



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'
Baile Átha Cliath 8

Office of the National Director of Human Resources
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All Queries to:
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HSE HR Circular 004/2011

15th August, 2011.

**To: Each Member of Management Team, HSE;
Each CEO / Secretary / Manager, Voluntary Hospital / Agency;
Each Regional Director of Operations, HSE;
Each Regional Assistant National Director of HR, HSE;**

**Re: Sponsorship of Post Registration Student Children's Nurses and Student
Midwives Education Initiatives.**

This Circular applies to the following nursing / midwifery education initiatives and the conditions under which they will be sponsored by the HSE.

Post Registration Student Children's Nurses

Recognised children's nursing education Hospitals / NMPDU's are authorised to pay fees for all students studying for the post-registration Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing.

Post Registration Student Midwives

Recognised midwifery education Hospitals / NMPDU's are authorised to pay course fees for all students studying for the post-registration Higher Diploma in Midwifery.

These initiatives are subject to the conditions set out below.

Conditions

Eligibility to apply: Candidates must be registered with or entitled to be registered with An Bord Altranais. Courses undertaken must be relevant to the nurse's / midwife's area of practice and meet patient and service needs with due regard to cost and the educational needs of the employing organisation as a whole. Applicants requiring a work visa / authorisation for employment in the State must provide evidence that their work visa/authorisation allows them to fulfil their commitment required under the Circular.

Funding: Course funding will only be provided for courses run in the State and at the fee applicable to an EU / EEA citizen. Any amount in excess of the fee applicable to an EU / EEA citizen will not be funded under the terms of this Circular. No funding will be provided for repeat module(s), units of study or examination fees. Such fees must be borne by the nurse or midwife concerned.

Satisfactory Employment Record: In order to qualify for sponsorship, the Director of the Nursing / Midwifery must be satisfied that the applicant has a satisfactory service record.

Salary/Incremental Credit: Each participant on these programmes will retain their current point on the staff nurse salary scale on entry into the programmes (based on verified nursing service). Participants will retain their incremental credit date and will be granted incremental credit (if applicable) during these programmes.

Service Commitment: Successful applicants for sponsorship will be required to give a written undertaking to their sponsoring public health service agency that they will, following successful completion of the programme, work for their sponsoring agency for a minimum period of twelve months or for the length of the academic course undertaken, whichever is longer (see paragraph 8 below in relation to service commitment required of part-time employees). Students sponsored under this education initiative do not have an automatic entitlement to appointment as a Children's Nurse / Midwife upon successful completion of the programme.

The requirement to honour the service commitment may be waived if the sponsoring agency is not in a position to recruit suitably qualified children's nurses / midwives.

Until such time as a sponsored employee has fulfilled their service commitment they will not be approved for further sponsorship under any other nursing/midwifery education initiative. However this restriction will not apply where the requirement to honour the service commitment has been waived by the sponsoring agency. In exceptional circumstances, all or a portion of the service commitment may, with the prior agreement of the sponsoring public health service agency concerned, be given in the employment of an alternative Irish public health service agency.

A sponsored employee who fails to honour their contractual undertaking to work as a nurse / midwife for their sponsoring agency (or agreed Irish alternative public health service agency) for the period of the service commitment immediately following successful completion of the programme shall be required to repay to that sponsoring agency their fees and in the case of fulltime courses the value of the salary received by them during the theory element of the programme. Any repayment due will be adjusted on a pro rata basis for any period of service commitment honoured.

Additional Costs: All other and additional costs, charges and expenses, including travel, text books and library charges incurred by the student undertaking the programme will be discharged by the student at their own expense.

Substantive Post: A public health service employee who is sponsored in accordance with the terms of this Circular will retain the permanent status of their existing substantive post for the duration of the academic study programme and if applicable for the duration of the service commitment.

Part-time Employees: Part-time employees who are awarded sponsorship for a full time course leading to an additional registration with An Bord Altranais will be required to become full-time employees for the duration of the programme. Following successful completion of the programme, they may, with the prior agreement of their Director of Nursing / Midwifery, revert to working part-time (provided the part-time work is not less than half-time)

Annual Leave: In the case of fulltime courses sponsored employees shall retain their annual leave entitlements throughout the period of the programme. However, annual leave may only be taken outside of academic semesters and in accordance with service need.

Student Obligations: The student will attend in full the programme with proper diligence and will undergo such examination and tests as may be prescribed in or required by the programme curriculum with a view to successfully completing the programme.

Governance: The student will be required to provide their sponsoring agency with a copy of their examination results at the end each academic term.

Exceptions: A student absenting themselves, and/or failing to complete the programme due to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, may be facilitated at the discretion of the sponsoring agency and higher education institute to complete the course and examinations in such manner as may be specified.

Repayment of Fees and salary (Fulltime programmes): When an employee is required to repeat elements of the programme they must remain in the employment of their sponsoring agency during the repeat period.

If they cease employment or do not complete the programme they will be required to repay both course registration and tuition fees and the portion of the salary received by them during the theory element of the programme.

In exceptional circumstances all the above repayments may be waived or deferred at the discretion of the Sponsoring Health Service Agency. Such repayments shall be made to the public health service sponsoring agency where they were employed.

Review of Initiatives: These initiatives will be kept under annual review.

Definition: A Sponsoring Health Service Agency is a statutory or voluntary agency in the public health service in which the student is working when they commence the sponsorship. This includes any of the following:

- an acute/non-acute hospital;
- a community care area;
- a long-term care facility;
- a mental health service;
- an intellectual disability service.

Yours sincerely,



Séan McGrath,
National Director of Human Resources.