



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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

Office of the National Director of Human Resources  
Health Service Executive  
Dr. Steevens' Hospital  
Dublin 8

**HSE HR Circular 020/2014**

**3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014**

To: **Each Member of Leadership Team, HSE**  
**Each Assistant National Director of HR, HSE**  
**Each Employee Relations Manager, HSE**  
**Each CEO/HR Manager directly funded Voluntary Hospital / Agency**

**Re: Sponsorship of Nursing/Midwifery Education Initiatives**

This circular supersedes *Circular 020/2009 - Sponsorship of Nursing/Midwifery Third Level Education Initiatives*.

**In Scope:**

This circular applies to the sponsorship of nurses and midwives to undertake programmes of education and the conditions under which they will be sponsored by the HSE. Courses undertaken must be relevant to the nurse's/midwife's area of practice and/ or meet patient or organisational needs with due regard to available financial resource and the educational needs of the employing organisation as a whole.

For the purposes of this circular an employing organisation is a statutory or voluntary agency in the public health service in which the nurse/midwife is working when they commence the sponsorship. This includes but is not limited to the following:

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

**Out of Scope:**

These funding initiatives are not available to nursing/midwifery agency staff or nurses/midwives employed in private hospitals, private nursing homes, self-employed community midwives or nurses/midwives working in general practitioner practices.



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All queries to be addressed to:  
The Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services,  
Dr Steevens' Hospital,  
Dublin 8.  
Tel. 01 6352241 Email: [john.scott@hse.ie](mailto:john.scott@hse.ie)

## **A. Post Registration/Graduate Nursing/Midwifery Education Initiatives**

Under this initiative a registered nurse or midwife undertaking a Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) / An Bord Altranais (ABA) approved Post Graduate / Certificate / Diploma / Higher Diploma / education initiative / module in specialist areas of clinical nursing/midwifery practice, or other relevant course will be entitled to apply to have their fees paid *provided the conditions of this initiative detailed below are fulfilled*. A sponsorship agreement and or learning contract setting out the arrangements for financial support and study leave or external placement where required must be completed at service/organisation level.

## **B. Nurse and Midwife Medicinal Product Prescribing Initiative**

Under this initiative a nurse or midwife, employed in the voluntary and statutory services of the Health Service Executive, undertaking a post-registration education programme leading to registration as a Registered Nurse Prescriber with NMBI will be entitled to have their fees paid in full *provided the conditions of this initiative are fulfilled* (see below) in addition to the criteria set out in the *Nurse and Midwife Medicinal Product Prescribing Site Declaration Form*. A sponsorship agreement setting out the arrangements for study leave and financial support must be completed at service/organisation level.

**The above initiatives are subject to the additional conditions set out below.**

### **Conditions**

#### **1. Eligibility**

Applicants must be registered with NMBI and employed in the public health service on a permanent or temporary basis (provided the term of their contract allows them fulfil their service commitment see section 3 below), whether working full-time or part-time to be eligible to apply for funding. Applicants requiring a work visa/authorisation for employment in the State must provide evidence that their work visa /authorisation allow them to fulfil their commitment required under the circular.

Applicants must not have already received funding for a specialist course within the last thirty six months (or less if specifically required by service need).

#### **2. Satisfactory Employment Record**

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

#### **3. Service Commitment/**

Successful applicants for sponsorship will be required to give a written undertaking to their employing public health service agency that they will following successful completion of the programme, work for their employing agency for a minimum period of twelve months or for the length of the academic course undertaken, whichever is longer.

#### **4. 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. In exceptional circumstances where the required education is not available in the state funding may be sanctioned for courses provided outside the state.

No funding will be provided for the repeat of module(s), units of study or examination(s). All associated costs must be borne by the nurse or midwife concerned.

#### **5. Repayment of Fees and salary**

Where an employee is required to repeat elements of a programme they must remain in the employ of their current agency during the repeat period. If they cease employment or do not complete the programme they will have their sponsorship terminated and will be required to repay fees. Such repayments shall be made to the public health service agency where they were employed.

In exceptional circumstances all the above repayments may be waived or deferred at the discretion of the employing Health Service Agency.

#### **6. Additional Costs**

All other and additional costs, charges and expenses, including travel, text books and library charges incurred by the nurse/midwife undertaking the programme will be discharged by the nurse/midwife at their own expense.

#### **7. Employing Agency Responsibilities**

The employing agency has responsibility for ensuring the sponsored employee's compliance with their sponsorship agreement/learning contract and attendant service commitment. 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.

In exceptional circumstances, all or a portion of the service commitment may, with the prior agreement of the employing 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 employing 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 employing agency their fees. Any repayment due will be adjusted on a pro rata basis for any period of service commitment honoured. The employing agency will seek repayment based on the parameters outlined above.

## 8. Nurse/Midwife Obligations

The Nurse/Midwife 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.

## 9. Governance

The Nurse/Midwife will be required to provide their employing agency with evidence of their successful completion of the programme.

## 10. Exceptions

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

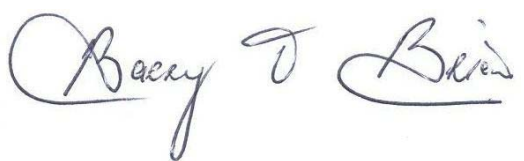
## 11. Review of Initiatives

These initiatives will be kept under periodic review.

### Queries

Any queries in relation to this circular should be addressed to The Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services, Dr Steevens' Hospital, Dublin 8. Tel. 01 6352241 Email: [john.scott@hse.ie](mailto:john.scott@hse.ie)

Yours Sincerely,



**Barry O'Brien,**  
**National Director Human Resources**