L.N. 105 of 1999

EDUCATION ACT
(CAP. 327)

Diploma in Nursing and Diploma in Midwifery Course Regulations, 1999

IN exercise of the powers conferred upon him by sections 30 (5) and 31 (6) of the Education Act (Cap. 327), the Chancellor of the University of Malta has promulgated the following regulations made by the Senate of the University of Malta by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by sections 31 and 35 of the said Act:

Citation and interpretation

1. (1) These regulations may be cited as the Diploma in Nursing and Diploma in Midwifery Course Regulations, 1999.

(2) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

"the Board" means the Board of the Institute of Health Care;

"the Course" means the Course leading to the Diploma in Nursing or to the Diploma in Midwifery; and

"the Institute" means the Institute of Health Care of the University of Malta.

Applicability

2. These regulations shall apply to courses starting in October 1994 or later.

Eligibility for Diploma

3. To be eligible for the award of the Diploma in Nursing or the Diploma in Midwifery, students must:

(a) have been registered in the Institute for a minimum period of three years six months, of which at least two shall be as regular students of the University of Malta; or have been registered as regular students in the Institute for a minimum period of two years, provided that they are also registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board as Registered Nurses/Midwives;

(b) have completed a course of studies and have been successful in the final comprehensive examination in accordance with these regulations;

(c) be in possession of a statement of good conduct as befits a person entitled to use the title 'Nurse' or 'Midwife', which statement must be signed by the Head of Nursing/Midwifery Studies; and

(d) have satisfied all other requirements laid down in these regulations and in any other relevant statutes, regulations and bye-laws of the University.

Admission Requirements

4. (1) Candidates may be registered as students in the Course if they:

(a) are aged not less than 17 years within three calendar months from the date on which the Course commences;

(b) satisfy the requirements as probationary or regular students in terms of the Admission Regulations of the University, and, if they are probationary students, satisfy also the entry requirements specified in regulation 5; and

(c) satisfy the Institute that they have the necessary aptitude for nursing or midwifery. The Institute may require candidates to attend an interview/assessment for this purpose.

(2) Candidates must possess a medical certificate as to their suitability for undertaking Nursing/Midwifery duties.

(3) In addition to satisfying the requirements indicated in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this regulation, overseas candidates must demonstrate proficiency in both written and oral English.

(4) Candidates with a Registered Nursing or Midwifery qualification may be registered directly into the Diploma component of the Course.

Entry Requirements for Probationary Students

5. (1) In order to be admitted as probationary students in the Course, candidates shall be in possession of one of the following:

(a) six passes at Ordinary Level, including passes in Maltese, English Language, Mathematics and a science subject; or

(b) a certificate from the Pre-Vocational School (Health Studies) with grade C or better in six subjects, including Maltese, English Language, Mathematics and a science subject; or

(c) the Certificate in Nursing Practice awarded by the Institute; or

(d) the Certificate of Enrolled Nurse awarded by the Department of Health.

Duration of the Course

6. (1) (a) The Course shall extend over a period of three years six months. Students may not take the final comprehensive examination earlier

than three years six months or later than four years six months from the date of the commencement of the Course, except with the permission of the Board.

(b) Students admitted under paragraph (4) of regulation 4 may not take the final comprehensive examination earlier than two years or later than three years from the date of the commencement of the Course, except with the permission of the Board.

(2) The Foundation Programme in Nursing and Midwifery comprises the first eighteen months of the Course.

(3) Students who successfully complete the Foundation Programme shall be entitled to be registered as regular students of the University.

(4) Following successful completion of the Foundation Programme students shall continue their studies in either Nursing or Midwifery for a further two years.

Nursing or Midwifery Options

7. (1) Students shall choose to study either Nursing or Midwifery at the commencement of the Course. Students choosing to study Midwifery must obtain grade C in the module on "Maternal Health and Care of the Newborn" and pass the clinical assessment of that module.

(2) Students shall not be allowed to change from Nursing to Midwifery or *vice versa* after the second semester of the Foundation Programme without the written recommendation of the Head of Nursing/Midwifery Studies to the Board, which may grant permission. Students shall be required to complete the relevant modules following such a change.

(3) Students in the Nursing diploma course may choose Psychiatric Nursing as their principal area of study at the commencement of the Diploma Course.

Foundation Programme

8. (1) During the Foundation Programme students shall be prepared in the fundamental knowledge, skills and attitudes inherent in the practice of Nursing or Midwifery. Students shall also be prepared for their subsequent professional and academic development.

(2) The Course shall consist of modules, each of which shall have a theoretical and clinical component, and shall concentrate on an area of Nursing/Midwifery practice.

(3) Subjects covered within each module are interrelated and shall therefore be assessed as one unit of learning.

(4) On completion of a module, students shall be awarded a grade indicating the standard attained by them in the theoretical assessments. The grades shall be as follows:

A Work of exceptional quality
B Work of above average quality
C Work of average quality
D Work of below average quality
F Fail.

(5) Students are allowed to re-sit the appropriate assessments once if they fail a module. If successful in the re-sit, the maximum grade that may be awarded shall be grade D.

(6) Students shall be assessed in both theory and practice of Nursing or Midwifery by continuous assessment.

(7) Clinical practice shall be assessed by nursing/midwifery teachers or clinical nurses/midwives from relevant areas of practice.

9. (1) To complete the Foundation Programme successfully and continue the Course, students shall obtain the following:

(a) a pass grade in the theoretical assessments with an average grade C;

(b) a pass grade in all the clinical assessments; and

(c) a pass in the Foundation Programme Comprehensive Examination.

(2) Students who do not satisfy the requirements stipulated in paragraph (1) of this regulation shall be allowed to re-join the Foundation Programme, provided that the Board may exempt them from up to one-third of the study-units which they have completed successfully.

(3) Students who fail the Foundation Programme Comprehensive Examination shall be required to re-sit the examination once only, normally within three months of completing the Foundation Programme.

(4) Students who successfully complete the Foundation Programme shall be awarded a Certificate in Foundation Studies (Nursing and Midwifery).

Diploma Programme

10. (1) Following the Foundation Programme there shall be a further two years of study towards the award of the Diploma in Nursing or the Diploma in Midwifery according to the course of studies followed.

(2) The Diploma Programme shall consist of two elements:

(a) Professional Studies - study-units at diploma level concerned with either General or Psychiatric Nursing or Midwifery theory and practice; and

(b) Diploma Studies - study-units of behavioural and biomedical sciences and professional knowledge applicable to both General or Psychiatric Nursing and Midwifery students.

Diploma in Nursing

Professional Studies

11. (1) Professional studies are set out in modules of learning.

(2) Each module shall be considered a discrete study-unit incorporating a theoretical and clinical component.

(3) The Head of Nursing/Midwifery Studies shall decide the sequence of modules students may take.

Theoretical Component

12. (1) Each nursing module shall be assigned a specific number of theoretical credits.

(2) Twenty-seven theoretical credits shall be assigned to professional nursing studies.

(3) Subjects covered within each module are interrelated and shall therefore be assessed as one unit of learning.

(4) On completion of a module students shall be awarded a grade indicating the standard attained by them in the theoretical assessments. The grades shall be as follows:

A Work of exceptional quality
B Work of above average quality
C Work of average quality
D Work of below average quality
F Fail.

(5) Students shall be allowed to re-take the appropriate assessments once if they fail a module. If successful in the re-assessment, the maximum grade

that may be awarded is grade D. If unsuccessful, students shall be entitled to repeat the whole module on only one occasion at the end of the Course. Students who fail the module at the second attempt shall not be allowed to continue the Course, except in special circumstances and with the permission of the Board. Only one module may be repeated.

(6) Students who fail to obtain a pass grade in two modules shall not be allowed to continue the Course, except in special circumstances and with the permission of the Board.

Clinical Component

13. (1) The clinical component of the Diploma Course shall consist of study-units of clinical practice to which not less than twenty-eight clinical nursing credits shall be assigned.

(2) Students shall be required to undergo clinical placements in areas specified by the Board in the sequence specified by it.

(3) Successful completion of a clinical study-unit shall be determined by intermittent continuous assessment.

(4) Students who fail a clinical module shall be entitled to repeat the module once at the end of the Course.

(5) Students who fail more than one clinical module in any one year shall not be allowed to continue the Course or shall not be eligible to sit for the final comprehensive examination, except in special circumstances and with the permission of the Board.

Professional Competence

14. Students shall not be allowed to take the final comprehensive examination unless they have achieved the competence of a Registered Nurse, that is to:

(a) demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the health and sickness requirements of individuals and of groups in a particular area of practice;

(b) recognise common factors which contribute to, and those which adversely affect physical, mental and social well-being of patients or clients and take appropriate action;

(c) identify the social and health implications of physical and mental handicap or disease, pregnancy and child-bearing, for the individual, his friends, family and community;

(d) demonstrate knowledge of the normal development of the foetus, the infant, the child, the adolescent and the young, middle-aged and elderly adult;

(e) demonstrate an appreciation of research and use relevant literature and research as an aid to practice;

(f) demonstrate professional accountability and commitment to continuing education and development;

(g) demonstrate an awareness of social and political factors which relate to health care;

(h) demonstrate knowledge and understanding to meet the requirements of legislation which is relevant to practice;

(i) recognise and uphold the personal and confidential rights of patients and clients;

(j) develop helpful caring relationships with patients, clients and their families or friends; initiate, continue and complete therapeutic relationships with patients using appropriate inter-personal and communication skills;

(k) identify the health-related learning needs of patients, clients, family or friends and participate in health promotion/education;

(l) demonstrate an awareness of the roles of individual members of the team who provide aspects of patient/client care, function efficiently in a team and assist in a multi-disciplinary approach where appropriate;

(m) assign appropriate work to helpers and provide supervision and monitoring of assigned work;

(n) identify physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of the patient or client; be aware of and value the concept of individualised care, devise a plan of care, contribute to its implementation and evaluation by demonstrating an appreciation of the principles of a problem solving approach and practice;

(o) enable patients or clients as appropriate to progress from varying degrees of dependence to maximum independence, or to a peaceful death.

Diploma in Midwifery

Professional Studies

15. (1) Professional studies are set out in themes which shall be taken concurrently.

(2) Each of the themes shall have a theoretical and clinical component.

(3) The Head of Nursing/Midwifery Studies shall decide the sequence of themes students may take.

Theoretical Component

16. (1) Each theme shall have a number of study-units, each of which shall be assigned a specific number of credits.

(2) Twenty-seven theoretical credits shall be assigned to professional midwifery studies.

(3) On completion of a study-unit students shall be awarded a grade indicating the standard attained by them in the theoretical assessments. The grades shall be as follows:

A Work of exceptional quality
B Work of above average quality
C Work of average quality
D Work of below average quality
F Fail.

(4) Students shall be allowed to re-sit the assessments/test once only if they fail a study-unit. If successful in the re-sit, the maximum grade that may be awarded shall be grade D. If unsuccessful, students shall be required to repeat the whole study-unit and on successful completion shall be eligible to grade D.

(5) Students who in any year fail to obtain 80% or more of the credits assigned shall not be allowed to continue the Course or to take the final comprehensive examination, except in special circumstances and with the permission of the Board.

Clinical Component

17. (1) The clinical component of the Diploma Course shall consist of clinical placements for which not less than twenty-eight credits shall be assigned.

(2) Clinical placements shall be specified by the Head of Nursing/Midwifery Studies. They shall allow flexibility in instances when the learning needs of the students shall be better served.

(3) Students shall be required to keep a record of clinical practice which must be signed by their supervisor.

(4) Successful completion of a clinical study-unit shall be determined by continuous assessment.

(5) Students who fail to reach an overall pass grade in clinical practice at the end of each diploma year shall be allowed to complete the Course or to take the final comprehensive examination only in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the Board.

Professional Competence

18. Students shall not be allowed to take the final comprehensive examination unless they have achieved the competence of a Registered Midwife, that is to:

(a) advise on the promotion of health;

(b) recognise the physical, emotional and social situations which may influence the health and well-being of the mother and baby;

(c) assess, plan and implement care within the sphere of practice of a midwife to meet the physical, emotional, educational and social needs of the mother, baby and family;

(d) take action on their own responsibility in initiating the action of other disciplines and seeking assistance when required;

(e) interpret and undertake care prescribed by a registered medical practitioner;

(f) demonstrate effective communication with mothers, relatives, colleagues and other disciplines;

(g) demonstrate an awareness of a research based practice;

(h) work in a multi-disciplinary team with an understanding of the role of all members; and

(i) assign appropriate work to helpers and provide supervision and monitoring of assigned work.

Diploma Studies (Nursing and Midwifery Options)

Diploma Studies

19. (1) Diploma Studies shall comprise biomedical and behavioural sciences and professional studies applicable to both nursing and midwifery students.

(2) Diploma Studies shall link in with the Professional Studies and sessions shared with other students where appropriate. One day per week shall be set aside for this purpose.

(3) Diploma Studies shall consist of study-units to which thirty-three credits shall be assigned.

(4) The Board shall decide which study-units students may take, and in which sequence, in order to complete the Course.

(5) On completion of a study-unit students shall be awarded a grade indicating the standard attained by them in the study-unit assessments. Grades shall be as follows:

A Work of exceptional quality
B Work of above average quality
C Work of average quality
D Work of below average quality
F Fail.

(6) Students shall be allowed to re-take an assessment once only if they fail a study-unit. If successful in the re-sit, the maximum grade that may be

awarded shall be grade D. If unsuccessful, students shall be required to repeat the whole study-unit and on successful completion shall be eligible to grade D.

(7) Students who in any one year fail to obtain 80% of the total number of credits shall not be allowed to continue the Course or to take the final comprehensive examination, except in special circumstances and with the permission of the Board.

Completion of the Course

20. (1) To complete the Course, students admitted under sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph (1) of regulation 4 must obtain the following:

(a) a pass at grade C or better in the Foundation Programme;
(b) 27 Professional credits (Nursing or Midwifery);
(c) 33 Diploma credits;
(d) 28 clinical Nursing credits or 28 clinical Midwifery credits; and
(e) other theoretical or clinical credits as from time to time required to comply with the European Community Directives on Nursing and Midwifery Education.

(2) To complete the Course, students admitted under paragraph (4) of regulation 4 must obtain the following:

(a) 40 Professional/Diploma credits as directed by the Board; and

(b) 12 clinical Nursing or 12 clinical Midwifery credits as directed by the Board.

(3) The Board may exempt students from the requirement of obtaining a credit certificate for a particular study-unit if they have obtained from the University, or an institution recognized by the Senate for the purpose, a qualification the study for which is, in the opinion of the Board, equivalent in content and standard to that required for the credit certificate concerned.

Students may only be exempted from up to one-fifth of the theoretical component.

Final Comprehensive Examination

21. (1) Students shall be required to sit for the final comprehensive examination after obtaining the requirements laid down in regulation 20.

(2) At the end of the Course students shall be required to take the final comprehensive examination consisting of two comprehensive papers (in the same session) relevant to their course of studies and present a project as follows:

(a) Paper I: Theory and Practice of General or Psychiatric Nursing or Midwifery, as the case may require;

(b) Paper II: Professional Development and Management related to General or Psychiatric Nursing or Midwifery, as the case may require; and

(c) Special Project related to General or Psychiatric Nursing or Midwifery, as the case may require.

(3) Students may also be required to take an oral examination at which they shall be expected to discuss aspects of the Special Project.

(4) The final comprehensive examination shall be set by the Board and shall normally take place during the last week of the Course.

(5) The overall evaluation of students for the Diploma in Nursing or Diploma in Midwifery shall take into account their performance in the final comprehensive examination as well as the credit certificates and grades obtained during the Course.

(6) Students who fail in only one paper shall be allowed a re-sit in that paper. Students who fail in more than one paper shall be required to re-sit the whole final comprehensive examination at a time to be established by the Board.

(7) Students shall only be allowed three attempts at the final comprehensive examination.

Results

22. (1) The names of students who qualify for the award of the Diploma in Nursing or the Diploma in Midwifery shall be published in a list in alphabetical order in the following three categories:

Distinction
Credit
Pass.

(2) Students who qualify for the award of either Diploma following a re-sit of part or all of the final comprehensive examination shall only be eligible for the category Pass.