

**Review of Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Degree  
(Pre-Registration) Programmes**

**Invitation for Submissions**

**Submission Form**

*(Targeted at: Nurses, Midwives, Student Nurses & Student Midwives, Health Professionals, Healthcare Managers, Regulators, Professional Bodies, Professional & Special Interest Groups, Educators etc.)*

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Job Title</b>	
<b>Organisation*</b> <i>Please include if making this submission on behalf of your organisation</i>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**Please confirm whether you are responding to this consultation:**

As an Individual  or on behalf of an Organisation

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Latest date for receipt of submissions is **30<sup>th</sup> January 2012**.

Written submissions by individuals, groups or organisations are welcome and should be sent via e-mail to: [nursemidwifereview@health.gov.ie](mailto:nursemidwifereview@health.gov.ie) or posted to: Ms Paula Monks, Review of Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Degree Programmes, Room 7.51, Department of Health, Hawkins House, Dublin 2.

**Freedom of Information**

Please note that it is intended that all submissions received will be made available under the Freedom of Information Acts and as such may be published on the Department of Health website following the publication of the Final Report of the Review of Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Degree Programmes.

## Context

The Department of Health has commenced a review of the undergraduate nursing and midwifery degree programmes in order to establish their efficiency and effectiveness in preparing nurses and midwives to practice in the Irish healthcare system now and into the future. The undergraduate nursing and midwifery degree programmes have been in place since 2002 for nursing (general, psychiatric and intellectual disability nursing) and 2006 for midwifery and integrated children and general programmes. These are the education programmes that prepare student nurses and student midwives to register with An Bord Altranais in order to practice as staff nurses and staff midwives in the health services.

The Irish healthcare system is undergoing significant reform with a focus on patient safety and quality patient care. More care will be delivered in the community with an emphasis on improving the health of the population and reducing health inequalities by addressing the causes of preventable illnesses. This Review aims to build on the excellence of the current pre-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes in order to prepare nurses and midwives to deliver healthcare services now and into the future.

A Review Group has been established to oversee the review of the nursing and midwifery programmes having regard to the objectives of the current health reform programme, the future workforce needs of the public health system and the need to achieve value for money. This Review will be conducted on a modular basis consisting of the following elements:

1) An examination of:

- the content of the undergraduate programmes
- the structure of the current degree programmes including the separate points of entry<sup>1</sup>, clinical placement requirements and governance arrangements.

2) An analysis of the number of student places required to ensure sufficient numbers of nurse and midwife graduates for new patterns of service delivery within the public health system.

The Review Group will consider the findings of both exercises and report to the Minister for Health by September 2012. Following the completion of these exercises the Department of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in consultation with the higher education institutions will lead on the development of any changes required in relation to the organisation and delivery of nursing and midwifery degree programmes within the higher education system. This will take into account the broader education policy considerations in relation to demand for such programmes nationally and internationally and the overall funding implications involved and take full consideration of the findings of the report to the Minister for Health on workforce planning and curricula changes.

A briefing paper is available on the Department's **website** [www.dohc.ie/issues/nmr](http://www.dohc.ie/issues/nmr) or can be requested by **telephone** 01 6354111 or by **email** [nursemidwifereview@health.gov.ie](mailto:nursemidwifereview@health.gov.ie)

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<sup>1</sup> There are direct entry education programmes at degree level in general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing; and midwifery. Further detail is provided in attached Explanatory Note

**Question 1. What do you consider motivates people to choose a career in nursing or midwifery?**

*(There are direct entry education programmes at degree level in general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing; and midwifery leading to registration in the appropriate division of the nursing or midwifery register. Further detail is provided in attached Explanatory Note)*

*If answering this question in relation to a particular nursing (general, psychiatric, intellectual disability, children's) or midwifery perspective please specify.*

**Question 2. What do you consider are the strengths of the nursing and midwifery undergraduate pre-registration degree programmes?**

*Nursing Programmes:*

*(Please give consideration to each of the nursing programmes and where relevant identify which one you are referring to i.e general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing. Further detail is provided in attached Explanatory Note)*

*Midwifery Programme:*

**Question 3. What do you consider are the weaknesses of the nursing and midwifery undergraduate pre-registration degree programmes?**

Nursing Programmes:

*(Please give consideration to each of the nursing programmes and where relevant identify which one you are referring to i.e general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing. Further detail is provided in attached Explanatory Note)*

Midwifery Programme:

**Question 4. What roles would you like to see nurses and midwives doing in the future to meet the needs of consumers of health services bearing in mind the changing nature of healthcare delivery in Ireland?**

Nursing Programmes:

*(Please give consideration to each of the nursing programmes and where relevant identify which one you are referring to i.e general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing. Further detail is provided in attached Explanatory Note)*

Midwifery Programme:

**Question 5. Does the content of the degree programmes need to be updated or expanded?**

**Question 5a. If yes, please describe the changes you would like to see?**

*(The content of the programme refers to the syllabus (i.e. an indication of the range of topics to be taught as listed by An Bord Altranais for each of the degree programmes.)*

Nursing Programmes:

*(Please give consideration to the content of each of the nursing programmes and where relevant identify which one you are referring to i.e general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing)*

Midwifery Programme:

**Question 6. Does the structure of the degree programmes need to be updated or expanded?**

**Question 6a. If yes, please describe the changes you would like to see?**

*The structure of the programmes refers to the:*

- (a) separate points of entry to prepare nurses and midwives for entry to separate divisions of the register (i.e. general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing; and midwifery)*
- (b) clinical placements for each of the programme (clinical experience, supervision, preceptorship and mentorship etc)*
- (c) governance arrangements (these include arrangements to support clinical placements and the work of the local joint working groups set up between 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and healthcare providers).*

*Nursing Programmes:*

*(Please give consideration to the structure (see a-c) of each of the nursing programmes and where relevant identify which one you are referring to i.e general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, combined children's and general nursing)*

*Midwifery Programme:*

*(Please give consideration to the structure (see a-c) of the midwifery programme)*

**Question 7.** Any further comments?

**-Please limit responses to 10 pages-**



## Review of Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Degree Programmes Explanatory Note

### 1. Points of Entry to Nursing and Midwifery

There are direct entry education programmes at degree level in general nursing, psychiatric nursing, intellectual disability nursing, integrated children's and general nursing; and midwifery.

#### *1.1 General, Psychiatric and Intellectual Disability Programmes*

Nurse registration education programmes (general, psychiatric and intellectual disability) moved from certificate exit point to a three-year diploma introduced in 1994. Since 2002 general, psychiatric and intellectual disability registration education programmes are delivered as a four-year honours degree.

A minimum number of hours/weeks in theoretical and clinical instruction must be successfully completed before applying to register with An Bord Altranais. For most of the programme the student receives a combination of theoretical and clinical instruction and this period generally includes normal third-level college holidays. During this period the student is not a paid employee of the health service. The usual entitlements/conditions regarding a means-tested third-level grant applies to student nurses.

Students are exposed to a variety of clinical placements during their education programme for example in clinical placements in general hospitals, in community, in older person settings etc. The first clinical placement occurs early in the programme, usually within three months of commencement. In the final fourth year of the education programme a continual 36 week rostered clinical placement (internship) takes place. This occurs in the clinical area of the particular programme for example it will be in a mental health service for psychiatric student nurses. During this period the student is a paid employee of the health service. Table 1 outlines An Bord Altranais requirements (ABA 2005a, 2011).

**Table 1 An Bord Altranais Requirements: Nurse Registration Programmes -  
General Nursing, Intellectual Disability Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing**

Aspect	General Nursing Intellectual Disability Nursing Psychiatric Nursing
Theoretical Instruction (to include self-directed study, exams)	58 weeks
Clinical Instruction (supernumerary clinical placement)	40 weeks
Internship (inclusive of annual leave)	36 weeks
Other/Discretionary Component (at least half should comprise supernumerary clinical placement)	10 weeks
<i>Total Minimum</i>	144 weeks

An Bord Altranais outlines the list of subjects in the syllabus/indicative content for the nurse registration education programmes (General Nursing, Intellectual Disability Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing). It is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It provides an indication of the programme content in terms of the range of topics and gives no indication of the weighting of each topic in the curriculum. Curriculum planners are expected to demonstrate that the programme is relevant and responsive with the most recent policy and legislative change. Table 2 outlines the syllabus/indicative content

headings for nurse registration education programmes (ABA 2005a). The *Requirements and Standards for Nurse Registration Education Programmes* (ABA 2005a) provides more detailed information.

**Table 2 An Bord Altranais Requirements: Syllabus/ Indicative Content Nurse Registration Programmes - General Nursing, Intellectual Disability Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing**

General Nursing	Intellectual Disability Nursing	Psychiatric Nursing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nursing</li> <li>- Communication &amp; Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>- The Individual in Health &amp; Illness</li> <li>- Health Promotion</li> <li>- Professional &amp; Personal Development</li> <li>- Healthcare systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nursing &amp; Professional Development</li> <li>- Person-Centred Care</li> <li>- Health Sciences &amp; Applied Nursing Principles</li> <li>- Nursing, Sociology, Law &amp; Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional Development in Psychiatric Nursing</li> <li>- Person-Centred Psychiatric Nursing</li> <li>- Health Science &amp; Applied Principles in Psychiatric Nursing</li> <li>- Social Science &amp; Applied Principles in Psychiatric Nursing</li> </ul>

### ***1.2 Integrated Children's and General Nursing***

In the 1980's, there were two routes of undergraduate education leading to registration as a sick children's nurse. This was via a three-year certificate course or a four-year integrated certificate course leading to registration as both a sick children's and general nurse. The three-year children's nursing certificate course was discontinued in October 1995. From 1996, the only route to registration as a registered sick children's nurse was through an eighteen-month post-registration education programme. In 2006 an integrated children's and general nursing four and a half year undergraduate honours degree programme was introduced leading to registration as a children's nurse and a general nurse. A post-registration children's education programme of 12-months duration is available for nurses who have registered in one of the three divisions - Registered Nurse Intellectual Disability (RNID), Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) or Registered General Nurse (RGN).

A minimum number of hours/weeks in theoretical and clinical instruction must be successfully completed before applying to register with An Bord Altranais. For most of the programme the student receives a combination of theoretical and clinical instruction and this period generally includes normal third-level college holidays. During this period the student is not a paid employee of the health service. The usual entitlements/conditions regarding a means-tested third-level grant applies to student nurses.

Students are exposed to a variety of clinical placements during their education programme for example clinical placements in general hospitals, in community, in children's services etc. The first clinical placement occurs early in the programme, usually within three months of commencement. In the final fourth year of the education programme a continual 36 week rostered clinical placement (internship) takes place. During this period the student is a paid employee of the health service. Table 3 outlines An Bord Altranais requirements (ABA 2005a, 2011).

**Table 3 An Bord Altranais Requirements: Children's & General Integrated Registration Programme**

Aspect	
Theoretical Instruction (to include self-directed study, exams)	70 weeks
Clinical Instruction (supernumerary clinical placement)	54 weeks
Internship (inclusive of annual leave)	36 weeks
Other/Discretionary Component (at least half should comprise supernumerary clinical placement)	10 weeks
<i>Total Minimum</i>	170 weeks

An Bord Altranais outlines the list of subjects in the syllabus/indicative content for the integrated children's and general nursing registration education programme. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It provides an indication of the programme content in terms of the range of topics and gives no indication of the weighting of each topic in the curriculum. Curriculum planners are expected to demonstrate that the programme is relevant and responsive with the most recent policy and legislative change. Table 4 outlines the syllabus/indicative content headings (ABA 2005a.) The *Requirements and Standards for Nurse Registration Education Programmes* (ABA 2005a) provides more detailed information.

**Table 4 An Bord Altranais Requirements: Syllabus/ Indicative Content Integrated Children's and General Nursing Programme**

- Nursing
- Health Science
- Behavioural & Social Sciences
- The Individual in Health & Illness
- Health Promotion
- Communication & Interpersonal Skills
- Professional & Personal Development
- Health Care Systems
- Organisation & Management of Care

### **1.3 Midwifery**

Midwifery registration education has historically been delivered at post-registration level where an applicant for midwifery education must first be registered as a general nurse with An Bord Altranais. A pilot three-year direct entry programme students was completed in 2003. Subsequently an undergraduate four-year honours degree programme was introduced leading to registration as a midwife in 2006. A post-registration midwifery education programme of 12-months duration is available for nurses who have registered in one of the three divisions - Registered Nurse Intellectual Disability (RNID), Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) or Registered General Nurse (RGN).

A minimum number of hours/weeks in theoretical and clinical instruction must be successfully completed before applying to register with An Bord Altranais. For most of the programme the student receives a combination of theoretical and clinical instruction and this period generally includes normal third-level college holidays. During this period the student is not a paid employee of the health service. The usual entitlements/conditions regarding a means-tested third-level grant applies to student midwives.

Students are exposed to a variety of clinical placements during their education programme for example in clinical placements in antenatal clinics, labour ward, in community, etc. The first clinical placement occurs early in the programme, usually within three months of commencement. In the final fourth year of the education programme a continual 36 week rostered clinical placement (internship) takes place in areas of midwifery practice. During this period the student is a paid employee of the health service. Table 5 outlines An Bord Altranais requirements (ABA 2005b, 2011).

**Table 5 An Bord Altranais Requirements: Midwife Registration Programme**

Aspect	
Theoretical Instruction (to include self-directed study, exams)	58 weeks
Clinical Instruction (supernumerary clinical placement)	40 weeks
Internship (inclusive of annual leave)	36 weeks
Other/Discretionary Component (at least half should comprise supernumerary clinical placement)	10 weeks
<i>Total Minimum</i>	144 weeks

An Bord Altranais outlines the list of subjects in the syllabus/indicative content midwifery education programme. It is not intended as an exhaustive list. It provides an indication of the programme content in terms of the range of topics and gives no indication of the weighting of each topic in the curriculum. Curriculum planners are expected to demonstrate that the programme is relevant and responsive with the most recent policy and legislative change. Table 6 outlines the syllabus/indicative content headings (ABA 2005b). ) The *Requirements and Standards for Midwife Registration Education Programmes* (ABA 2005b) provides more detailed information.

**Table 6 An Bord Altranais Requirements: Syllabus/ Indicative Content Midwifery Programme**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge base for midwifery practice (Biological sciences – general &amp; specific, psychology, pharmacology)</li> <li>- Non-pharmacological approaches to symptom relief</li> <li>- Research</li> <li>- Midwifery Practice – Knowledge &amp; Skills</li> <li>- Health Promotion</li> <li>- Sociology &amp; midwifery practice</li> <li>- Communication &amp; interpersonal skills</li> <li>- The provision of maternal &amp; social care services in Ireland</li> <li>- Professional, personal, ethical &amp; legal issues.</li> </ul>
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## 2. Programme Delivery

Thirteen higher education institutes (HEIs) deliver 44 undergraduate degree programmes in partnership with 57 main healthcare agencies. This accounts for 1570 places in nursing and midwifery at pre-registration level (An Bord Altranais 2011). The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) has placed the nursing and midwifery undergraduate programmes at Level 8, Honours Bachelor Degree with Bachelor of Science (BSc) as the academic award. Five programmes are delivered at undergraduate degree level (Table 7).

**Table 7 Summary of Nursing and Midwifery Undergraduate Degree Programmes**

<b>Programme Title</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Registration</b>	<b>Number of Programmes</b>	<b>Number of Places</b>	<b>Number of HEIs</b>	<b>Number of Healthcare Agencies</b>
Children's and General Nursing	4.5	RCN, RGN	4	100	4	4
General Nursing	4	RGN	14	860	13	22
Intellectual Disability Nursing	4	RNID	8	180	8	10
Midwifery	4	RM	6	140	6	7
Psychiatric Nursing	4	RPN	12	290	12	14

### **3. Programme Outcomes**

#### **3.1 Nursing**

An Bord Altranais outlines five Domains of Competence which represent the level the student must reach on completion of the education programme for entry to the relevant Nursing Register (*General, Psychiatric, Intellectual Disability and Childrens*) held by An Bord Altranais. The aim is to ensure that students acquire the skills of critical analysis, problem-solving, decision-making, reflective skills and abilities essential to the art and science of nursing. Safe and effective practice requires a sound underpinning of theoretical knowledge that informs practice and is in turn informed by that practice. Within complex and changing healthcare environments it is essential that practice is informed by the best available evidence.

The competencies encompass five domains:

1. Professional / ethical practice
2. Holistic approaches to care and the integration of knowledge
3. Interpersonal relationships
4. Organisational and management of care
5. Personal and professional development.

#### **3.2 Midwifery**

An Bord Altranais outlines five Domains of Competence which represent the level the midwifery student must reach on completion of the education programme for entry to the Midwives Division of the Register maintained by An Bord Altranais. The aim is to ensure that students acquire the skills of critical analysis, problem-solving, decision-making and reflective skills and abilities essential to the art and science of midwifery. Safe and effective midwifery practice requires a sound underpinning of theoretical knowledge that informs practice and is, in turn, informed by that practice. Within complex and changing healthcare environments, it is essential that practice is based on the best available evidence.

The competencies encompass five domains:

1. Professional/ethical midwifery practice.
2. Holistic midwifery care.
3. Interpersonal relationships.
4. Organisation and co-ordination of midwifery care.
5. Personal and professional development.

## **References**

An Bord Altranais (2005a) *Requirements and Standards for Nurse Registration Education Programmes*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. An Bord Altranais, Dublin.

An Bord Altranais (2005b) *Requirements and Standards for Midwifery Registration Education Programmes*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. An Bord Altranais, Dublin.

An Bord Altranais (2011) *A career for you – Pre-registration honours degree programmes 2011*. An Bord Altranai, Dublin.