Nursing and Midwifery: Careers with a Difference

**Opening**

1. Nursing is a unique profession.
2. It offers a special personal human experience.
3. People meet and engage with nurses / midwives right through their lifespan.
4. The profession is involved in the lives of real people at the very defining points of human existence - birth – death and a multitude of events in between.
5. All nurses and midwives have four core values, to promote health, to prevent ill health, to treat and relieve ill health when it occurs and to comfort and console where ill health is not treatable.

**What types of disciplines does the profession have?**

- General / Adult,
- Psychiatric,
- Intellectual Disability
- Sick Children’s
- Midwifery

**What attributes are expected of the aspiring nurse /midwife?**

- Attitude
- Knowledge
- Skills

**What do I mean by attitude? What kind of person should I be?**

- You must like people; they are what the job is about.
- You should be able to demonstrate caring; not just towards close associates but also demonstrate it towards the Stranger.
- Non Judgemental non prejudicial. (treat with equity regardless of Race, Creed, Sexual orientation, Gender etc)
- You should be capable of showing Unconditional Positive Regard for the stranger – because as a nurse/ midwife you will engage with people whose personal, ethical or social background or beliefs may be at odds with your own but you may not treat them any differently.
- People disclose and reveal to nurses / midwives personal intimate details which occasionally might be at odds with the nurses / midwives personal values. You must remember never to impose your personal values and still be able to deliver Unconditional Positive Regard.
How can I acquire the knowledge?

- By joining one of the nursing programmes at one of 13 HEI’s that have a nursing school.
- They are located all over Ireland, from Cork to Letterkenny, Dundalk to Galway as well as three in Dublin, Trinity, DCU and UCD.
- You will attend classroom based lectures and do course work.
- You will complete Assignments as other science students have to do.
- There will be library research.
- You will sit examinations.
- Subjects you can expect to study include nursing & midwifery topics, the biological and social sciences, sociology, psychology and ethics.

Skills

- Your HEI will place in appropriate work settings in hospitals and health services.
- You will get About 80 weeks Practical Work Experience in a wide variety of clinical settings ideal for learning for your chosen discipline.
- You will complete a Work book or Portfolio of Skills & Competencies relevant to your chosen discipline.
- You will have Preceptor Nurses to supervise you and teach you the practical arts of nursing & midwifery.
- You will be supervised by clinical placement coordinators who will provide support and guidance.

How do I get on the course as a school leaver?

Apply through the CAO

You will need the minimum requirements. Some are applicable for all HEI’s while there are slight variations between HEI’s for others.

Mandatory for All HEI’s

- 6 Subjects two must be at higher level
- Laboratory Science subject, at least one of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Physics & Chemistry Combined or Agricultural Science.
- Maths not foundation level
- Languages Irish or English

Specific to Certain HEI’s

- Some variation in the language requirement. Confirm with your Chosen HEI
- TCD require three subjects at higher level

POINTS

- As with all CAO courses defined by supply and demand
At the conclusion of four years commitment to the course what are my opportunities?

- There are Nurses of all Disciplines & Midwives employed in all parts of Ireland. They are to be found in hospital and community settings, in both rural and urban locations. In fact in virtually every parish of the country.
- That employment opportunity is replicated worldwide.
- 45% of HSE employees are nurses.
- Some nurses take the glamorous option visiting Australia, the Middle East or USA.
- Others want to give something back and volunteer for humanitarian work with Goal, Trocaire, Concern or Oxfam.
- Whatever they do most come home to Ireland enriched by the experience and pass on the learning of their experiences.

Career Pathways

- Management; administering the provision of nursing / midwifery at several different levels of responsibility. Right up to Director of Nursing / Midwifery.
- Education / Research; teaching new and existing nurses. Learning in nursing and midwifery is a lifetime experience. It really only begins on Graduation Day.
- Specialist; in the newer roles which have developed in particular areas expanding the role of nurses and midwives. Clinical Nurse Specialist, Clinical Midwife Specialist, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Advanced Midwife Practitioner.

In conclusion people often ask nurses how they can get job satisfaction when working with people who are suffering and dying.

Most of the time the people we care for recover and go back to their lives but when we have to deal with the more challenging issues we get our satisfaction from knowing that the journey the person has to take has been that bit better, that bit more comfortable from our input.

John G Kelly; RPN (Hons) RGN Dip Nursing

September 2014