

		Indicators
2.1	Acts to enhance the health and social well being of individuals/families/groups and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raises awareness about health and social well being and related factors, services and resources. • Collects, collates, analyses and interprets data accurately and comprehensively related to the improvement of health and social well being. • Profiles/identifies the health and social well being needs of community populations. • Identifies individuals/families/groups/communities who are at risk or in need of support. • Identify and help reduce the risk of abuse or violence, protecting children and vulnerable members of the community. • Enables the views of groups and communities to be heard by advocating on their behalf. • Works with and enables individuals/families/groups and communities to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to identify and access information/services/facilities on health and social care in a form that is appropriate to their need, context and culture. • Mobilises community partnerships to identify and solve health and social care problems. • Applies appropriate strategies for screening and referral to appropriate agencies and personnel. • Plans, implements and evaluates appropriate public health nursing care interventions on the basis of research evidence and evaluation. • Initiates, plans, co-ordinates, implements and evaluates health promotion initiatives in collaboration with other health care professionals/agencies/voluntary organisations. • Works in partnership with others in the planning, development, implementation, monitoring and review of public and community health programmes.
2.2	Conducts a systematic holistic assessment of individual/family/group and community needs based on nursing theory and evidence-based practice in a community care setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses an appropriate assessment framework safely and accurately. • Analyses and interprets data accurately and comprehensively leading to appropriate identification of findings. • Incorporates relevant evidence and research findings into public health nursing practice. • Promotes research designed to improve public health nursing practice.

		Indicators
2.3	Plans care in consultation with the individual/family/group/community taking into consideration the public health and therapeutic regimes of all members of the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes priorities for resolution of identified health needs of the individual/family/group/community. • Identifies expected outcomes including a time frame for achievement. • Plans, delegates/implements and evaluates public health nursing care interventions to meet the needs of the individual/family/group/ community. • Identifies criteria for the evaluation of the expected outcomes. • Plans for discharge and follow up care in consultation with the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary team.
2.4	Implements planned nursing/maternal/child health care/interventions to achieve the identified outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organises the implementation of nursing care in accordance with a plan that is accurate, safe, comprehensive and effective. • Incorporates relevant knowledge and research evidence into public health nursing practice and monitors its impact. • Plans, implements, and evaluates appropriate maternal and child health care/intervention on the basis of research evidence and evaluation. • Promotes, creates and maintains a physical, psychosocial, and spiritual environment that promotes safety, security and optimal health. • Provides for the comfort needs of individuals. • Acts to enhance the dignity and integrity of individuals/families/groups/ communities. • Promotes and contributes to research designed to improve public health nursing practice.
2.5	Evaluates individual/family/group/ community progress toward expected outcomes and reviews plans in accordance with evaluation data and consultation with the individual/family/group/ community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses the effectiveness of public health nursing care/ intervention in achieving the planned outcomes. • Determines further outcomes and nursing interventions in accordance with evaluation data and consultation with the individual/family/group/community.

Domain 3 - Interpersonal Relationships

		Indicators
3.1	Establishes and maintains caring therapeutic interpersonal relationships with individuals/families/groups/ communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a climate of mutual trust. • Communicates sensitively, effectively, professionally in a manner appropriate with persons from diverse cultural, socio economic, educational, racial, ethnic and professional backgrounds and persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences. • Demonstrates effective communication skills in addressing sensitive topics with adolescents and adults such as sexual and reproductive health, sexually transmitted disease, crisis pregnancy, substance abuse, violence, death, mental health and related problems. • Reflects on the usefulness of personal communication techniques taking into account the needs, context and culture of the individual/family/group and community. • Conducts nursing care ensuring the recipients receive and understand relevant and current information concerning health care. • Assists individuals/families/groups/communities to communicate needs and to make informed decisions.
3.2	Collaborates with all members of the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary team and documents relevant information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates with the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary team in a collaborative effort directed toward decision making concerning individuals/families/groups and communities. • Establishes and maintains accurate, clear and current client records within a legal and ethical framework.

Domain 4 - Organisation and Management of Care

		Indicators
4.1	Effectively manages the nursing care of individuals/families/groups/communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to effectively manage a caseload using time management strategies to prioritise own work and the focus of activities. • Demonstrates leadership, team building, problem solving, and negotiation and conflict resolution skills. • Engages in collaborative practice with other practitioners and agencies. • Determines priorities for care based on need, acuity and optimal time for intervention. • Selects and utilises resources effectively and efficiently. • Utilises methods to demonstrate quality assurance and quality management. • Changes practice to reflect current best evidence, health care policy and new or articulated values and beliefs. • Promotes a culture that is receptive to change. • Works with and advocates with others for the development of public policy to promote health and social well-being.
4.2	Delegates to other nurses/carers activities commensurate with their competence and within their scope of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When delegating a particular role/function account is taken of the principles outlined in the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework • Accepts accountability and takes responsibility for the delegation of aspects of practice to others. • Effectively supervises and facilitates the work of members of the team.
4.3	Facilitates the co-ordination of care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with all members of the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary team to ensure that individual/family/group and community care is appropriate, effective, and consistent.

Domain 5 - Personal and Professional Development

		Indicators
5.1	Acts to enhance the personal and professional development of self and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a commitment to life long learning. • Acts as a positive role model. • Initiates strategies that contribute to the learning experiences of colleagues through support, supervision and teaching. • Informs/educates and empowers individuals/families/groups/communities to protect, maintain and promote health. • Assumes personal responsibility for professional development and the maintenance of competence.

SYLLABUS/ INDICATIVE CONTENT

Public health nursing is an interpersonal caring process that takes account of the unique needs of individuals, families, groups and communities. The public health nurse identifies health needs and inequalities, raises issues of health and social well being and uses a partnership and empowerment approach to enable people to increase control over and improve their own health. The healthcare environment of the public health nurse is changing continuously, thus the public health nurse must be able to respond to, and adapt, to meet the new and emerging health care needs of the population. Within this complex and rapidly changing care environment it is essential that public health nurses are able to adapt to new systems, policy initiatives, population needs and implement public health nursing practice that is informed by the best available evidence. Public health nursing practice also involves working with other professions, statutory and voluntary healthcare agencies. The programme of study aims to develop public health nurses who will be able to participate as effective members of the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary team.

Public health nursing students are registered nurses who enter the programme with a registration/diploma and/or registration/degree. This level of knowledge, skill and professional competence needs to be developed and applied to public health nursing practice. It is important that previous knowledge and experience is acknowledged and is advanced and developed during the programme.

The sections into which the indicative content is organised should not be viewed as discrete, neither is the list of topics included in the syllabus exhaustive. The manner in which the content is interwoven and interlinked is individual to each programme. Curriculum planners will be expected to demonstrate that the programme is relevant and responsive to the most recent policy and legislative changes. Access to inter professional learning and working should be made available to students.

Principles of Public Health

- Concepts of health, of community and of public health
- Public health theory and practice at a National, European and International level
- Public health in community practice
- Primary health care
- Theories and models of health promotion and community development
- Determinants of health: biological, behavioural, gender, social, environmental, economic, educational, political and cultural factors affecting health
- Infectious/communicable diseases, screening and surveillance
- Risk assessment, and measures of health
- Environmental health
- Professional values in the provision of public health - an understanding of the current climate and political influences on health care, the values, priorities and contributions of health professionals.

Principles of Public Health Nursing

- Development of public health nursing in Ireland - including the historical, political, social, cultural, economic and international factors influencing its development
- Key concepts in public health nursing including concepts of holism, advocacy, partnership, empowerment and the right to self-determination
- Role and function of the public health nurse
- Conceptual models of nursing that may be applied to public health nursing
- Managing change and transitions in life (parenthood/ageing/caring/increasing disability/ bereavement)
- Child health/child development/child protection/child welfare/child care legislation
- Children at risk
- Family health (employment/ relationships /stress /anxiety /illness /money /domestic violence /abuse)
- Community issues (housing/public transport/accidents/noise/crime/drugs/public play areas)
- Supporting child development (parenthood/feeding/sleeping/preparing for school/ behaviour/ safety/ bullying/ substance use/ suicide/ parasuicide)
- Health needs assessment at an individual, family and community level
- Community profiling
- Community development and participative approaches
- Setting priorities, planning, implementing and evaluating strategies to improve health and well-being
- Interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary working and interaction in the provision of public health nursing
- Statutory and voluntary partnership
- Teaching and facilitation skills
- Health promotion, health education
- Record keeping, report writing
- Skills of reflection in and on public health nursing practice
- Current issues in public health nursing
- Ethical issues influencing the practice of public health nursing, application of ethical principles to practice
- Contemporary public health dilemmas that impact on the public health nurse
- Professional accountability, responsibility and scope of public health nursing practice
- Legal and policy frameworks that impact on public health nursing, role of regulatory and statutory bodies.

Public Health Nursing Care/Intervention across the Life Cycle

Primary, secondary and tertiary care of special client groups including maternal and child health, care of the family, care of the child, the adolescent, the adult, the older person, the person with a mental health problem, the person with a physical and/or intellectual disability in the community care setting. Care of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Management and Health Economics

- Knowledge and skills for effective management
- Management and management of change
- Leadership skills

- Critical appraisal skills
- Evidence based health care and information technology
- Analytical methods for decision making
- Building partnerships and partnership working
- Risk analysis and risk management strategies
- Political analysis and an understanding of political policy
- Strategic planning and forecasting
- Health care as an economic commodity
- Equity in health and health care
- Economic analysis in health and social care
- Health and safety legislation
- Quality assurance, audit, evaluation of standards and outcomes.

Health Care Research

- Research methods: quantitative i.e. descriptive, experimental, qualitative i.e. case studies, phenomenology; ethnography, grounded theory, action research; ethical and legal research considerations, critical appraisal of research
- Epidemiology, data sources/collection/interpretation/methods and application
- Statistical theory and statistical analysis.

Policy, Economic and Administrative Context of Public Health

- Health and Social Legislation/policy governing public health
- Health and Social Structures
- Family and Social Policy
- Administration, organisation and functioning of health care systems. Current issues, policies and initiatives in the health and social services.

Social and Behavioural Sciences

- Power and empowerment
- Influence of society on health
- Anthropology - transcultural perspective
- Cultural diversity
- Social dimensions of health - social inequalities (gender / class)
- Sociology of the family, groups and the community, family dynamics and family functioning
- Philosophical/ethical dimension principles - quality of life
- Learning theories and motivation for adults
- Behavioural change
- Psychological theory and its application to public health nursing
- Applied developmental psychology
- Advocacy and influencing, influencing higher level policy
- Negotiation and influencing

Students who are not registered midwives must undertake the following additional Maternal and Child Health module/unit of study.

Maternal and Child Health Nursing

- The role of the public health nurse in supporting and meeting the health and well being of women during the preparation for parenthood and the six week post-natal period within the nurse's scope of practice
- Recent developments in maternal health and reproductive health policy nationally and internationally
- Concepts associated with pregnancy, delivery and the post-natal period related to the primary health care setting
- Social, biological, genetic, behavioural and environmental factors influencing fetal and neonatal growth and development
- Transition to motherhood
- The physical, psychological, spiritual needs of women and their families, care and support required following childbirth
- Preparation for and adaptation to parenthood
- Parent/baby attachment and interaction
- Identification of problems/complications following childbirth, sources/methods of referral
- Culturally sensitive family centred care following pregnancy loss, stillbirth and neonatal death
- Use and effects of medicinal products in the post-natal period, during lactation and on the neonate
- Reproductive health and family planning education
- The 18 hour breast feeding education course for hospital and community health professionals approved by WHO and UNICEF
- The nutritional needs of neonates including those with special needs
- Management of minor ailments of the newborn
- Examination and care of newborn infants
- Family centred care of infants with specific health or social needs, e.g. congenital disorders, birth defects, low birth weight
- An overview of the pathological conditions of the newborn recognising when to refer
- Screening for inborn errors of metabolism
- Sudden infant death syndrome – measures to reduce risk
- Accident prevention - neonatal

THEORETICAL AND CLINICAL INSTRUCTION

Theoretical and Clinical Instruction for Public Health Nursing

This section presents the requirements for the education and training of student public health nurses. Public health nursing programmes are developed on the assumption that students are entering a practice based profession beyond the point of initial registration.

The period of training for admission to the Public Health Nurse division of the Register shall be attendance at a course at an approved third level institution for a period of no less than 32 weeks full time or an equivalent part time course

Essential requirements of the programme	Number of weeks
Theoretical instruction (to include self-directed study, exams)	11 weeks (no less than one third of 32 weeks)
Clinical instruction	16 weeks (no less than one half of 32 weeks)
Discretionary component (must be accounted for in the curriculum document and at least half should be allocated to clinical practice placement).	5 weeks
Total	32 weeks

Note: The major component of clinical practice placement should involve placement with the public health nurse.

The programme should provide the opportunity to experience practice in a variety of settings to allow students gain a broad understanding of public health nursing practice and interdisciplinary/ multidisciplinary team working. Practice placements should be of sufficient length of time to enable students achieve the professional competence required.

Discretionary practice placement experiences may be selected based upon the identified needs of the students, the competencies to be achieved and current health care policy initiatives and developments. The following list should not be viewed as discrete neither is the list exhaustive.

Discretionary practice placement experiences

The Primary Care Team - psychologist, community welfare officer, speech & language therapist, community occupational therapist, community physiotherapist

- Palliative Care - hospice & home care
- Child Protection Services
- School Health Services & Pre- School Services, Immunization programmes

- Family support services - social workers, child care workers, family support workers, environmental health officers
- Community development workers; Parent and toddler groups
- Maternity services including domiciliary midwifery services
- Travellers health services
- Refugee and asylum seeker health services
- Mental Health Services
- Services for Older People - community, hospital, respite care
- Intellectual and Sensory Disability Services
- Voluntary Organisations

The discretionary placements will be selected to enable the student achieve the programme learning outcomes and develop the competencies essential for registration as a public health nurse.

THEORETICAL AND CLINICAL INSTRUCTION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED MIDWIVES

Maternal and Child Health Module/Unit of study

Essential requirements of the programme	Number of weeks
Theoretical instruction (to include self-directed study, exams)	No less than 3 weeks
Clinical instruction	No less than 5 weeks
Total	8 weeks

Total Number of Weeks for students who are not registered midwives is 40 Weeks

The minimum academic standard for the programme shall be no less than Higher Diploma level, Level 8.

Following any interruption in the educational programme the HEI in partnership with the health care provider(s) ensure that the student meets the theoretical and the practice requirements of the programme.

Interruption: Any leave (other than annual leave and bank holidays including sick leave, maternity leave, force majeure, paternity leave, parenting leave, compassionate leave and other special leave).

THEORETICAL AND CLINICAL INSTRUCTION

Standards for the Approval of Higher Education Institutions, Health Care Institutions and Educational Programmes Leading to Registration as a Public Health Nurse

Details of approval of HEIs and associated HCPs along for provision of such programmes is published on our website. For more information, visit: www.NMBI.ie/Education/Higher-Education-Institutions/Approvals-Nursing-Programmes

In addition to the above NMBI standards for the accreditation of an HEI and associated Health Care Provider (HCP), NMBI requires HEIs to deliver a programme to prepare graduates for entry into the Public Health Nurse division of the Register of Nurses and Midwives to meet the following standards:

Curriculum Design

1. The course leader/co-ordinator leading the programme team is a Registered Public Health Nurse and where possible a Registered Nurse Tutor with appropriate academic, professional qualifications and experience.
2. Curriculum design and development is led by a Registered Public Health Nurse and where possible where possible a Registered Nurse Tutor.
3. The curriculum utilises a range of teaching-learning strategies to assist the development of knowledgeable, competent, reflective practitioners willing to accept personal and professional accountability for evidenced-based public health nursing practice, practitioners equipped with the life-long skills for problem-solving and self-directed learning.

Student Entry

1. Before admission to the programme of education and training leading to registration in the Public Health Nurses Division of the Register:
 - the name of the candidate for registration must already be entered in the General Division of the Register of Nurses
 - and the candidate must have two years clinical experience in nursing.
2. Unless the candidate's name is registered in the Midwives Division of the Register, the candidate must complete an NMBI approved module or unit of study on Maternal and Child Health as part of the programme.

Programme Governance

1. A Committee, which includes representatives of the key stakeholders from the HEI/HCP(s) is in operation to continually oversee and monitor programme implementation and promptly and efficiently deal with identified problems.

Student Support

1. The staff resource supports the delivery of the educational programme at the stated professional and academic level.
2. It is anticipated that those supporting students in both the academic and practice environments are Registered Public Health Nurses and where possible are also registered as a Nurse Tutor.

Assessment

1. External Examiners are appointed by the third level institution in accordance with specified criteria:
 - Are registered nurses with professional qualifications appropriate to the registration programme being examined;
 - Hold academic and (where possible) teaching qualifications and have at least 3 years full-time teaching experience in courses appropriate to the programme being examined;
 - Have experience in examining and assessing public health nurse registration students;
 - Have experience in the development, management, delivery and evaluation of public health nurse registration programmes;
 - Have at least 2 years full-time experience in the area of clinical practice appropriate to the registration programme being examined;
2. The role of the external examiner in relation to the educational programme is explicit.

Practice Placement

All practice placements must meet the audit requirements of NMBI and the higher education institution.

1. The aim of clinical practice learning is to enable students develop the domains of competence and become safe, caring, competent decision-makers willing to accept personal and professional accountability for evidence-based public health nursing care/intervention.
2. Clinical practice experience, whether in the community care setting or in the hospital, forms the central focus of the profession and is an integral component of the public health nurse registration education programme.
3. Clinical practice placements are based in community care settings/health care institutions, that are the subject of audit as to their suitability as quality clinical learning environments and NMBI standards of approval.
4. Students undertaking the public health nurse registration education and training programme have supernumerary status during the programme.
5. Clinical practice placements provide learning opportunities, which enable the achievement of the learning outcomes. The supernumerary status of the student during the period of clinical placement is an important factor in enhancing the educational value of the experience.
6. The student actively participates in the delivery of public health nursing care/intervention appropriate to the student's level of knowledge and practical experience, with the supervision and direction of a registered public health nurse;
7. The student public health nurse is surplus to the rostered complement of nurses;
8. The clinical placement allows for purposeful/focused learning where the student applies the

theoretical knowledge to health care practice and develops the integrated knowledge and skills essential to a professional public health nurse;

9. The student takes an active role in achieving the learning outcomes whilst acknowledging and respecting the interests/rights of individuals/families/groups and communities.

Competence Assessment

1. Each student is assigned a named preceptor, who is a Registered Public Health Nurse, during clinical practice placement to provide support and supervision.
2. Preceptors/nurses, who support students, should have completed a teaching and assessing course to enable them support, guide and assess students and assist them learn the practice of public health nursing.
3. At all times there must be sufficient registered practitioners to facilitate the supervision and support of student public health nurses to achieve the expected learning competencies of the programme.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance indicators are identified and measured in relation to there being:

1. Sufficient registered practitioners to facilitate the supervision of student public health nurses.
2. Availability of mechanisms for student support, supervision and assessment.
3. Availability of mechanisms to involve the public and patients/clients in healthcare.

References

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<http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/HealthyIrelandBrochureWA2.pdf>

Government of Ireland Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 (No. 41 of 2011) Irish Statute Book

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2014) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethic for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives Dublin, NMBI

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