

PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS
MIDWIFERY
& NURSING

**Post Registration Specialist
Nursing & Midwifery Education
Programmes Standards and
Requirements**



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

About NMBI

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI – ‘the Board’) is the independent, statutory organisation that regulates the nursing and midwifery professions in Ireland.

Governance

This education programme is governed by the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 and by the Nurses and Midwives (Education and Training) Rules 2018. For more information on the Act, and on the Nurses and Midwives Rules, visit the “What We Do/Legislation” section of NMBI’s website, www.NMBI.ie

Approval of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Associated Health Care Providers (AHCP)

Details of approval of HEIs and AHCPs for the provision of such education programmes are published on our website. For more information, visit www.NMBI.ie/Education/Higher-Education-Institutions (www.nmbi.ie).

Glossary

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

PREFACE

The role of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) is to promote high standards of professional education, training and practice and professional conduct among nurses and midwives. NMBI is mandated by the Nurses and Midwives Act of 2011 to set standards and requirement for post-registration specialist education programmes. The purpose of this document is to guide the development of progressive, flexible and practice-orientated specialist programmes that will lead nurses and midwives to become specialist nurses and midwives working in different practice areas. These programmes will facilitate nurses and midwives to develop the core concepts of the role of a specialist nurse and specialist midwife in the provision of quality and safe person centred care. These core concepts are Clinical Focus, Person/ Child/ Service User's Advocate, Education and Training, Audit and Research, and Consultant (NCNM 2000). The core concepts of a specialist nurse and specialist midwife's role are reflected and outlined in section 2 (Competences for Specialist Nurse Practice and Specialist Midwife Practice) of this document.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| About NMBI..... | 1 |
| Governance..... | 1 |
| Approval of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Associated Health Care Providers (AHCP) | 1 |
| Glossary | 1 |
| Preface | 2 |
| Introduction..... | 5 |
| Section 1: Extract from Nurses and Midwives (Education and Training) Rules 2018 | 7 |
| Part 1- Preliminary..... | 8 |
| Part 3 – Provision of Education and Training Programmes | 8 |
| Rule 9 – Application for Approval of Programmes | 9 |
| Rule 10 – Annual Reports | 10 |
| Rule 11 - Review and Monitoring of Programmes | 10 |
| Minimum Entry Requirements..... | 11 |
| Section 2: Competences for Specialist Nursing Practice and Specialist Midwifery Practice..... | 12 |
| Competences for Specialist Nursing Practice..... | 13 |
| Domain 1: Professional Values and Conduct of the Specialist Nurse Competences..... | 14 |
| Domain 2: Clinical-Decision Making Competences..... | 15 |
| Domain 3: Knowledge and Cognitive Competences | 16 |
| Domain 4: Communication and Interpersonal Competences..... | 17 |
| Domain 5: Management and Team Competences..... | 18 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Domain 6: Leadership and Professional Scholarship Competences | 18 |
| Competences for Specialist Midwifery Practice..... | 19 |
| Principle 1: Respect for the Dignity of the Person..... | 19 |
| Principle 2: Professional Responsibility and Accountability | 20 |
| Principle 3: Quality of Practice | 21 |
| Principle 4: Trust and Confidentiality | 22 |
| Principle 5 Collaboration with Others..... | 23 |
| Section 3: The Approval Process for Education Providers for the provision of Post-Registration Specialist Nursing and Midwifery Education Programme..... | 24 |
| The Approval Process..... | 25 |
| Approval of Programmes..... | 25 |
| General Provisions Regarding the Process of Approval..... | 26 |
| Section 4: Standards for the Approval of Education Providers and Allied Healthcare Provider..... | 27 |
| The Respective Education Providers..... | 28 |
| Programmes Design and Development..... | 30 |
| Clinical Practice Experience | 32 |
| Assessment Process | 34 |
| External Examiners..... | 35 |
| Section 5: NMBI Guide Template for Submission of Post - Registration Programmes Curriculum Document..... | 36 |
| Section 6: NFQ Level 9 Learning Outcomes for Nursing Post-Registration Specialist Education Programmes..... | 40 |
| Section 7: NFQ Level 9 Learning Outcomes for Midwifery Post-Registration Specialist Education Programmes..... | 46 |
| References..... | 52 |

INTRODUCTION

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) (the Board) is the statutory regulatory body for nursing and midwifery in Ireland. The object of the Board shall be the protection of the public in its dealing with nurses and midwives and the integrity of the practice of nursing and midwifery through the promotion of high standards of professional education, training and practice and professional conduct among nurses and midwives (Part 2 (8) of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011). The duties of the Board in relation to education and training of nurses and midwives are defined by the provisions of Part 10 (85) of the Nurses and Midwives Act, 2011.

One of the functions of the Board under the Nurses and Midwives Act (2011) is to publish standards and requirements of nursing and midwifery education and training for post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery qualifications. This function is operationalised through the Nurses and Midwives (Education and Training) Rules 2018 (S.I. 218 of 2018) and led to the development of the Post – Registration Specialist Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes Standards and Requirements.

This document provides education and clinical preparation for nurses and midwives towards becoming a specialist nurse and specialist midwife. This is in line with the *A Policy on the Development of Graduate to Advanced Nursing and Midwifery Practice* published by the Department of Health (DoH) (2019). This policy proposes a new education framework to facilitate nurses and midwives to progress from a graduate practice to specialist practice and finally, advanced practice within a two-year timeframe (DoH 2019).

The academic standard and terminal award for all post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes are at Level 9 award on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) (Quality and Qualifications Ireland 2014). This is reflective of the directives of the *A Policy on the Development of Graduate to Advanced Nursing and Midwifery Practice* (DoH 2019).

SECTION 1:

EXTRACT FROM NURSES AND MIDWIVES (EDUCATION AND TRAINING) RULES 2018

Extract from Nurses and Midwives (Education and Training) Rules 2018

This section provides extracts from the Nurses and Midwives (Education and Training) Rules 2018 for the guidance of the higher education institutions and their allied healthcare providers involved in the provision and delivery of post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes.

Part 1 - Preliminary

Rule 3 - Definition

In these rules,

“Act” means the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011 (No. 41 of 2011);

“standards and requirements” means the standards and requirements set out in—

- (a) the standards, set and published by the Board pursuant to section 85(1) of the Act, of nursing and midwifery education and training for first-time registration and post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery qualifications, and
- (b) the guidelines, prepared by the Board pursuant to section 85(2)(b) of the Act, on curriculum issues and content to be included in education and training programmes approved by the Board;

Part 3 - Provision of education and training programmes

Rule 7. This part applies to the following programmes of education and training in nursing and midwifery (in this Part referred to as “education and training programmes”):

- (b) post-registration leading to registration or annotation; and
- (c) specialist nursing and midwifery.

Rule 9 - Applications for Approval of Programmes

9.1 An application by a body seeking approval from the Board under section 85(2)(a) of the Act to deliver education and training programme shall be in such form and manner as may be prescribed by the Board from time to time and shall—

- (a) satisfy the Board that the programme will comply with the relevant standards and requirements,
- (b) set out minimum governance requirements relating to the delivery of the programme, including long-term commitment, staffing, premises, facilities, funding, policies, procedures and organisational structures,
- (c) incorporate an indicative syllabus that is responsive to current healthcare needs, and
- (d) have regard to the National Framework of Qualifications kept and maintained in accordance with section 43 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (No. 28 of 2012).

9.2 In considering an application under paragraph (1), the Board shall confirm the accuracy of the information provided and may give notice in writing to the body requesting it to provide further information in support of its application.

Rule 10 - Annual Reports

10.1 A body granted approval under Rule 9 to deliver an education and training programme shall, on an annual basis, provide the Board with a report in such form and manner as may be prescribed by the Board, in relation to compliance of the programme with the standards and requirements, and any conditions that the Board may have imposed under Rule 9(4).

10. 2 A body granted approval under Rule 9 to deliver education and training programme shall notify the Board of any proposed material change to the programme.

Rule 11 - Review and Monitoring of Programmes

11.1 Where the Board has granted approval for delivery of an education and training programme under Rule 9, it shall subsequently, and at intervals not exceeding five years, review whether the the programme continues to conform with the standards and requirements, and any conditions that the Board may have imposed under Rule 9(4).

11.2 Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Board shall monitor adherence to the standards and requirements by education and training programmes granted approval under Rule 9, and any conditions that the Board may have imposed under Rule 9(4).

11.3 Having carried out a review or monitoring of an education and training programme under this Rule, the Board may—

- (a) continue to approve the programme,
- (b) continue to approve the programme subject to compliance with specified conditions,
- (c) defer its decision on continued approval of the programme pending the resolution, to the satisfaction of the Board, of specified issues of concern arising, or
- (d) withdraw approval of the programme.

MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Entry Requirements for Admission to Post - Registration Specialist Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes.

- The postgraduate student must be registered in a relevant Division of the Register with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI).
- The postgraduate student must have the equivalent of a minimum of one-year post-registration experience in the last two years working in a nursing or midwifery specialist area where the postgraduate student intends to become a nurse specialist or midwife specialist.

MINIMUM ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE SPECIALIST PROGRAMME IN WEEKS AND HOURS

- Theoretical Instruction – 6 weeks **(210 hours)**
- *Clinical Instruction – 20 weeks **(912 hours)**
- Duration – 1 Year

* The postgraduate student must continue to work in a related nursing/ midwifery specialist area for the duration of the programme. By continuing to work in the related specialist area of nursing or midwifery practice, the postgraduate student is not required to attend specialist practice placement in another place unless it is requested by the student.

SECTION 2

COMPETENCES FOR SPECIALIST NURSING PRACTICE AND SPECIALIST MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

The Domains of Competence for Nurses and Practice Standards for Midwives

Competence is the ability of the nurse or midwife to practise safely and effectively fulfilling their professional responsibility within their scope of practice (NMBI 2014). It is also the attainment of knowledge, intellectual capacities, practice skills, integrity and professional and ethical values required for safe, accountable and effective practice as a registered nurse or registered midwife (NMBI 2016).

The Domains of Competence for Nurses and Practice Standards for Midwives represent a broad enabling framework to facilitate the assessment of a postgraduate specialist nursing/ midwifery student's clinical practice. Each specialist nursing domain consists of a number of standard statements with relevant indicators while the specialist midwife practice standards consist of principles and the required competencies and pertinent indicators.

The aim is to ensure that the postgraduate student at the end of the post-registration specialist education programme, has acquired the specialist nurse or midwife competences for holistic health assessment: critical analysis, problem-solving, decision-making, goal setting, collaborative team-working, leadership, professional scholarship, effective interpersonal communication, reflection and re-assessment that are essential to the art and science of nursing (NMBI 2018).

COMPETENCES FOR SPECIALIST NURSING PRACTICE

Domain 1: Professional Values and Conduct of the Specialist Nurse Competences

Standard 1

The Specialist Nurse will apply ethically sound solutions to complex issues related to individuals and populations

Cues

- 1.1 Demonstrate accountability and responsibility for professional practice as a lead healthcare professional
- 1.2 Articulate safe boundaries and engage in timely referral and collaboration for those areas outside of their scope of practice, experience and competence
- 1.3 Demonstrate leadership by practising compassionately to facilitate, optimise, promote and support the health, comfort, quality of life and wellbeing of *persons/ children/ service users* whose lives are affected by altered health, chronic disorders, disability, distress or life-limiting conditions
- 1.4 Articulate and promote the Specialist Nursing role in clinical, political and professional contexts.

Domain 2: Clinical-Decision Making Competences

Standard 2

The Specialist Nurse will utilise advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities to engage in senior clinical decision making

Cues

- 2.1 Conduct a comprehensive holistic health assessment using evidence-based frameworks to inform the development, delivery and evaluation of nursing care
- 2.2 Synthesise and interpret assessment information particularly history including prior treatment outcomes, physical findings and diagnostic data to identify normal, at-risk and subnormal states of health
- 2.3 Demonstrate timely use of diagnostic investigations to inform clinical decision making;
- 2.4 Exhibit comprehensive knowledge of therapeutic interventions including pharmacological and non-pharmacological nursing interventions.

Domain 3: Knowledge and Cognitive Competences

Standard 3

The Specialist Nurse will actively contribute to the professional body of knowledge related to their area of specialist nursing practice

Cues

- 3.1 Provide leadership in the translation of new knowledge to specialist clinical practice
- 3.2 Educate others using a specialist nursing knowledge derived from clinical experience, ongoing reflection and engagement in continuous professional development
- 3.3 Demonstrate a vision for specialist nursing based on a competent expert knowledge base that is developed through an audit, research, critical thinking and experiential learning
- 3.4 Demonstrate accountability in considering access, cost and clinical effectiveness when planning, delivering and evaluating person centred nursing care
- 3.5 Provide evidence of own continuing professional education through formal and informal education opportunities to ensure continued clinical credibility amongst nursing colleagues and other members of the multidisciplinary team.

Domain 4: Communication and Interpersonal Competences

Standard 4

The Specialist Nurse will negotiate and advocate with other health professionals to ensure the beliefs, rights and wishes of the person/ child/ service user are respected

Cues

- 4.1 Communicate effectively with the healthcare team through sharing of information in accordance with legal, professional and regulatory requirements
- 4.2 Communicate effectively with the person/ child/ service user and their family by sharing relevant information that may influence their decision making regarding the planning and delivery of a person centred nursing care
- 4.3 Demonstrate leadership in professional practice by using professional language (verbally and in writing) that represents the plan and delivery of care, which is shared with persons/ children/ service users, their family and other members of the multidisciplinary team
- 4.3 Facilitate clinical supervision and mentorship through utilising one's expert knowledge and clinical competences
- 4.4 Utilise information technology, in accordance with legislation and organisational policies and procedures, to record all aspects of specialist nursing care.

Domain 5: Management and Team Competences

Standard 5

The Specialist Nurse will manage risk to those who access the specialist service through collaborative risk assessments and promotion of a safe environment

Cues

- 5.1 Promote a culture of quality and safe person centred nursing care
- 5.2 Proactively seek feedback from persons/ children/ service users receiving care, families and staff on their experiences and suggestions for improvement
- 5.3 Implement practice changes using negotiation and consensus-building, in collaboration with the multidisciplinary team and persons/ children/ service users receiving care.

Domain 6: Leadership and Professional Scholarship Competences

Standard 6

The Specialist Nurse will lead in multidisciplinary team planning for transitions across the continuum of care

Cues

- 6.1 Demonstrate clinical leadership in the design and evaluation of services
- 6.2 Engage in healthcare policy development, implementation, and evaluation
- 6.3 Identify gaps in the provision of care and services pertaining to the area of specialist nursing practice and apply the best available evidence to address them
- 6.4 Lead in managing and implementing change.

COMPETENCES FOR SPECIALIST MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

Principle 1: Respect for the Dignity of the Person

Practice Standard 1

Midwifery practise is underpinned by a philosophy that protects and promotes the safety and autonomy of the woman and respects her experiences, choices, priorities, beliefs and values.

Competency 1

The Specialist Midwife applies ethically sound solutions to complex issues related to caring for women and their babies.

Indicators

- 1.1 Demonstrates leadership by protecting, promoting and supporting the human rights of women and babies, including advocating for each woman's right to choose how and where to give birth.
- 1.2 Demonstrates clinical leadership by practising empathically and compassionately to facilitate and support the health and wellbeing of all women, babies and their families, respecting the diversity of beliefs, values, choices and priorities of each woman and her family.
- 1.3 Demonstrates leadership by advocating for women and their babies, including their emotional and psychological safety whilst at all times respecting each woman's right to choose whether or not to follow advice and recommendations about her care.

Principle 2: Professional Responsibility and Accountability

Practice Standard 2

Midwives practise in line with legislation and professional guidance and are responsible and accountable within their scope of midwifery practice. This encompasses the full range of activities of the midwife as set out in EC Directive 2005/36/ EC and the adapted Definition of the Midwife International Confederation of Midwives 2011 (ICM) as adopted by the NMBI.

Competency 2

The Specialist Midwife uses advanced knowledge, skills and abilities to critically analyse, problem solve and engage in complex clinical decision-making as lead healthcare professionals.

Indicators

2.1 Is accountable and responsible for senior clinical decision-making, practising effectively as a lead healthcare professional in accordance with legal, professional and regulatory requirements.

2.2 Demonstrates professional boundaries by referring to and collaborating with other members of the multidisciplinary team for areas that are outside the Specialist Midwife's scope of practice, experience or competence.

2.3 Promotes, protects and articulates the Specialist Midwife role in clinical, professional and political contexts based on clinical expertise and supervision, reflection in and on practise and continuous professional development.

2.4 Demonstrates a vision for Specialist Midwife based on a competent expert knowledge derived from research, critical thinking and experiential learning.

Principle 3: Quality of Practice

Practice Standard 3

Midwives use comprehensive professional knowledge and skills to provide safe, competent, kind, compassionate and respectful care. Midwives keep up to date with midwifery practice by undertaking relevant continuing professional development.

Competency 3

The Specialist Midwife promotes and protects a culture of quality, compassionate and evidence-based safe maternity care and services.

Indicators

3.1 Demonstrates leadership in developing maternity services through initiatives, improvements and changes in the care provided to women, their babies and families.

3.2 Influences clinical practice through education (formal and informal), mentoring and coaching in the multidisciplinary team.

3.3 Uses expert knowledge and clinical competence when facilitating clinical supervision and mentorship of midwifery colleagues, postgraduate midwifery students and others.

3.4 Leads in the translation of new knowledge and facilitation of best available evidence in the clinical setting.

3.5 Demonstrates professional leadership by conducting audits and research and disseminating findings that shape and advance practice in midwifery, education, and policy at local, national, and international levels.

Principle 4: Trust and Confidentiality

Practice Standard 4

Midwives work in equal partnership with the woman and her family and establish a relationship of trust and confidentiality.

Competency 4

The Specialist Midwife negotiates and advocates with other health professionals to ensure the beliefs, rights, and wishes of women, babies and their families are upheld in the design and evaluation of services.

Indicators

4.1 Demonstrates professional leadership in advocating choice for women when developing midwifery services.

4.2 Promotes, protects and develops a culture of openness, honesty, trust and confidentiality with women and their families.

4.3 Articulates and understands how, in exceptional circumstances, confidential information may need to be shared with others.

Principle 5: Collaboration with Others

Practice Standard 5

Midwives communicate and collaborate effectively with women, women's families and with the multidisciplinary healthcare team.

Competency 5

The Specialist Midwife manages risk for those who access the service through collaborative risk assessments and promotion of a safe environment.

Indicators

5.1 Communicates effectively with other members of the multidisciplinary team sharing information in accordance with legal, professional and regulatory requirements.

5.2 Uses expert professional judgment to make timely referrals to other appropriate healthcare professionals or members of the multidisciplinary team.

5.3 Demonstrates leadership in negotiation and consensus-building to manage conflict in collaboration with women receiving care and other members of the multidisciplinary team.

SECTION 3

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

DRAFT

3.0 The Approval Process for Education Providers for the Provision of Post - Registration Specialist Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) has a statutory responsibility to approve Education providers in respect of post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes.

3.1 The Approval Process:

The approval process consists of two separate parts:

1. Approval of the education provider (Higher Education Institutions) - utilising appropriate internal and external quality assurance criteria as determined by the relevant awarding bodies and the Standards and Requirements of NMBI.
2. Approval of the post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes
3. Once approval has been granted it will be maintained through annual monitoring and review.

The respective education providers must declare to NMBI through a self-declaration audit of compliance that their post-registration specialist education programme complies with the Standards and Requirements for Post-Registration Specialist Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes.

3.2 Approval of Programmes

All post-registration specialist education programmes will be accredited by the Higher Education Institutions' academic councils and the relevant academic awarding bodies. The education providers will make a written submission to NMBI in the form of detailed programmes including evidence of its self-audit and compliance with NMBI Standards and Requirements for Post-Registration Specialist Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes.

The Education, Training and Standards Committee of NMBI will approve programmes. This committee includes representatives of the education providers (elected and nominated to the Board), the Department of Health and Children, the Health Service Executive and other national stakeholders. Once approval has been granted it will be maintained through annual monitoring and review.

An annual report which includes statistics on attrition, success rate and evaluation data incorporating the views of the stakeholders including postgraduate students, service providers, persons/ children/ service users and their family if appropriate must be forwarded annually to NMBI.

3.3 General Provisions Regarding the Approval Process:

1. The education provider will submit the curriculum document (Section 6 –Template for Curriculum Document), other relevant supporting documents and self-assessment audit (Section 7) for the post-registration specialist education programme/s.
2. Review by Professional Standards Officer(s)
3. Review by the Education, Training and Standards Committee
4. A decision is made by the committee and the decision is validated by the Board
5. The Education provider is informed of the decision of the committee by the Director of Professional Standards - Nursing, Director of Professional Standards - Midwifery or a Professional Standards Officer.
6. Approved post-registration specialist education programmes are placed on the Nursing Careers Website – www.nursingcareers.ie

The approval process will take place within a time scale prescribed by NMBI. The course submission time frame is 6 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting of the Education, Training and Standards Committee within NMBI. Dates for the scheduled committee meetings will be made available to all education providers.

After approval has been given, any subsequent changes within the education provider or in the post-registration specialist education programmes that affect any aspect of the programmes must be notified to NMBI. Notification of approval of the post-registration specialist education programmes will be in writing from NMBI. Conditions and recommendations may be attached to the approval of post-registration specialist education programmes. These conditions and recommendations will include a six months' timeframe to address the conditions or as prescribed by the committee if a longer timeframe is required.

SECTION 4

STANDARDS FOR THE APPROVAL OF EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND ALLIED HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

4.0 Standards for the Approval of Education Providers and Allied Healthcare Providers

4.1 The Respective Education Providers.

Education providers are committed to providing post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes which demonstrates that the highest standards of professional education and training are in place. Due regard should be taken in relation to issues such as the evolving public and service need; clinical/practice audit, person/ child/ service users safety (Government of Ireland, 2008), Education and clinical quality and postgraduate student access.

- 4.1.1 Education providers respond to change and need affecting professional, education, health, policy, social and economic issues.
- 4.1.2 Education providers keep appropriate records including records for the conferment of professional and academic awards.
- 4.1.3 The process for monitoring postgraduate student attendance is declared.
- 4.1.4 Organisational structures supporting the management of the post-registration specialist education programmes are explicit.
- 4.1.5 Education providers have a Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Committee/local joint working group, with representatives of the key stakeholders including service users.
- 4.1.6 The role of the external examiner in relation to post-registration specialist education programmes is explicit.
- 4.1.7 The staff resource supports the delivery of the post-registration specialist education programmes at the stated professional, clinical and academic level.
- 4.1.8 Lecturers/tutors are involved in clinical practice and its development.

- 4.1.9 Nursing/Midwifery subjects are developed and taught by registered nurses/midwives with appropriate professional, clinical and academic qualifications and teaching expertise in the subject matter.
- 4.1.10 Education providers provide administrative and clerical support for all educational activity.
- 4.1.11 Education providers provide education resources/facilities (including a library, computer, audio-visual & accommodation) to meet the teaching and learning needs of the post-registration specialist education programmes.
- 4.1.12 Mechanisms for postgraduate student admission to the post-registration specialist education programmes ensure that the stated entry requirements are met. This should include specific mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning (RPL).
- 4.1.13 Following any interruption in the post-registration specialist education programme the education provider ensures that the postgraduate student meets all the post-registration specialist education programme requirements.
- 4.1.14 The mechanism for postgraduate students' support in relation to student services, facilities and academic and clinical guidance is explicit.
- 4.1.15 The education provider provides an annual programme report on the post-registration specialist education programmes including the external examiner's report to NMBI.

4. 2 Programmes Design and Development.

- 4.2.1 Curriculum design and development reflect research and evidence-based education theory and health care theory, audit, policy and practice. National and International benchmarks should inform curriculum development.
- 4.2.2 The curriculum model chosen should be dynamic and flexible to allow for changes in Nursing/Midwifery practice and health care delivery.
- 4.2.3 Theoretical and clinical learning experiences and the learning environment must support the achievement of the programme and individual modules' learning outcomes.
- 4.2.4 The learning outcomes programme and individual modules must be developed at NFQ level 9 (see section 6 for the specialist nursing NFQ level 9 learning outcomes grid and section 7 for specialist midwifery NFQ level 9 learning outcomes grid).
- 4.2.5 All module assessments are mapped to module learning outcomes.
- 4.2.4 The post-registration specialist education programme's design and development are led by registered nurse tutors or nurse/midwifery lecturers with a teaching qualification and are supported by academic and clinical experts including multidisciplinary professionals as appropriate in collaboration with others and are guided by professional Nursing/Midwifery knowledge which is evidence/research-based.
- 4.2.5 The post-registration specialist education programme's learning development team is comprised of representative members of key stakeholders in Nursing/Midwifery education and practice and service users.
- 4.2.6 The post-registration specialist education programmes are strategically planned to demonstrate balanced distribution and integration of theory and practice, logical sequencing and progressive development of subjects and clinical competence.
- 4.2.7 The post-registration specialist education programmes are based on a range of teaching-learning strategies (including e-learning, blended learning and other new technologies that aid learning) to assist the development of a knowledgeable, safe and competent practitioners and to equip them with the life-long skills for problem-solving and self-directed learning.

- 4.2.8 The post-registration specialist education programmes' design reflects various methods of teaching/learning and provides a balance between lectures, tutorials, workshops, small group interactions, demonstrations, practical work, clinical application and self- directed study.
- 4.2.9 The post-registration specialist education programmes equip the postgraduate students with an appropriate level of knowledge, skills, competence, attitude, research awareness and critical analysis.
- 4.2.10 The accreditation of post-registration specialist education programmes by the awarding body (QQI) is explicit.
- 4.2.11 The post-registration specialist education programmes design include the assessment strategy in relation to the assessment of clinical competence and theoretical learning outcomes.
- 4.2.12 The post-registration specialist education programmes design include an evaluation strategy which captures evaluation feedback from a broad range of stakeholders including the postgraduate student, the clinical sites, persons/ children/ service users and their family.
- 4.2.13 Quality assurance criteria are reflective of both NMBI and Standards and Requirements and the relevant awarding body are explicit.
- 4.2.14 Quality assurance mechanisms and indicators are identified and measured in relation to the internal and external governance requirements of the education provider, the awarding body and the professional regulator.

4.3 Clinical Practice Experience

4.3.1 Clinical practice experience provides learning opportunities that enable the achievement of competence in specialist clinical Nursing/Midwifery practice and the stated learning outcomes.

4.3.2 Clinical practice placements are based in Allied Healthcare Providers (AHCP) which are audited/ approved by the HEI and satisfy NMBI Standards and Requirements.

4.3.3 The Allied Healthcare Providers (AHCP) used for clinical practice placements are required to have in place:

- Arrangements for monitoring and improving a person/ child/ service user's safety
- Evidence-based practice guidelines to support appropriate standards of care and for systematic approaches to nursing and midwifery care
- Policies and procedures that support audit and research
- Risk management systems
- Adverse event reporting system
- Policies and procedures that support good practice in recording clinical practice
- Policies and procedures to address complaints/concerns
- Mechanisms to support multidisciplinary team working
- A structure within which concerns around clinical practice are raised and addressed
- Mechanisms to involve service users in the development and review of healthcare provision
- Evidence of clinical and education audit for each practice placement site used in the education and training of specialist nurses and midwives

4.3.4 The selection of areas for clinical practice experience reflects the scope of the healthcare settings and supports the achievement of the learning outcomes of the post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes.

- 4.3.5 Postgraduate student allocation to clinical practice placements is based on the need to integrate theory and practice and to facilitate the progressive development of clinical skills, knowledge, competence, attitude, quality person centred care and person/child/ service user's safety.
- 4.3.6 Clearly written learning outcomes/objectives appropriate to the clinical practice placement area are developed and are available to ensure optimal use of valuable clinical practice experience. These learning outcomes/objectives are revised as necessary.
- 4.3.7 Postgraduate students and all those involved in meeting their learning needs are fully acquainted with the expected learning outcomes related to that clinical practice placement.
- 4.3.8 Lecturers and nurse/midwifery tutors, in liaison with the appropriate clinical staff (clinical facilitators, preceptors, clinical nurse/midwife managers and practice development co-ordinators) guide and support the postgraduate students in ensuring that the clinical practice placement provides an optimum quality learning environment.

4.4 Assessment Process.

The assessment of learning is a continuous process. Assessment should be balanced and integrated throughout the post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes.

Assessments are strategically planned and function to:

- Provide feedback on postgraduate student progress
- Ensure education standards (theory and clinical practice) are achieved before entry to the next part/year of the post-registration specialist education programmes, as appropriate.

4.4.1 Assessments are based on a variety of strategies which are aligned with the subject area, clinical practice setting and stage of the post-registration specialist education programmes and expected learning outcomes.

4.4.2 Assessment measures where appropriate demonstrates the integration and application of theory to a person/ children/ service user's care learned throughout the post-registration specialist education programmes and requires the postgraduate student to demonstrate competence within practice through the achievement of learning outcomes in both theory and clinical practice.

4.4.3 Assessment strategies are established as reliable and valid measures of learning outcomes.

4.4.4 Grading criteria indicating the standard for a pass award is required for theoretical and clinical practice competency assessments as an award/grading mechanism, which acknowledges higher achievements by the postgraduate student and is recorded.

4.4. Marks and standards and assessment regulations relating to compensation, supplemental and appeal mechanisms and conditions for the continuance of the education programmes are explicit.

4.5 External Examiners.

External examiners have an important role in maintaining the standard of post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes by providing an independent view about their content, structure, organisation and assessment. The third level institutions in collaboration with the relevant education providers appoint external examiners in accordance with specified internal and external criteria (see below).

4.5.1 The role of the external examiner is explicit and functions to:

- Maintain the quality and standards of post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes.
- Ensure the assessment strategies for theory and clinical practice are reliable and equitable.
- Ensure individual postgraduate students are treated fairly.

4.5.2 External examiners for post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes:

- Are Registered Nurses/ Registered Midwives with professional qualifications appropriate to the post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes being examined?
- Hold academic and teaching qualifications and have at least 3 years of full-time teaching experience in courses appropriate to the post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes being examined.
- Have experience in examining and assessing post-registration nursing and midwifery students.

4.5.3 The mechanism whereby the external examiner is provided with relevant documentation participates in decision- making concerning the post-registration specialist nursing and midwifery education programmes and has a membership of the Examination Boards of the respective institutions, is explicit.

5.4 An abridged CV of the external examiner is explicit within the submission.

SECTION 5

NMBI GUIDE TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF POST - REGISTRATION SPECIALIST EDUCATION PROGRAMMES CURRICULUM DOCUMENT

Section 1: Programme Summary

1. Title

2. Location and Provider

3. Table of Contents

4. Students

I. Application Procedures

II. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

III. Admission Criteria

- Entry requirements

IV. Interruption in the delivery of the programme

5. Structure

6. Attendance

I. Minimum Hours Declared

7. Student Support

I. Student Lecturers

II. Student Unions

III. Counselling

IV. Disability/Access

V. Other Supports Available to Student

- Admin Support

8. Learning Resources

I. Library Facilities

II. Computer/IT Facilities



III. Online/Virtual Learning Environments (e.g. Moodle/Blackboard)

IV. Other Learning Resources

9. Administration

I. Programme Management

II. ECT Framework

III. Awarding Body

IV. Programme Evaluation, Oversight and Quality

10. Programme review process

Section 2: Curriculum Design, Development, Content and Organisation

1. Curriculum Design

I. Background

II. Rationale

2. Curriculum Development

- Supported by current published evidence.

3. Curriculum Philosophy

4. Curriculum Content

I. Aims and Learning Outcomes

a. Programme Learning Outcomes Mapped to Standards and Requirements at NFQ Level 9 (Section 6/ 7)

b. Module Learning Outcomes Mapped to Standards and Requirements at NFQ Level 9 (Section 6/7)

II. Structure, Modes of Study and Duration

5. Assignments and Assessments

I. Module Assignments and Assessments mapped to module learning outcomes

II. Submissions/Late Submissions

III. Scope of compensation between modules (Compensation between a theoretical and clinical component of the assessment is prohibited).

IV. Examinations

V. Plagiarism

VI. Repeat Examinations

- The number of repeats allowed for failed assessments.

6. Module Descriptors in Table format

- Current references included

Section3: Appendices

1. Letter of accreditation from HEI's Academic Council

2. CV's of Academic Staff (Include NMBI PINs for nurses and midwives)

3. Abridge CV of External Examiner

4. Academic regulations

5. Programme Evaluation Tools, e.g. Students Questionnaires, Impact on Service Assessment, Preceptor Evaluation

6. Clinical Competency Assessment Tool

7. Detailed examination grading scale

8. Governance structure in diagrammatic format

9. Oversight committee memberships

10. Policies on marking/plagiarism/submission/exams/conduct/ etc.

11. Recognition of prior learning policies/forms

12. Marking criteria

13. Any other documents deemed relevant to the programme

SECTION 6

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS (NFQ) LEVEL 9 LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR POST – REGISTRATION NURSING SPECIALIST PROGRAMMES

The learning outcomes at this level relate to the demonstration of knowledge and understanding which is the forefront of a field of learning (Specialist Nursing). The outcomes relate to the application of knowledge, understanding and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar contexts related to a field of study (Specialist Nursing). The outcomes are associated with an ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgements (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland 2003).

The HEI must outline the programme and learning outcomes of the specialist education programme as indicated by the NFQ level 9 learning outcomes grid. The HEI must outline clearly the expected Knowledge, Competency and Skills that will be gained by the postgraduate student at the end of the specialist education programme.

NFQ Level 9 Learning Outcomes Grid for Post – Registration Nursing Specialist Education Programmes

All cognate areas within the discipline of specialist nursing must be at level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications

| Level 9 Standards | Description | Indicators |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Knowledge – Breadth | <i>A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning (specialist nursing)</i> | <p>The graduate should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. know how knowledge is created and changed within the profession. 2. be able to demonstrate a knowledge base that exercises higher levels of judgement, discretion and decision making within nursing practice. 3. be able to demonstrate the value of nursing through the generation of nursing knowledge and innovative clinical practice, nursing education and management. |
| 2. Knowledge – Kind | <i>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning (specialist nursing)</i> | <p>The graduate should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from various domains showing breadth and depth of knowledge of his/her discipline. 2. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from a broad range of disciplines that inform and develop nursing practice. 3. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of the major research methodologies appropriate to his/her professional domain. |

3. Know – How & Skill - Range *Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry*

The graduate should be able to:

1. make critical choices in the selection of approaches to research problems.
2. synthesise different approaches to research and justify their use in practice.
3. systematically gather, interpret and evaluate evidence drawn from a diverse range of sources that are chosen independently.
4. conduct a comprehensive health needs assessment as the basis for independent nursing practice within a specified area.
5. demonstrate expert skill in providing care for individuals and groups in communities, within the scope of practice framework and multidisciplinary team.
6. demonstrate advanced clinical decision-making skills to manage a patient/client caseload.
7. evaluate and critique current evidence base to set standards for best practice

4. Know – How & Skill - Selectivity *Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques*

The graduate should be able to:

1. critically evaluate with discrimination the complex theories and concepts underpinning professional practice.
2. utilise advanced knowledge and critical thinking skills to, directly and indirectly, provide optimum nursing care.
3. develop and apply critical faculties to practice through advanced reflection skills.

-
4. demonstrate a vision of a professional practice that can be developed beyond the current scope of practice.
 5. act proactively as an educational resource for healthcare professionals.
 6. apply critical faculties to professional practice through analysis of the underlying epistemology of its knowledge base.

5. Competence - Context

Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts

The graduate should be able to:

1. demonstrate autonomy, experience, competence, accountability, authority and responsibility in nursing practice.
2. demonstrate leadership in nursing practice.
3. use knowledge to autonomously identify, resolve and evaluate intellectual issues and practical problems that appear in practice.
4. identify and integrate research into areas of health care that can incorporate the best evidence-based practice.
5. use advanced skills to conduct an in-depth research study relevant to the field of professional Nursing

**6. Competence -
Role**

Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity

The graduate should be able to:

1. coordinate evidence-based practice audit and research to develop and evaluate practice.
2. actively contribute to the professional body of nursing knowledge.
3. demonstrate the value of nursing & midwifery through the generation of nursing knowledge and innovative nursing education and practice.
4. teach others from a broad and in-depth knowledge base, derived from reflection on nursing practice and expertise.
5. Critically review the working of teams and demonstrate skills in negotiation and the management of conflict.

**7. Competence –
Learning to Learn**

Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development

The graduate should be able to:

1. identify personal learning needs and the steps needed to meet them.
2. reflect critically on practise in order to improve it in self and others.
3. undertake complex and sustained analysis of subject matter and provide a balanced, logical and coherent conclusion.
4. continually evaluate the personal contribution to the current body of knowledge in practice.
5. utilise life-long learning skills to continue to develop knowledge applied to nursing practice.
6. explore beyond scope of practice, developing effective and innovative nursing practice.

-
7. demonstrate a commitment to advancing the body of knowledge in nursing practice.

8. Competence – Insight *Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them*

The graduate should be able to:

1. identify and implement action to improve practice and initiate change.
2. identify and critically evaluate ethical issues and work with others towards their resolution.
3. develop the ability to be political within and outside of his/her employing organisation.
4. challenge assumptions and question values, beliefs and policies underpinning care at the individual, team and organisational level.
5. actively contribute to the quality of care through research that can advance nursing and health care knowledge.
6. develop advanced communication skills in order to present balanced arguments.
 - present structured, rational and evidenced coherent arguments using appropriate strategies.
 - engage confidently in the academic and multi-professional debate.

SECTION 7

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS (NFQ) LEVEL 9 LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR POST – REGISTRATION MIDWIFERY SPECIALIST PROGRAMMES

The learning outcomes at this level relate to the demonstration of knowledge and understanding which is the forefront of a field of learning (Specialist Midwifery). The learning outcomes relate to the application of knowledge, understanding and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar contexts related to a field of study (Specialist Midwifery). The learning outcomes are associated with an ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgements (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland 2003).

The HEI must outline the programme and learning outcomes of the specialist education programme as indicated by the NFQ level 9 learning outcomes grid. The HEI must outline clearly the expected Knowledge, Competency and Skills that will be gained by the postgraduate student at the end of the specialist education programme.

NFQ Level 9 Learning Outcomes Grid for Post – Registration Midwifery Specialist Education Programmes

All cognate areas within the discipline of specialist midwifery must be at level 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications

| Level 9 Standards | Description | Indicators |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Knowledge – Breadth | <i>A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning</i> | <p>The graduate should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. know how knowledge is created and changed within the midwifery profession. 2. be able to demonstrate a knowledge base that exercises higher levels of judgement, discretion and decision making within midwifery practice. 3. be able to demonstrate the value of midwifery through the generation of midwifery knowledge and innovative clinical practice, midwifery education and management. |
| 2. Knowledge – Kind | <i>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning</i> | <p>The graduate should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from various domains showing breadth and depth of knowledge of midwifery. 2. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from a broad range of disciplines that inform and develop midwifery practice. 3. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of the major research methodologies appropriate to midwifery. |

3. Know – How & Skill - Range *Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry*

The graduate should be able to:

1. make critical choices in the selection of approaches to research problems.
2. synthesise different approaches to research and justify their use in practice.
3. systematically gather, interpret and evaluate evidence drawn from a diverse range of sources that are chosen independently.
4. demonstrate expert skill in providing care for women and groups in communities, within the scope of practice framework and multidisciplinary team.
5. demonstrate advanced clinical decision-making skills to manage a midwifery caseload.
6. evaluate and critique the current evidence base to set standards for best practice.

4. Know – How & Skill - Selectivity *Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques*

The graduate should be able to:

1. critically evaluate with discrimination the complex theories and concepts underpinning professional midwifery practice.
2. utilise advanced knowledge and critical thinking skills to, directly and indirectly, provide optimum midwifery care.
3. develop and apply critical faculties to practice through advanced reflection skills.

-
4. demonstrate a vision of a professional practice that can be developed beyond the current scope of practice.
 5. act proactively as an educational resource for healthcare professionals.
 6. apply critical faculties to professional midwifery practice through analysis of the underlying epistemology of its knowledge base.

5. Competence - Context

Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts

The graduate should be able to:

1. demonstrate autonomy, experience, competence, accountability, authority and responsibility in midwifery practice.
2. demonstrate leadership in midwifery practice.
3. use knowledge to autonomously identify, resolve and evaluate intellectual issues and practical problems that appear in midwifery practice.
4. identify and integrate research into areas of health care that can incorporate the best evidence-based practice.
5. use advanced skills to conduct an in-depth research study relevant to professional midwifery practice.

**6. Competence -
Role**

Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity

The graduate should be able to:

1. coordinate evidence-based practice audit and research to develop and evaluate midwifery practice.
2. actively contribute to the professional body of midwifery knowledge.
3. demonstrate the value of midwifery through the generation of midwifery knowledge and innovative midwifery education and practice.
4. teach others from a broad and in-depth knowledge base, derived from reflection on midwifery practice and expertise.
5. Critically review the working of teams and demonstrate skills in negotiation and the management of conflict.

**7. Competence –
Learning to Learn**

Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development

The graduate should be able to:

1. identify personal learning needs and the steps needed to meet them.
2. reflect critically on midwifery practice in order to improve it in self and others.
3. undertake complex and sustained analysis of subject matter and provide a balanced, logical and coherent conclusion.
4. continually evaluate the personal contribution to the current body of midwifery knowledge in practice.
5. utilise life-long learning skills to continue to develop knowledge applied to midwifery practice.
6. explore beyond scope of practice, developing effective and innovative midwifery practice.

-
7. demonstrate a commitment to advancing the body of knowledge in midwifery practice.

**8. Competence –
Insight** *Scrutinise and reflect on social norms
and relationships and act to change
them*

The graduate should be able to:

1. identify and implement action to improve midwifery practice and initiate change.
2. identify and critically evaluate ethical issues and work with others towards their resolution.
3. develop the ability to be political within and outside of his/her employing organisation.
4. challenge assumptions and question values, beliefs and policies underpinning maternity care at the individual, team and organisational level.
5. actively contribute to the quality of care through research that can advance midwifery and maternity care knowledge.
6. develop advanced communication skills in order to present balanced arguments.
 - present structured, rational and evidenced coherent arguments using appropriate strategies.
 - engage confidently in the academic and multi-professional debate.

References

An Bord Altranais (2010) *Requirements and Standards for Post –Registration Nursing and Midwifery education Programmes – Incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications (first ed)*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Canadian Nurse (2014) The pillars of CNS practice. *Canadian Nurse* 110, (7), 32-35.

Department of Health (2019) *A Policy on the Development of Graduate to Advanced Nursing and Midwifery Practice*. Department of Health: Dublin.

Government of Ireland (2011) *The Nurses and Midwives Act*. Stationery Office, Dublin

Government of Ireland (2017) *The Nurses and Midwives (Education and Training) Rules of 2018 (S.I. No. 218 of 2018)*. Stationery Office, Dublin.

National Council for the Development of Nursing and Midwifery (2010) *Profiles of Advanced Nurse/Midwife Practitioners and Clinical Nurse/ Midwife Specialists in Ireland*. National Council for the Development of Nursing and Midwifery: Dublin.

National Qualification Authority of Ireland (2003) *Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications*. National Qualification Authority of Ireland, Dublin.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2016) *Nurse Registration Programmes Standards and Requirements*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2015) *Practice Standards for Midwives*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2018) *Advanced Practice (Midwifery) Standards for Midwives*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2017) *Advanced Practice (Nursing) Standards for Midwives*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2018) *Psychiatric Nurse Post Registration Education Programme Standards and Requirements*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2014) *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurse and Registered Midwives*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2015) *Scope of Practice for Registered Nurse and Registered Midwives*. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin.

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2014) *The National Framework of Qualifications - an Overview. Policy Summary*. Available at [http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx) (accessed 16th June 2019).