



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
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**To: Each Member of the Directorate and Leadership Team
Each Assistant National Director HR
Each Hospital Group CEO
Each Hospital Group Director of HR
Each Chief Officer CHO
Each CHO HR Manager
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery**

From: Rosarii Mannion, National Director Human Resources

13th February, 2018

Re: HR Circular 009/2018 re Sponsorship of Post Registration Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Education Initiative

Dear Colleagues,

This Circular applies to the sponsorship of nurses or midwives to undertake a post-graduate Higher Diploma programme in Mental Health Nursing and the conditions under which they may be sponsored in order to be employed as a Psychiatric/Mental Health Staff Nurse on successful completion of the programme. The sponsoring Public Mental Health Service is an agency in the Public Health Service in which the student will work once they commence the sponsorship.

This initiative is subject to the conditions set out below.

Conditions:

- 1. Eligibility to apply:** Applicants must be registered or entitled to be registered on the General or the Intellectual Disability Division of the Register maintained by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI). Applicants must meet any further requirements as outlined in the Health Business Services (HBS) Recruit Campaign Information for this sponsorship. Applicants must also meet the entry requirements set by the Higher Education Institute providing the education programme. 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 this Circular.
- 2. Funding:** Course funding will only be provided for the tuition fee applicable to EU / EEA citizens. 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), repeat units of study or repeat examination fees. Such fees and any other related expenses must be borne by the nurse or midwife concerned.

3. **Satisfactory Employment Record:** In order to qualify for sponsorship, the applicant must provide evidence of a satisfactory service record.
4. **Salary/Incremental Credit:** Each participant will retain their current point of the staff nurse/midwife salary scale on entry into the programme (based on verified nursing/midwifery service), excluding allowances, overtime, etc. Participants will retain their incremental credit date and will be granted incremental credit (if applicable) during the programme.
5. **Service Commitment:** Successful applicants for sponsorship will be required to give a written undertaking to their sponsoring Public Mental Health Service that they will, following successful completion of the programme, take up employment as a full time permanent Psychiatric/Mental Health Staff Nurse* in their sponsoring Public Mental Health Service for a period of not less than 2 years from the date of registration with the NMBI.

* The salary applied will be that of a Registered Psychiatric/Mental Health Staff Nurse Grade. Such salary will be calculated in line with the approved current Department of Health salary scales and will take into consideration, for incremental credit purposes, previous approved nursing service only.

Arrangements for the fulfilment of this service commitment for part time employees are set out in paragraph 8 below.

The requirement to honour the service commitment may be waived if the sponsoring Public Mental Health Service is not in a position to recruit suitably qualified psychiatric/mental health nurses and in this case the participant is entitled to return to their substantive post within the Public Health Service.

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

A sponsored employee who fails to honour their contractual undertaking to work as a psychiatric/mental health nurse for their sponsoring Public Mental Health Service for the period of the service commitment immediately following successful completion of the programme, shall be required to repay to that sponsoring Public Mental Health Service their fees and 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. If an arrangement for repayment is not agreed within twenty eight calendar days of notification of liability by the sponsoring Public Mental Health Service, the repayment may be pursued through the Civil Courts.

6. **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.
7. **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 programme. On successful completion of the programme, any entitlement to return to their previous substantive post shall cease subject to Section 5 above.
8. **Part-time Employees:** Part-time employees who are awarded sponsorship for a full time course leading to an additional registration with NMBI 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 the Area Director of Mental Health Nursing, revert to working part-time (provided

the part-time work is not less than half-time). In such a case, the length of the service commitment requirement will be adjusted upwards to reflect this (e.g. for a half-time employee, the service commitment would be fulfilled after four years rather than two years for a full-time employee).

9. **Annual leave:** Student will be entitled to a total of 24 days annual leave. However, annual leave may only be taken outside of academic semesters and in accordance with service need.
10. **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.
11. **Governance:** The student will be required to provide their sponsoring Public Mental Health Service with a copy of their examination results at the end of each academic term.
12. **Exception:** 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 Public Mental Health Service and higher education institute to complete the course and examinations in such manner as may be specified.
13. **Repeat:** A student, failing to obtain the Post Graduate Higher Diploma in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing qualification on completion of the programme may, at the discretion of the sponsoring Public Mental Health Service, be retained on probation to afford him/her one further opportunity to secure the qualification at repeat examination, but in any event, no later than the end of the following academic year. During this repeat period, the student will be remunerated at their existing salary.
14. **Repayment of fees and salary (Full time programmes):** If the sponsored candidate ceases employment or does not complete the programme, they will be required to repay both the 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, reduced or deferred at the discretion of the sponsoring Public Mental Health Service. Such repayments shall be made to the sponsoring Public Mental Health Service where they were employed and this repayment may be pursued through the Civil Courts.
15. **Review of initiative:** This initiative will be kept under annual review.

Queries

Any queries in relation to this Circular should be addressed to John F Scott, General Manager, Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services, Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Dublin 8. Tel: 01 6352241 / Email: john.scott@hse.ie

Please also note that the HR Help Desk is available to take queries on 1850 444 925 or ask.hr@hse.ie.

Yours sincerely,



**Rosarii Mannion,
National Director of Human Resources.**