Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes – Incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications

First Edition

June 2010
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Preface

It gives me great pleasure to present this new set of Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes-Incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications. This document represents a major revision to guidance for educational providers in relation to continuing and post registration education and training. The document provides comprehensive guidance and replaces the previous An Bord Altranais policy in this area.

The Education and Training of nurses and midwives has undergone a period of radical change since the Report of the Commission on Nursing (Government of Ireland, 1998). This period of radical change has also been influenced by significant national and international developments in terms of higher and further education. Developing and enhancing a culture of educational excellence, lifelong learning and procedures to implement access, transfer and progression are key features of recent legislative instruments in the education sector internationally.

Nursing and Midwifery Registration education is located in Higher education. Registration programmes are placed at level 8 on the NQAI framework of qualifications. The Board’s Domains of Competence are also at level 8. An Bord Altranais recognises that Registered Nurses and Midwives as competent professionals practice at level 8. Registered Nurses and Midwives teach, supervise, assess and support pre-registration students to achieve competence at level 8 at the point of Registration.

Nurses and Midwives are committed to providing quality care. The professions have a long history of commitment to lifelong learning and continued professional development. This is evidenced by the significant number of short courses approved by An Bord Altranais as well as the large volume of approved higher education programmes.

The Requirements and Standards for Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes will provide comprehensive guidance to support the continued professional development and lifelong learning agenda for nurses and midwives and contribute to public confidence, public trust, quality patient care, patient safety and public protection.

The production of this document includes the NQAI level 7 to 9 standards which were developed in conjunction with HETAC and is the culmination of many contributions from colleagues representing all stakeholders involved in nursing and midwifery education in Ireland. In particular the commitment and energy of the An Bord Altranais/National Qualifications Authority of Ireland Steering Committee, the Executive staff of An Bord Altranais and the work of Dr. Mary Hodson Project Officer, are acknowledged in this regard. A special note of thanks to Dr. Anna Murphy, Director, Standards Development, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), Ms Mary Sheridan, Head of Standards Management HETAC and Dr. Jim Murray NQAI for their support in relation to this work.

Anne Carrigy
President, An Bord Altranais
Introduction

An Bord Altranais (the Board) is the statutory regulatory body for nursing and midwifery in Ireland. The primary function of the Board is to promote high standards of professional education and conduct among nurses and midwives. Part IV 36 (1) (d) of the Nurses Act, 1985 states that “The Board shall, from time to time as occasion may require but, in any event, not less than once every five years, satisfy itself as to the adequacy and suitability of post registration courses for nurses provided by bodies recognised by the Board for that purpose”. The Board has statutory responsibility to approve Educational Providers and Health Care Institutions in respect of post registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning.

The agenda for the Board includes the setting of standards of education for in-service education, specialist education and continuing education. The education of Registered Nurses and Midwives has undergone radical change over the last decade in response to The Commission on Nursing Report (1998) and the Health Service Reform Programme - Quality and Fairness – A Health Service For You (2001). Changes in nursing and midwifery education reflect changes in the educational environment at large. Today, Pre-Registration nursing and midwifery education is located primarily in third level institutions. Pre-Registration nursing and midwifery education consists of a four-year BSc. programme in recognised third level institutions. The development of graduate education for Registration has changed the expectations of the nursing and midwifery professions in relation to academic awards and recognition for education undertaken.

The responsibilities and functions of the Board are defined by the provisions of the Nurses Act, 1985. Nursing and midwifery education is governed within a complex framework of legislation. Part IV of the Nurses Act 1985 requires the Board to make rules in respect of education and training of nurses and midwives. Other stakeholders involved in the education of nurses and midwives are also governed by statutory instruments. The Universities Act, 1997 regulates the National University of Ireland and the constituent colleges, the University of Dublin Trinity College, Dublin City University and the University of Limerick. The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999, led to the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). Under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 the Institutes of Technology are governed by the Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992, the Regional Technical Colleges (Amendment) Act, 1994 and the Regional Technical Colleges (Amendment) Act, 1999. Developing and enhancing a culture of educational quality and excellence, life-long learning and procedures to implement access, transfer and progression arrangements are key features of recent legislative instruments in the education sector.

To meet these challenges the Board has entered into a range of new partnerships. At a national level the Board has established associations and alliances with the National University of Ireland and the constituent colleges, the University of Dublin Trinity College, Dublin City University and the University of Limerick, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the Institutes of Technology, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Health and Children.

Mindful of its regulatory responsibility to protect the public, the Board is responsive to educational changes, societal expectations, learner needs and evolving nursing and midwifery practice when communicating regulation. Professional nursing and midwifery education is experiencing a period of considerable change. This change reflects changes in the general educational environment at large, both from a national and international perspective. Pre-Registration nursing and midwifery education has also undergone a considerable evolution since the late 1990s. It has experienced a transition from a hospital based apprenticeship programme, to Higher Education/Health Care Institution partnership based Registration Diploma and Registration Honours Degree level in less than a decade. Since the publication of the Commission on Nursing (Government of Ireland, 1998) and the Nurse Education Forum Report (Government of Ireland, 2000) there has been a considerable development of post-registration nursing and midwifery professional development and specialist courses (HSE, 2008). They include programmes at Bachelor Degree, Higher or Graduate/Diploma or Post-graduate Diploma, Masters Degree and Doctorate level.
Nurses and midwives are accountable for providing competent nursing and midwifery care. One method of maintaining competence is through completing formal academic programmes leading to post qualifying awards. These develop the knowledge, know-how and competence of the nurse and midwife beyond initial Registration. The Board protects the public through setting standards in terms of education and practice. The Board will make the approval decision informed by full consideration of programme standards and the quality of the learning opportunities.
Background

SECTION 1

An Bord Altranais
June 2010
Section 1:  
1 Background

The Board viewed continuing education in 1989 as a lifelong learning process which takes place after the completion of a Pre-Registration nursing or midwifery education programme. It consists of planned learning experiences, which are designed to augment the knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes of Registered nurses and Registered midwives for the enhancement of nursing and midwifery practice, education, administration and research. In 1989 the Board decided to recognise post-registration nursing and midwifery programmes in terms of granting such programmes approval as either Category 1 or Category 2 courses.

**Category 1** programmes are of very short duration, e.g. an in-service training day. The Chief Education Officer can directly approve this category. A new policy and submission template for Category 1 course approval was published by the Board in May 2009.

**Category 2** programmes are of a longer duration, and approval for these has traditionally been within the governance of the Education and Training Committee of the Board. Category 2 programmes include a broad range of academic and clinical specialist programmes excluding those leading to Registration with the Board. Specialist programmes are post-registration programmes designed, developed and conducted with reference to a specific body of knowledge and experience in an area of nursing and midwifery. Such courses must satisfy the criteria of An Bord Altranais (1989) in relation to specialist education courses.

These Requirements and Standards are the revised An Bord Altranais policy for approving post-registration programmes. These include major awards that are approved as Category 2 programmes.

1.1 Extract from the Nurses Rules, 2010.

Rule 4.5 of the Nurses Rules, 2010 states:

"An Bord Altranais may stipulate requirements and standards in respect of education and training programmes for nurses that do not lead to registration in a Division of the Register, containing details of theoretical and clinical instruction required to be undertaken and competencies to be attained by each student on the satisfactory completion of such programmes".

1.2 The National Framework of Qualifications

The National Framework of Qualifications (Framework of Qualifications), which has been developed by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) in partnership with national stakeholders, is a radical development in Irish education and training arising from the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999. This learner-centred Framework relates all education and training awards to each other. It brings coherence to the awards system. It establishes clearly defined standards about what a learner can be expected to achieve for each award. The Framework of Qualifications is designed to bring about change. It introduces a new approach to the meaning of an award that will recognise learning outcomes, what a person with an award knows, can do and understands rather than time spent on the programme. These developments are occurring within the context of parallel European developments under the Bologna process. The referencing of the Irish National Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework was completed in June 2009.

1.3 Vision

The learner should be able to enter and successfully participate in a programme, or a series of programmes leading to an award, or a series of awards, in pursuit of their learning objectives. The Framework of Qualifications and associated programme provision should be structured to facilitate learner entry and promote transfer and progression, so that learners
are encouraged to participate in the learning process to enable them to realise their ambitions to the full extent of their abilities (NQAI 2003). While the Framework of Qualifications is about awards, it is also learner-centred and values learning. As a result the development of the Framework of Qualifications is based on certain values and principles. A key characteristic is the centrality of the learner within formal, non-formal and informal learning experiences. The formal recognition and valuing of all learning is an integral part of the work of the NQAI. The Framework of Qualifications will need to be meaningful for all stakeholders, including learners, employers, and educational providers.

1.4 Structure of The National Framework of Qualifications

The Framework consists of 10 levels. It encompasses the widest possible spread of learning defined by a set of learning outcomes which are packages of knowledge, skill and competence (See Appendix 4 - NQAI 10 Level Grid). At each level there are one or more award types.

1.5 Award Types

Definition:

*A class of named awards sharing common features and level and can reflect a mix of standards of knowledge, skill and competence...* (NQAI 2003)

- Major award-type - A major award-type represents a significant volume of learning outcomes
- Minor award-type - A minor award-type will be part of the learning outcomes associated with one or more major award-types at a given level in the Framework of Qualifications. Minor awards may be combined with other learning outcomes towards a major or special purpose award.
- Supplemental award-type - Programmes leading to such award can be refresher, updating or continuing education and training. In some cases there may be regulatory requirements for such awards. Learning at this level has not traditionally been explicitly recognised in the formal systems of awards.
- Special-purpose award-type - Awards at this level are made for specific relatively narrow purposes. They may comprise learning outcomes that also form part of major awards. Special-purpose awards may form the basis for transfer into more broadly based major awards at the same level and thus progression on to higher awards.

While An Bord Altranais can approve awards from all of these classes of named awards if they meet the Requirements and Standards, only major award types at level 8 and above will be approved as An Bord Altranais Category 2 programmes.
Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes/Units of Learning

SECTION 2

June 2010
Section 2:
Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes/Units of Learning

2.1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Requirements and Standards document is to provide guidance for the development of flexible and innovative programmes/units of learning for educational providers (Third Level Institutions, Health Care Institutions, Regional Centres for Nurse (Midwifery) Education) and other stakeholders for the development of post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning, within the context of the regulations of An Bord Altranais and the National Framework of Qualifications. The educational providers involved in the development and delivery of post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning are required to submit a detailed curriculum document, reflective of units of learning, in the pursuit of appropriate awards as depicted in the Framework of Qualifications to the relevant awarding bodies for validation/accreditation and to the An Bord Altranais for approval. This Requirements and Standards document will assist the development of these submissions and provide a framework aimed at ensuring that the highest national standards for post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning are maintained.

2.1.2 Models of co-operation

Within the literature produced by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland and educational literature in general the words accreditation, validation and approval are employed and at times used interchangeably. An Bord Altranais employs what the NQAI describe as the optimum model for how a professional regulatory body should relate to education and training providers and awarding bodies. An Bord Altranais has chosen not to exercise its awarding authority conferred on it under the Nurses Act, 1985. The Board currently approves all education programmes leading to Registration in a Division of the Register of Nurses maintained by An Bord Altranais. The Board also approves continuing professional development and post registration nursing and midwifery education programmes. The Board sets requirements and standards for professional programmes and approval is based on the programme satisfying these.

An Bord Altranais welcomes and supports models of co-operation between educational providers awarding bodies and the Board in order to facilitate effective and efficient programme approval.
Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Post-Registration Education Programmes/Units of Learning
Section 3:
Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Post–Registration Education Programmes/Units of Learning

These Standards are inclusive of the NQAI National Framework of Qualifications, the standards developed in conjunction with HETAC, the An Bord Altranais Competencies* and The National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery core competencies for role development of CNS/CMS and ANP/AMP. They are intended to facilitate programme writers in developing programmes/units of learning leading to an academic named award at levels 7-9 on The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland National Framework of Qualifications (Appendix 5). These Requirements and Standards are intended to guide the development of all post-registration awards at major, minor, special purpose and supplemental level.

Major awards submitted based on these requirements and standards that are approved by the Education and Training committee will be deemed Category 2 approved. Category 2 approval does not apply to minor, special purpose or supplemental awards.

3.1 The Approval Process for Educational Providers for the provision of Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes/Units of Learning.

An Bord Altranais has statutory responsibility to approve educational providers in respect of post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning.

3.1.1 The approval process:

The approval process consists of two separate parts:

1. Approval of the educational provider - utilising appropriate internal and external quality assurance criteria as determined by the relevant awarding bodies and the Requirements and Standards of An Bord Altranais.

2. Approval of the post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning.

3. Once approval has been granted it will be maintained through annual monitoring and review.

The respective educational providers must declare to An Bord Altranais through a self-declaration audit of compliance that their programmes/units of learning comply with these Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications.

Each educational provider must establish a post-registration educational committee or equivalent partnership structure representative of the educational and service stakeholders to oversee the post-registration educational provision.

In respect of post-registration education programmes/units of learning An Bord Altranais will satisfy itself as to the suitability of the educational providers’ internal and external Quality Assurance mechanisms. Such mechanisms should reflect national and international best practice in terms of internal and external Quality Assurance structures and processes. An Bord Altranais reserves the right to conduct an audit in respect of education programmes submitted to it for approval.

(*Post Script: Level 8 standards are underpinning the development of pre-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes. Standards for Level 10 are not written reflective of the multiplicity of routes involved in acquiring a doctorate qualification nonetheless work is ongoing in agreeing national and European standards to underpin professional doctorates)
3.1.2 Approval of programmes/units of learning
All education programmes/units of learning will be accredited by the relevant academic councils and the relevant awarding bodies. The educational providers will make a written submission to An Bord Altranais in the form of detailed programmes/units of learning including evidence of its self audit and compliance with An Bord Altranais Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications.

The Education and Training Committee of An Bord Altranais will approve programmes/units of learning. This committee includes representatives of the educational providers (elected and nominated to the Board), the Department of Health and Children, the HSE and other national stakeholders. Once approval has been granted it will be maintained through annual monitoring and review. An annual report which will include statistics on attrition, success rate and evaluation data incorporating the views of stakeholders including students, service providers and service users if appropriate is to be forwarded by the end of February each year to An Bord Altranais.

3.1.3 General provisions regarding the process of approval:
1. Review by Education Officer(s) and/or representatives of An Bord Altranais.
2. Review by Education and Training Committee.
3. A decision is made by the committee and the decision is reported to the Board.
4. Educational provider is informed of the decision of the committee by the Chief Education Officer or a designated Officer of the Board.
5. Approved programmes are placed on the Nursing Careers Website - www.nursingcareers.ie

The approval process will take place within a time-scale agreed with educational providers at the outset. The course submission time frame will take cognisance of the meetings’ schedule of the Education and Training Committee within An Bord Altranais.

After approval has been given, any subsequent changes within the educational provider or in the education programmes/units of learning that affect any aspect of the programmes/units of learning must be notified to An Bord Altranais. Notification of approval of the programmes/units of learning will be in writing from An Bord Altranais. Conditions and recommendations may be attached to the approval of programmes/units of learning. These conditions and recommendations will include a time frame for response.

An annual report on the programme will be submitted to An Bord Altranais at the end of February.
Standards for the Approval of Educational providers and Health Care Providers.
Section 4: Standards for the Approval of Educational providers and Health Care Providers.

4.1 The respective Educational Providers.

Educational providers are committed to providing post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning which demonstrate that the highest standards of professional education and training are in place. Due regard should be taken in relation to issues such as the evolving public and service need, clinical/practice audit, patient safety (Government of Ireland, 2008), educational and clinical quality and student access.

4.1.1 Educational providers respond to change and needs affecting professional, educational, health, policy, social and economic issues.

4.1.2 Educational providers keep appropriate records including records for the conferment of professional and academic awards.

4.1.3 The process for monitoring student attendance is declared.

4.1.4 Organisational structures supporting the management of the educational programmes/units of learning are explicit.

4.1.5 Educational providers have a Post–Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Committee/local joint working group, with representatives of the key stakeholders including service users.

4.1.6 The role of the external examiner in relation to the post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning is explicit.

4.1.7 The staff resource supports the delivery of the education programmes/units of learning at the stated professional, clinical and academic level.

4.1.8 Lecturers/tutors are involved in clinical practice and its development.

4.1.9 Nursing/midwifery subjects are developed and taught by registered nurses/midwives with appropriate professional, clinical and academic qualifications and teaching expertise in the subject matter.

4.1.10 A mechanism for staff development which prepares staff to deliver the education programmes/units of learning including the provision for maintaining nursing/midwifery expertise and credibility is identified.

4.1.11 Educational providers provide administrative and clerical support for all educational activity.

4.1.12 Educational providers provide educational resources/facilities (including library, computer, audio-visual & accommodation) to meet the teaching and learning needs of the specific post-registration programmes/units of learning.

4.1.13 Mechanisms for learner admission to the nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning ensure that the stated entry requirements are met. This should include specific mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning. The mechanism and conditions for learners exiting the education programmes/units of learning before completion are explicit.

4.1.14 Following any interruption in the education programmes/units of learning the educational provider ensures that the learner meets the education programmes/units of learning requirements.

4.1.15 The mechanism for learner support in relation to student services, facilities and academic and clinical guidance is explicit.
4.1.16 The educational provider provides an annual programme report on the education programmes/units of learning including the external examiner’s report to An Bord Altranais.

4.2 Programmes/Units of Learning Design and Development.

4.2.1 Curriculum design and development reflect research and evidence based educational theory and health care theory, policy and practice. National and International benchmarks should inform curriculum development.

4.2.2 The curriculum model chosen should be dynamic and flexible to allow for changes in nursing/midwifery practice and health care delivery.

4.2.3 Theoretical and clinical learning experiences and the learning environment must support the achievement of the aims and objectives/outcomes of the programmes/units of learning.

4.2.4 Programmes/units of learning design and development are led by registered nurse tutors or nurse/midwifery lecturers with a teaching qualification and is supported by academic and clinical experts including inter-disciplinary professionals as appropriate in collaboration with others and is guided by professional nursing/midwifery knowledge which is evidence/research based.

4.2.5 The programmes/units of learning development team comprise representative members of key stakeholders in nursing/midwifery education and practice and service users.

4.2.6 The programmes/units of learning are strategically planned to demonstrate balanced distribution and integration of theory and practice, logical sequencing and progressive development of subjects and clinical competence over the education programme.

4.2.7 The programmes/units of learning are based on a range of teaching-learning strategies (including e-learning and blended learning) to assist the development of a knowledgeable, safe and competent practitioner and to equip her/him with the life-long skills for problem-solving and self-directed learning.

4.2.8 The programmes/units of learning design reflects various methods of teaching/learning and provides a balance between lectures, tutorials, workshops, small group interactions, demonstrations, practical work/clinical; and self-directed study.

4.2.9 The programmes/units of learning equip the students/participants with an appropriate level of knowledge, research awareness and critical analysis.

4.2.10 The awarding body accreditation of programmes/units of learning is explicit.

4.2.11 Processes to facilitate access, transfer and progression are explicit within the programme/unit of learning.

4.2.12 The programmes/units of learning design include the assessment strategy in relation to the assessment of clinical competence and theoretical learning outcomes.

4.2.13 The programmes/units of learning design include an evaluation strategy which captures evaluation feedback from a broad range of stakeholders including the student, the clinical sites and service users.

4.2.14 Quality assurance criteria reflective of both An Bord Altranais Requirements and Standards and the relevant awarding body are explicit.

4.2.15 Quality assurance mechanisms and indicators are identified and measured in relation to the internal and external governance requirements of the educational provider, the awarding body and the professional regulator.

4.3 Clinical Practice Experience (if appropriate to programmes/units of learning).

4.3.1 Clinical practice experience provides learning opportunities that enable the achievement of competence in clinical nursing/midwifery practice and the stated learning outcomes.
4.3.2 Clinical placements are based in health care institutions, which are audited/approved by the Programmes/Units of Learning Team and satisfy An Bord Altranais Requirements and Standards.

4.3.3 The healthcare institution(s) used for clinical placements are required to have in place:

• Arrangements for monitoring and improving patient safety
• Evidence based practice guidelines to support appropriate standards of care and for systematic approaches to nursing care
• Policies that support audit
• Risk Management systems
• Adverse event reporting system
• Policies that support good practice in recording clinical practice
• Policies to address complaints/concerns
• Mechanisms to support interdisciplinary team working
• A structure within which concerns around clinical practice are raised and addressed
• Mechanisms to involve service users in the development and review of healthcare provision; and
• Evidence of clinical and educational audit for each placement site used in the education and training of registrants

4.3.4 The selection of areas for clinical practice experience reflects the scope of the health care settings and supports the achievement of the learning outcomes of the post-registration education programmes/units of learning.

4.3.5 Post-registration learner allocation to clinical placements is based on the need to integrate theory and practice and to facilitate the progressive development of clinical skills, competence, quality patient care and patient safety.

4.3.6 Clearly written learning outcomes/objectives appropriate to the clinical area are developed and are available to ensure optimal use of valuable clinical experience. These learning outcomes/objectives are revised as necessary.

4.3.7 Post-registration learners and all those involved in meeting their learning needs are fully acquainted with the expected learning outcomes related to that clinical placement.

4.3.8 Lecturers and nurse/midwifery tutors, in liaison with the appropriate clinical staff (clinical facilitators, preceptors, clinical managers and practice development co-ordinators) guide and support the learners in ensuring that the clinical placement provides an optimum quality learning environment.

4.4 Assessment Process.

The assessment of learning is a continuous process. Assessment should be balanced and integrated throughout the post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning.

Assessments are strategically planned and function to:

• Provide feedback on student/participant progress
• Ensure educational standards (theory and practice) are achieved before entry to the next part/year of the education programmes/units of learning, as appropriate.

4.4.1 Assessments are based on a variety of strategies which are aligned with the subject area, practice setting and stage of the education programmes/units of learning and expected learning outcomes.

4.4.2 Assessment measures where appropriate demonstrates the integration and application of theory to patient care learned throughout the programmes/units of learning and requires the student/participant to demonstrate competence within practice through the achievement of learning outcomes in both theory and practice.
4.4.3 Assessment strategies are established as reliable and valid measures of learning outcomes.

4.4.5 Grading criteria indicating the standard for a pass award is required for theoretical and clinical practice competency assessments as award/grading mechanism, which acknowledges higher achievements by the student/participant, is recorded.

4.4.6 Marks and standards and assessment regulations relating to compensation, supplemental and appeal mechanisms and conditions for continuance of the education programmes/units of learning are explicit.

4.5 **External Examiners.**

External examiners have an important role in maintaining the standard of post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning by providing an independent view about their content, structure, organisation and assessment. The third level institutions in collaboration with the relevant educational providers appoint external examiners in accordance with specified internal and external criteria (see below).

4.5.1 The role of the external examiner is explicit and functions to:

- Maintain the quality and standards of post-registration education programmes/units of learning.
- Ensure the assessment strategies for theory and practice are reliable and equitable.
- Ensure individual students/learners are treated fairly.

4.5.2 External examiners for post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes/units of learning:

- Are Registered Nurses/Midwives with professional qualifications appropriate to the post-registration programmes/units of learning being examined.
- Hold academic and teaching qualifications and have at least 3 years full-time teaching experience in courses appropriate to the post-registration programmes/units of learning being examined.
- Have experience in examining and assessing post-registration students.
- Have experience in the development, management, delivery and evaluation of post-registration programmes/units of learning.

4.5.3 The mechanism whereby the external examiner is provided with relevant documentation participates in decision-making concerning the programmes/units of learning and has membership of the Examination Boards of the respective institutions, is explicit.

4.5.4 An abridged CV of the external examiner is explicit within the submission.
Appendix I
Abbreviations

APEL - Accreditation of prior experiential learning.

APL - Accreditation of prior learning.

ABA - An Bord Altranais.

HSE - Health Service Executive.

NQAI - The National Qualification Authority of Ireland.

HETAC - The Higher Education and Training Awards Council.

FETAC - The Further Education and Training Awards Council.

HEA - The Higher Education Authority.

DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology.

ECTS - European Credit Transfer and accumulation System.
Appendix 2

Glossary of Terms for the Development of the National Framework of Qualifications

The following are presented as current working understandings of the terms described. They do not form part of the formal determination of the Authority except where this has been specified elsewhere and are subject to change.

Access (as part of equity)

The global, inclusive, term of ‘equity’...refers to...policies and procedures for enabling and encouraging groups in society at present under-represented as students in higher education institutions and programmes or study areas, to gain access to and demonstrate successful performance in higher education, and transition to the labour market.

Access (de jure)

The process by which learners may commence a programme of education and training, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.

Active Citizenship

The cultural, economic, political/democratic and/or social participation of citizens in society as a whole and in their community. It incorporates the mutually supporting objectives of personal fulfilment, democratic participation, social inclusion, adaptability and employability.

Award

An award which is conferred, granted or given by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.

Award Standard

Award standards are the expected outcomes of learning, inclusive of all education and training.

Award-type

An award-type is a class of named awards sharing common features and level. Award-types can reflect a mix of standards of knowledge, skill and competence which is independent of any specific field of learning. Descriptors can be defined generically for award-types.

Award Type Descriptor

An award-type descriptor is a description of a class of named awards sharing common features and level.

Awarding Body (Private Awards Bodies, International Awards Bodies)

A body which makes awards.

Competence

Competence is the effective and creative demonstration and deployment of knowledge and skill in human situations. Such situations could comprise general social and civic ones, as well as specific occupational ones. Competence draws on attitudes, emotions, values and sense of self-efficacy of the learner, as well as on declarative and procedural knowledge. Competence outcomes can thus be stated in the form, “In a specified range of circumstances, a learner will be able to ...”.

Competence – context

The contexts in which a learner is able to apply his/her knowledge and skills.
Competence – role
The responsibility the learner can take, personally and in groups, for the application of his/her knowledge and skills.

Competence - learning to learn
The extent to which the learner can identify the gaps in his/her learning and take steps to fill those gaps.

Competence – insight
The extent to which the learner has integrated the intellectual, emotional, physical and moral aspects of his/her learning into his/her self-identity and interaction with others.

Criteria
Specific conditions that determine the features of the framework.

Field of Learning
A basis for grouping awards within the framework based on the subject matter of the learning they contain.

Grid of level indicators
The grid shows how the outcomes in each of the eight sub-strands progress across the ten levels.

Know-how and Skill
The exercise of a skill is the performance of a task that in some way responds to or manipulates the physical, informational or social environment of the person. Know-how underpins skill but is not identical to skill. Know-how, or savoir faire, is the procedural knowledge required to carry out a task.

Know-how and skill – range
The extent of the physical, intellectual, social and other skills demonstrated by the learner.

Know-how and skill – selectivity
The complexity of the problems that a learner can tackle using the skills acquired and the approach with which the learner tackles them.

Knowledge
Knowledge is the cognitive representation of ideas, events or happenings. It can be derived from practical or professional experience as well as from formal instruction or study. It can comprise description, memory, understanding, thinking, analysis, synthesis, debate and research.

Knowledge – breadth
The extent of the learner’s knowledge.

Knowledge – kind
The nature or quality of knowing that the learner has engaged in.

Learner
A person who is acquiring or who has acquired knowledge, skill or competence.

Level
Levels are a series of sequential steps. Each level sets out a range of standards of knowledge, skill and competence acquired by learners. Levels are not in themselves standards but indicators of a range of standards and can be described in an ordered sequence.
Level indicators
Level indicators are broad descriptions of learning outcomes at a given level, in terms of the eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence.

Lifelong Learning
All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.

Major award-types
Major award-types are the principal class of awards made at each level. At most levels, such award-types capture a typical range of achievements at the level.

Minor award-types
A minor award-type will provide recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, without achieving the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award.

Named Awards
The particular awards, within an award type, which are named with respect to field of learning. Standards for named awards include reference to knowledge skill and competence within a specific field of learning (e.g. National Vocational Certificate Level 2 in Business Studies - Secretarial; National Craft Certificate - Motor Mechanic; National Diploma in Construction in Architectural Technology; Master of Philosophy in Medieval Language, Literature, and Culture).

National Framework of Qualifications
The single, nationally and internationally accepted entity, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards.

Policies
The basic factors determining how the Authority will construct the framework.

Process Guidelines
How the Authority will act in undertaking the task of developing the framework, rather than the practical and operational aspects of such work.

Programme of Education and Training
Programme (of education and training) means any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence and includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment.

Progression
The process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme where each programme is of a higher level than the preceding programme.

Provider (of a programme of education and training)
A person who, or body which, provides, organises or procures a programme of education and training.

Qualification
No distinction is being made between an award and a qualification.

Recognition (of Learning)
A formal acceptance of a claim to a standard of learning on the part of a learner as being true or valid.
Recognition of Prior Learning
Recognition of learning that has taken place, but not necessarily been assessed or measured, prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal routes.

Recognition (of Award Equivalence)
The formal acceptance of an award by an awarding body as equivalent, for some stated purpose or purposes, to another award of that body.

Special-purpose award-types
Special-purpose award-types are made for specific, relatively narrow, purpose.

Stakeholder
Any person or party who has an interest in the framework of qualifications.

Strand
Learning outcomes are divided into three strands of knowledge, know and skill, and competence.

Sub-strand
Learning outcomes are divided in to eight sub-strands. Sub-strands identify the sources of order within the kinds of learning outcomes associated with awards at the various levels.

Supplemental award-types
Supplemental award-types are for learning which is additional to a previous award.

Transfer
The process by which learners may transfer from one programme of education and training to another programme, having received recognition for knowledge, skill or competence acquired.

Validation of a Programme
It is sometimes efficient for an awarding body to formally recognise a programme of education and training, thereby devolving responsibility for the assessment of learning to the provider of the programme, subject to appropriate quality assurance arrangements. Validation means the process by which an awarding body shall satisfy itself that a learner may attain knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award made by the awarding body.

Values and Principles
A set of statements underpinning the development of the national framework of qualifications.

Volume
Volume of standards of knowledge, skill and competence refers to the amount of knowledge, skill and competence at a particular level or levels. The more the amount of knowledge, skill and competence, the greater the volume.

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Appendix 3
NQAI Named Award Types

Awards record that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill and competence; therefore assessment of learning is central to all awards.

**Award Type 1 – Major Awards**

This category includes a broad range of specialist or advanced programmes of study, of which some may lead to Registration with An Bord Altranais. These are defined as ‘A class of named awards sharing common features and level and can reflect a mix of standards of knowledge, skill and competence…’ (NQAI, 2003).

Specialist or advanced programmes are post registration education programmes designed, developed and conducted with reference to specific named award reflecting a defined body of knowledge, know-how, competence and experience in an area of nursing or midwifery. Such programmes must satisfy these An Bord Altranais Requirements and Standards.

**Award Type 2 – Minor Awards**

A minor award-type will be part of the learning outcomes associated with one or more major award types at a given level in the framework. Minor awards may be combined with other learning outcomes towards a major or special purpose reward. This category includes stand-alone modules or groups of modules that constitute a defined part of a major award such as one year of a two year programme.

**Award Type 3 – Supplemental Awards**

Supplemental award-types include programmes that are refresher, updating or continuing education and training in nature. In some cases there may be regulatory requirements for such awards. Learning at this level has not traditionally been explicitly recognised in the formal systems of awards.

This category includes:

- In-service training/education for hospital/HSE staff
- Seminars
- Study days
- Conferences: national/international
- Refresher courses
- Return to Practice programmes

**Award Type 4 – Special Purpose Awards**

Special-purpose award-type awards at this level are made for specific relatively narrow purposes. They may comprise learning outcomes that also form part of major awards. Special purpose awards may form the basis for transfer into more broadly based major awards at the same level and thus progression on to higher awards.

This category might include for example:

- Venepuncture course
- Cannulation course
- Moving and handling course
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation course
- Managing challenging behaviour
## Appendix 4
National Framework of Qualifications - Level 1-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge - Breadth</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge that is narrow in range</td>
<td>Knowledge moderately broad in range</td>
<td>Broad range of knowledge</td>
<td>Broad range of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge - Kind</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrable by recognition or recall</td>
<td>Concrete in reference and basic in comprehension</td>
<td>Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements</td>
<td>Mainly concrete in reference and with some elements of abstraction or theory</td>
<td>Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant depth in some areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know-how and skill - Range</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate basic practical skills, and carry out directed activity using basic tools</td>
<td>Demonstrate limited range of basic practical skills, including the use of relevant tools</td>
<td>Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools</td>
<td>Demonstrate a moderate range of practical and cognitive skills and tools</td>
<td>Demonstrate a broad range of specialised skills and tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know-how and skill - Selectivity</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perform processes that are repetitive and predictable</td>
<td>Perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction</td>
<td>Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems</td>
<td>Select from a range of procedures and apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems</td>
<td>Evaluate and use information to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to varied unfamiliar problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence - Context</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act in closely defined and highly structured contexts</td>
<td>Act in a limited range of predictable and structured contexts</td>
<td>Act within a limited range of contexts</td>
<td>Act in familiar and unfamiliar contexts</td>
<td>Act in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs; identify and apply skill and knowledge to a wide variety of contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence - Role</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act in a limited range of roles</td>
<td>Act in a range of roles under direction</td>
<td>Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogeneous groups</td>
<td>Act with considerable amount of responsibility and autonomy</td>
<td>Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities; join and function within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence - Learning to Learn</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn to sequence learning tasks; learn to access and use a range of learning resources</td>
<td>Learn to learn in a disciplined manner in a well-structured and supervised environment</td>
<td>Learn to learn within a managed environment</td>
<td>Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a supervised environment</td>
<td>Learn to take responsibility for own learning within a managed environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence - Insight</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
<th>LEVEL 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin to demonstrate awareness of independent role for self</td>
<td>Demonstrate awareness of independent role for self</td>
<td>Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour</td>
<td>Assume partial responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour</td>
<td>Assume full responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 6</td>
<td>LEVEL 7</td>
<td>LEVEL 8</td>
<td>LEVEL 9</td>
<td>LEVEL 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised knowledge of a broad area</td>
<td>Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas</td>
<td>An understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning</td>
<td>A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning</td>
<td>A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory</td>
<td>Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas</td>
<td>Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)</td>
<td>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning</td>
<td>The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools</td>
<td>Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study</td>
<td>Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity</td>
<td>Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry</td>
<td>Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate responses to well-defined abstract problems</td>
<td>Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes</td>
<td>Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing</td>
<td>Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques</td>
<td>Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts</td>
<td>Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts</td>
<td>Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts</td>
<td>Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill defined contexts</td>
<td>Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form, and function within, multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups</td>
<td>Accept accountability for determining and chieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work</td>
<td>Act effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners; lead multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups</td>
<td>Take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity</td>
<td>Communicate results of research and innovation to peers; engage in critical dialogue; lead and originate complex social processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs</td>
<td>Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group</td>
<td>Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically</td>
<td>Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development</td>
<td>Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others</td>
<td>Express an internalised, personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</td>
<td>Express a comprehensive, internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others</td>
<td>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them</td>
<td>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5
Standards for Nursing Post Registration and Education Programmes

All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.

Standards – Nursing¹ - Post Registration Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge-Breadth</th>
<th>Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas</th>
<th>Understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning</th>
<th>A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 7</strong></td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. demonstrate an integration of knowledge and an understanding of a systematic approach to care and a specified range of nursing interventions, and of health, ethics, interpersonal communication, management information technology, numeracy and literacy as applied to health care within a health care team.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 8</strong></td>
<td>The graduate should:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. demonstrate an understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to relevant clinical practice skills, essential for safe and effective nursing practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 9</strong></td>
<td>The graduate should:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. know how knowledge is created and changed within the profession.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. be able to demonstrate a knowledge base that exercises higher levels of judgement, discretion and decision making within nursing practice.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. be able to demonstrate the value of nursing through the generation of nursing knowledge and innovative clinical practice, nursing education and management.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge-Kind</th>
<th>Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas</th>
<th>Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s)</th>
<th>A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 7</strong></td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. demonstrate an integration of knowledge of: assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing care; concepts that underpin nursing practice and health care, including social, biological and related sciences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. recognise the limitations to current competence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 8</strong></td>
<td>The graduate should:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. know and demonstrate an understanding of relevant biological and related sciences as they apply to nursing practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. know and demonstrate an understanding of the social sciences as they apply to nursing practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in nursing science.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in health promotion and health care policy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. demonstrate relevant knowledge to adopt systematic approaches to nursing practice based on best available evidence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 9</strong></td>
<td>The graduate should:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from various domains showing a breadth and depth of knowledge of his/her discipline.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from a broad range of disciplines that inform and develop nursing practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of the major research methodologies appropriate to his/her professional domain.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Pre-registration nurse education programmes are at Level 8.

¹ All Standards should be utilised in conjunction with the Requirements of An Bord Altranais
All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know-How &amp; Skill-Range</th>
<th>Level 7</th>
<th>Level 8</th>
<th>Level 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. demonstrate defined specialised technical, creative or conceptual</td>
<td>1. assist individuals, families and groups achieve optimum health,</td>
<td>1. make critical choices in the selection of approaches to research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nursing skills and tools, with supervision as appropriate.</td>
<td>independence, recovery or a peaceful death in a professional caring</td>
<td>problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. take responsibility for actions and omissions.</td>
<td>manner.</td>
<td>2. synthesise different approaches to research and justify their use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
<td>2. provide and manage direct practical nursing, whether health</td>
<td>in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. assist individuals, families and groups achieve optimum health,</td>
<td>promotional, preventive, curative, rehabilitative or supportive, to</td>
<td>3. systematically gather, interpret and evaluate evidence drawn from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>independence, recovery or a peaceful death in a professional caring</td>
<td>individuals, families or groups.</td>
<td>a diverse range of sources that are chosen independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>manner.</td>
<td>3. demonstrate evidence based clinical practice skills essential for</td>
<td>4. conduct a comprehensive health needs assessment as the basis for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. provide and manage direct practical nursing, whether health</td>
<td>safe nursing practice.</td>
<td>independent nursing practice within a specified area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>promotional, preventive, curative, rehabilitative or supportive, to</td>
<td>4. identify and implement health promotion priorities in the relevant</td>
<td>5. demonstrate expert skill in providing care for individuals and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individuals, families or groups.</td>
<td>area of practice.</td>
<td>groups in communities, within the scope of practice framework and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. demonstrate evidence based clinical practice skills essential for</td>
<td>5. implement health promotion strategies for patient/client groups</td>
<td>multidisciplinary team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>safe nursing practice.</td>
<td>in accordance with the public health agenda.</td>
<td>6. demonstrate advanced clinical decision-making skills to manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. identify and implement health promotion priorities in the relevant</td>
<td></td>
<td>a patient/client caseload.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>area of practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td>7. evaluate and critique current evidence base to set standards for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. implement health promotion strategies for patient/client groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>best practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in accordance with the public health agenda.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.

| Know-How & Skill - Selectivity | Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes | Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing | Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques |

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<tr>
<th>LEVEL 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
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<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. exercise relevant judgement in participating in the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of patient care with appropriate supervision.</td>
<td>1. identify and meet the nursing needs of the individual, family and community in all health care settings.</td>
<td>1. critically evaluate with discrimination the complex theories and concepts underpinning professional practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. undertake delegated duties in a reliable manner taking responsibility for actions or omissions, as appropriate.</td>
<td>2. demonstrate the skills of - analysis - critical thinking - problem solving, and - reflection in nursing practice.</td>
<td>2. utilise advanced knowledge and critical thinking skills to directly and indirectly provide optimum nursing care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. seek guidance in situations beyond experience or competence.</td>
<td>3. act as an effective member of the health care team, in an appropriate nursing setting and participate in the multidisciplinary team approach to the care of patients and clients.</td>
<td>3. develop and apply critical faculties to practice through advanced reflection skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. utilise knowledge experience, learning resources from diverse sources to enhance competence.</td>
<td>4. evaluate practice and use current research findings to underpin clinical practice.</td>
<td>4. demonstrate vision of professional practice that can be developed beyond current scope of practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. articulate and represent patient/client interests and enable patient/client and others to fully participate in decisions about his/her health needs.</td>
<td>5. articulate and represent patient/client interests and enable patient/client and others to fully participate in decisions about his/her health needs.</td>
<td>5. act proactively as an educational resource for healthcare professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. implement changes in healthcare service in response to patient/client need and service demand.</td>
<td>6. implement changes in healthcare service in response to patient/client need and service demand.</td>
<td>6. apply critical faculties to professional practice through analysis of the underlying epistemology of its knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence - Context</th>
<th>Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts</th>
<th>Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts</th>
<th>Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| LEVEL 7               | The graduate should be able to:  
1. utilise skills in a wide range of appropriate functions in the health care setting with appropriate supervision.  
2. seek and understand sources of evidence to underpin nursing interventions. |                                                                                               |                                                                                                |
| LEVEL 8               | The graduate should be able to:  
1. adopt a holistic approach to care and the integration of knowledge. Conduct a systematic holistic assessment of patient/client needs based on nursing theory and evidence-based practice.  
2. plan care in consultation with the patient/client taking into consideration the therapeutic regimes of all members of the health care team.  
3. implement planned nursing care/interventions to achieve the identified outcomes.  
4. evaluate patient/client progress toward expected outcomes and review plans in accordance with evaluation data and consultation with the patient/client.  
5. establish and maintain caring therapeutic interpersonal relationships with individuals/clients/groups/communities.  
6. perform a nursing assessment; plan and initiate care and treatment modalities within agreed interdisciplinary protocols to achieve patient/client centred outcomes and evaluate their effectiveness.  
7. identify, critically analyse, disseminate and integrate nursing and other evidence into the relevant area of practice.  
8. initiate and/or participate in and evaluate audit and use the outcome of audit to improve service provision.  
9. contribute to service planning and budgetary processes through use of audit and specialist knowledge. |                                                                                               |                                                                                                |
| LEVEL 9               | The graduate should be able to:  
1. demonstrate autonomy, experience, competence, accountability, authority and responsibility in nursing practice.  
2. demonstrate leadership in nursing practice.  
3. use knowledge to autonomously identify, resolve and evaluate intellectual issues and practical problems that appear in practice.  
4. identify and integrate research into areas of health care that can incorporate best evidence based practice.  
5. use advanced skills to conduct an in-depth research study relevant to the field of professional nursing. |                                                                                               |                                                                                                |
All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Competence-Role</th>
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<th>LEVEL 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. accept responsibility for personal outcomes within a defined range of nursing activities. 2. undertake delegated nursing duties with supervision as appropriate. 3. respect the expertise of and work collaboratively with all members of the multi-professional care team. 4. adhere to the policies, procedures and clinical guidelines of the health care provider. 5. work within the boundaries of role competence. 6. seek guidance when unsure how to intervene or act. 7. take responsibility for own actions or omissions.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. effectively manage the nursing care of clients/groups/communities. 2. contribute to the overall goal/mission of the health care institution. 3. demonstrate the ability to work as a team member. 4. determine priorities for care based on need, acuity and optimal time for intervention. 5. select and utilise resources effectively and efficiently. 6. utilise methods to demonstrate quality assurance and quality management. 7. delegate to other nurses activities commensurate with their competence and within their scope of professional practice, having due regard for the principles outlined in the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework, when delegating a particular role or function. 8. facilitate the coordination of care. This is achieved through working with all team members to ensure that client care is appropriate, effective and consistent. 9. provide leadership in clinical practice and act as a resource and role model for a relevant area of practice.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. co-ordinate evidence based practice audit and research to develop and evaluate practice. 2. actively contribute to the professional body of nursing knowledge. 3. demonstrate the value of nursing &amp; midwifery through the generation of nursing knowledge and innovative nursing education and practice. 4. teach others from a broad and in-depth knowledge base, derived from reflection on nursing practice and expertise. 5. Critically review the working of teams and demonstrate skills in negotiation and the management of conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.
All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.

### Competence - Learning to Learn

**Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group.**

**Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically.**

**Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development.**

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<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
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<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. reflect on personal experience to integrate experiential learning with theoretical knowledge.</td>
<td>1. take responsibility for personal and professional development.</td>
<td>1. identify personal learning needs and the steps needed to meet them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. identify personal and professional development needs.</td>
<td>2. act to enhance the personal and professional development of self and others.</td>
<td>2. reflect critically on practice in order to improve it in self and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. take appropriate opportunities to enhance own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.</td>
<td>3. demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning.</td>
<td>3. undertake complex and sustained analysis of subject matter and provide a balanced, logical and coherent conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. show self-direction in use of time, motivation and commitment to enhancing professional development.</td>
<td>4. contribute to the learning experiences of colleagues through support, supervision and teaching.</td>
<td>4. continually evaluate personal contribution to current body of knowledge in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. educate clients/groups/communities to maintain and promote health.</td>
<td>5. utilise life-long learning skills to continue to develop knowledge applied to nursing practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. provide mentorship, preceptorship, teaching, facilitation and professional supervisory skills for nurses, midwives and other health care professionals.</td>
<td>6. explore beyond scope of practice, developing effective and innovative nursing practice.</td>
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<td>7. demonstrate commitment to advancing the body of knowledge in nursing practice.</td>
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</table>
All cognate areas within the discipline of nursing must be at level 8.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence-Insight</th>
<th>LEVEL 7</th>
<th>LEVEL 8</th>
<th>LEVEL 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express an internalised personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to demonstrate an understanding of: 1. the principles of professional regulation. 2. principles governing ethical behaviour in health care. 3. how they can recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence. 4. the need for personal reflection upon clinical practice.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. provide and articulate professional and ethical nursing practice. Safe and effective practice requires a sound underpinning of theoretical knowledge that informs practice and is in turn informed by that practice. 2. practice in accordance with legislation effecting nursing practice. 3. practice within the limits of own competence and takes measures to develop own competence. 4. demonstrate an understanding and consciousness of professional nursing practice issues through the process of reflection on experience. 5. generate and contribute to the development of clinical standards and guidelines 6. use relevant knowledge to support and enhance generalist nursing knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. identify and implement action to improve practice and initiate change. 2. identify and critically evaluate ethical issues and work with others towards their resolution. 3. develop the ability to be political within and outside of his/her employing organisation. 4. challenge assumptions and question values, beliefs and policies underpinning care at individual, team and organisational level. 5. actively contribute to the quality of care through research that can advance nursing and health care knowledge. 6. develop advanced communication skills in order to present balanced arguments. - present structured, rational and evidenced coherent arguments using appropriate strategies. - engage confidently in academic and multi-professional debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express a comprehensive internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others</td>
<td>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes - Incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications - First Edition
Appendix 6
Standards for Midwifery Post-Registration Education Programmes

All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.

Standards – Midwifery² - Post Registration Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge-Breadth</th>
<th>Specialised knowledge across a variety of areas</th>
<th>Understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning</th>
<th>A systematic understanding of knowledge, at, or informed by, the forefront of a field of learning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 7</td>
<td>LEVEL 8</td>
<td>LEVEL 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. demonstrate an integration of knowledge and an understanding of a systematic approach to care and a specified range of midwifery interventions, and of health, ethics, interpersonal communication, management, information technology, numeracy and literacy as applied to maternity care within a maternity care team.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. demonstrate an understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to relevant clinical practice skills, essential for safe and effective midwifery practice.</td>
<td>The graduate should: 1. know how knowledge is created and changed within the midwifery profession. 2. be able to demonstrate a knowledge base that exercises higher levels of judgement, discretion and decision making within midwifery practice. 3. be able to demonstrate the value of midwifery through the generation of midwifery knowledge and innovative clinical practice, midwifery education and management.</td>
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</table>

Note: Pre-registration midwife education programmes are at Level 8.

• Within this document, the use of the word ‘woman’ should be taken to include her fetus/baby where appropriate.
• Within this document, the use of the word ‘family’ refers to any significant others, identified by the woman, and not necessarily blood relatives.

²All Standards should be utilised in conjunction with the Requirements of An Bord Altranais
All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.

| Knowledge-Kind | Recognition of limitations of current knowledge and familiarity with sources of new knowledge; integration of concepts across a variety of areas | Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialised areas, some of it at the current boundaries of the field(s). | A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, generally informed by the forefront of a field of learning |

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<th>LEVEL 7</th>
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| The graduate should be able to:  
1. demonstrate an integration of knowledge of:  
   - assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of midwifery care;  
   - concepts that underpin midwifery practice and maternity care, including social, biological, psychological and related sciences.  
2. recognise the limitations to current competence. | The graduate should:  
1. know and demonstrate an understanding of relevant biological and related sciences as they apply to midwifery practice.  
2. know and demonstrate an understanding of the social sciences as they apply to midwifery practice.  
3. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in contemporary midwifery practice.  
4. critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge in health promotion and health care policy.  
5. demonstrate relevant knowledge to underpin evidence based midwifery practice. | The graduate should:  
1. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from various domains showing a breadth and depth of knowledge of midwifery.  
2. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of knowledge from a broad range of disciplines that inform and develop midwifery practice.  
3. demonstrate the synthesis and integration of the major research methodologies appropriate to midwifery. |
All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know-How &amp; Skill-Range</th>
<th>Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across and area of study</th>
<th>Demonstrate mastery of a complex and specialised area of skills and tools; use and modify advanced skills and tools to conduct closely guided research, professional or advanced technical activity</th>
<th>Demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 7</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:  1. demonstrate defined specialised technical, creative or conceptual midwifery skills and tools, with supervision as appropriate.  2. take responsibility for actions and omissions.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:  1. conduct a comprehensive needs assessment as the basis for independent midwifery practice.  2. provide competent, safe midwifery care to women and, where possible, their wider family circle.  3. demonstrate evidence based clinical practice skills essential for safe midwifery practice.  4. identify and implement health promotion priorities in midwifery practice.  5. implement health promotion strategies for women, their families and the wider community in accordance with the public health agenda.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:  1. make critical choices in the selection of approaches to research problems.  2. synthesise different approaches to research and justify their use in practice.  3. systematically gather, interpret and evaluate evidence drawn from a diverse range of sources that are chosen independently.  4. demonstrate expert skill in providing care for women and groups in communities, within the scope of practice framework and multidisciplinary team.  5. demonstrate advanced clinical decision-making skills to manage a midwifery caseload.  6. evaluate and critique current evidence base to set standards for best practice.</td>
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<td>LEVEL 8</td>
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**All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know-How &amp; Skill-Selectivity</th>
<th>Exercise appropriate judgement in planning, design, technical and/or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes</th>
<th>Exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex planning, design, technical and/or management functions related to products, services, operations or processes, including resourcing</th>
<th>Select from complex and advanced skills across a field of learning; develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques</th>
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<th>LEVEL 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. exercise relevant judgement in participating in the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of midwifery care for women with appropriate supervision. 2. undertake delegated duties in a reliable manner taking responsibility for actions or omissions, as appropriate. 3. seek guidance in situations beyond experience or competence. 4. utilise knowledge experience, learning resources from diverse sources to enhance competence.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. identify and meet the midwifery care needs of women, their families and community in all health care settings. 2. demonstrate the skills of - analysis - critical thinking - problem solving, and - reflection in midwifery practice. 3. where appropriate, act as an effective member of the maternity care team and participate in the multidisciplinary team approach to the care of women. 4. evaluate practice and use current research findings to underpin clinical midwifery practice promoting the normality of pregnancy and birth. 5. articulate and represent women’s interests and enable women to fully participate as partners in decisions about their maternity care needs. 6. implement changes in maternity care service in response to women’s needs and choices, and service demand.</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to: 1. critically evaluate with discrimination the complex theories and concepts underpinning professional midwifery practice. 2. utilise advanced knowledge and critical thinking skills to directly and indirectly provide optimum midwifery care. 3. develop and apply critical faculties to practice through advanced reflection skills. 4. demonstrate a vision of professional practice that can be developed beyond current scope of practice. 5. act proactively as an educational resource for healthcare professionals. 6. apply critical faculties to professional midwifery practice through analysis of the underlying epistemology of its knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.

| Competence - Context | Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts | Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts | Act in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional levels and ill-defined contexts |

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<tr>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
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<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. utilise skills in a wide range of appropriate functions in the health care setting with appropriate supervision.</td>
<td>1. adopt a holistic approach to midwifery care and the integration of knowledge. Conduct a systematic holistic assessment of women’s needs based on midwifery theory and evidence-based practice.</td>
<td>1. demonstrate autonomy, experience, competence, accountability, authority and responsibility in midwifery practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. seek and understand sources of evidence to underpin midwifery care interventions.</td>
<td>2. plan care in partnership with the woman taking into consideration the role and potential input of all members of the maternity care team.</td>
<td>2. demonstrate leadership in midwifery practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. implement planned midwifery care to achieve the identified outcomes.</td>
<td>3. use knowledge to autonomously identify, resolve and evaluate intellectual issues and practical problems that appear in midwifery practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. evaluate a woman’s progress toward expected outcomes and review plans in accordance with evaluation data and partnership with the woman.</td>
<td>4. identify and integrate research into areas of health care that can incorporate best evidence based practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. establish and maintain caring interpersonal relationships with women and their families.</td>
<td>5. use advanced skills to conduct an in-depth research study relevant to professional midwifery practice.</td>
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</table>
All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence - Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes; take significant supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work</td>
<td>1. accept responsibility for personal outcomes within a defined range of midwifery care activities. 2. undertake delegated midwifery care duties with supervision as appropriate. 3. respect the expertise of and work collaboratively with all members of the multi-professional care team. 4. adhere to the policies, procedures and clinical guidelines of the health care provider. 5. work within the boundaries of role competence. 6. seek guidance when unsure how to intervene or act. 7. take responsibility for own actions or omissions.</td>
<td>1. co-ordinate evidence based practice audit and research to develop and evaluate midwifery practice. 2. actively contribute to the professional body of midwifery knowledge. 3. demonstrate the value of midwifery through the generation of midwifery knowledge and innovative midwifery education and practice. 4. teach others from a broad and in-depth knowledge base, derived from reflection on midwifery practice and expertise. 5. Critically review the working of teams and demonstrate skills in negotiation and the management of conflict.</td>
<td>1. take significant responsibility for the work of individuals and groups; lead and initiate activity.</td>
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All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.

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<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Express an internalised personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</td>
<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
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<td>The graduate should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Express a comprehensive internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others</td>
<td>1. the principles of professional regulation for midwives. 2. principles governing ethical behaviour in maternity care. 3. how he/she can recognise limitations of own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence. 4. the need for personal reflection upon clinical practice in midwifery.</td>
<td>1. provide and articulate professional and ethical midwifery practice. Safe and effective practice requires a sound underpinning of theoretical knowledge that informs practice and is in turn informed by that practice. 2. practice in accordance with legislation affecting midwifery practice. 3. practice within the limits of own competence and take measures to develop own competence. 4. demonstrate an understanding and consciousness of professional midwifery practice issues through the process of reflection on experience. 5. generate and contribute to the development of clinical standards and guidelines. 6. use relevant knowledge to support and enhance midwifery knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>1. identify and implement action to improve midwifery practice and initiate change. 2. identify and critically evaluate ethical issues and work with others towards their resolution. 3. develop the ability to be political within and outside of his/her employing organisation. 4. challenge assumptions and question values, beliefs and policies underpinning maternity care at individual, team and organisational level. 5. actively contribute to the quality of care through research that can advance midwifery and maternity care knowledge. 6. develop advanced communication skills in order to present balanced arguments. - present structured, rational and evidenced coherent arguments using appropriate strategies. - engage confidently in academic and multi-professional debate.</td>
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All cognate areas within the discipline of midwifery must be at level 8.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Competence- Learning to Learn</th>
<th>Competence- Insight</th>
<th>Competence-</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take initiative to identify and address learning needs and interact effectively in a learning group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Express an internalised personal world view, manifesting solidarity with others</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learn to take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learn to act in variable and unfamiliar contexts; learn to manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically</strong></td>
<td><strong>Express a comprehensive internalised, personal world view manifesting solidarity with others</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learn to self-evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and act to change them</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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### LEVEL 7

The graduate should be able to:

1. reflect on personal experience to integrate experiential learning with theoretical knowledge.
2. identify personal and professional development needs.
3. take appropriate opportunities to enhance own level of knowledge, skill, attitude or competence.
4. show self-direction in use of time, motivation and commitment to enhancing professional development.

### LEVEL 8

The graduate should be able to:

1. take responsibility for personal and professional development.
2. act to enhance the personal and professional development of self and others.
3. demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.
4. contribute to the learning experiences of colleagues through support, supervision and teaching.
5. educate and support women, their families and the wider community to maintain and promote health.
6. provide mentorship, preceptorship, teaching, facilitation and professional supervisory skills for midwives and other health care professionals.

### LEVEL 9

The graduate should be able to:

1. identify personal learning needs and the steps needed to meet them.
2. reflect critically on midwifery practice in order to improve it in self and others.
3. undertake complex and sustained analysis of subject matter and provide a balanced, logical and coherent conclusion.
4. continually evaluate personal contribution to current body of midwifery knowledge in practice.
5. utilise life-long learning skills to continue to develop knowledge applied to midwifery practice.
6. explore beyond scope of practice, developing effective and innovative midwifery practice.
7. demonstrate commitment to advancing the body of knowledge in midwifery practice.

### LEVEL 7

The graduate should be able to:

1. provide and articulate professional and ethical midwifery practice. Safe and effective practice requires a sound underpinning of theoretical knowledge that informs practice and is in turn informed by that practice.
2. practice in accordance with legislation affecting midwifery practice.
3. practice within the limits of own competence and take measures to develop own competence.
4. demonstrate an understanding and consciousness of professional midwifery practice issues through the process of reflection on experience.
5. generate and contribute to the development of clinical standards and guidelines.
6. use relevant knowledge to support and enhance midwifery knowledge and practice.

### LEVEL 8

The graduate should be able to:

1. identify and implement action to improve midwifery practice and initiate change.
2. identify and critically evaluate ethical issues and work with others towards their resolution.
3. develop the ability to be political within and outside of his/her employing organisation.
4. challenge assumptions and question values, beliefs and policies underpinning maternity care at individual, team and organisational level.
5. actively contribute to the quality of care through research that can advance midwifery and maternity care knowledge.
6. develop advanced communication skills in order to present balanced arguments. - present structured, rational and evidenced coherent arguments using appropriate strategies. - engage confidently in academic and multi-professional debate.
Appendix 7
Submission Criteria for Approval by An Bord Altranais

Submissions should include:

Curriculum design, content and organisation

- Background to the programmes/units of learning, evidence including service evidence at policy and local level to support or justify the programmes/units of learning.
- Programmes/units design, academic level (National Framework of Qualifications), Access, transfer and progression, balance of theory/academic and clinical/practical experience (where appropriate to programmes/units of learning), flexibility, coherence (logical progression through the programmes/units of learning), integrity (feasibility of attainment of outcomes and assessments) and external reference points (research, regulation, health policy, demographics).
- Philosophy of nursing/midwifery philosophy congruent with programmes/units of learning speciality
- Philosophy of education.
- Curriculum model.
- Nursing and midwifery educational theories underpinning programmes/units of learning are explicit.
- Aims of programmes/units of learning
- Learning outcomes of programmes/units of learning
- Full unit of learning or module descriptors.
- Assessment criteria both theoretical and clinical competence assessment where applicable.
- A framework to facilitate credit accumulation and transfer is evident within programmes i.e. ECTS Framework.
- The programmes/units of learning presented are logically structured to meet the aims and objectives/outcomes of the programme.

Teaching / learning and assessment

- Methods of facilitating learning (both theoretical and clinical) are made explicit.
- Marks and standards for programmes/units of learning.
- Evaluation policy and procedures.
- Student transfer, progression and achievement.
- Entry requirements/access criteria (including An Bord Altranais Registration).
- Duration and modes of attendance.
- A circuit of clinical placement(s) as appropriate identified.
- Awards type outlined as per Framework of Qualifications.
- Relationship of the programmes/units of learning to others in the educational arena.
- Relationship of the programmes/units of learning to the Framework of Qualifications.
Learning resources

- Teaching accommodation, organisational facilities
- Human (academic and clinical) module/units of learning and programme leader details and clinical support/supervision details.
- Curriculum Vitae of personnel of programmes/units of learning to be submitted.
- Information technology in support of programmes/units of learning
- Library resources in relation to programmes/units of learning.
- Student support in practice.

Quality management and enhancement

- Audit of clinical and educational learning environment relevant to the programmes/units of learning aims and outcomes are explicit.
- Quality assurance criteria as per relevant educational provider, awarding body and An Bord Altranais are made explicit.
- Evaluation policy, strategy and methodology. Evaluation policy and procedures/methods explicit, data collected to include information about academic and clinical dimensions of programmes/units of learning.
- Committee structures representative of differing educational providers, Third Level Institutions, Health Service Educational Providers/Institutions, Regional Centres for Nurse (Midwifery) Education, Voluntary/Statutory Bodies and Professional Bodies and other stakeholders appropriate for post-registration nursing and midwifery education programmes.
- Structures for regular monitoring and review of the programmes/units of learning.
- External examiner details as appropriate to named award.
Appendix 8
Guidance for Education Programmes/Units of Learning Writers utilising the National Framework of Qualification.

1 The programme development teams discuss the initial idea of the proposed education programme/units of learning with the relevant educational providers/stakeholders (e.g., Health Service Providers, Third Level Institutions, Regional Centres for Nurse (Midwifery) Education, Voluntary/Statutory and Professional Bodies etc).

2 Notify An Bord Altranais of the proposed programme/units of learning being developed by the respective educational providers.

3 Explore potential outcomes of the proposed education programme/units of learning and match to the appropriate level of indicators (7-9) on the National Framework of Qualifications grid.

4 Consider the choice of Award-Types
   - Major Award
   - Minor Award
   - Supplemental Award
   - Special-Purpose Award.

5 Form a curriculum/working group/committee or equivalent representing the appropriate stakeholders and write the education programme/units of learning taking the following into consideration:
   a. Liaise with the Education Officer of An Bord Altranais responsible for post registration education. The respective Education Officer could be invited to advise the programme development team. Alternatively if this is not possible the programme development team should meet with the Education Officer at an early stage in the programme/units of learning development process to discuss the programme/units of learning outline and rationale for the proposed programme/units of learning. The Board should be kept appraised of progress at mutually agreed times and relevant documentation supplied to the Board as appropriate.
   b. The specific outcome of the education programme/units of learning.
   c. The specific level of indicators/learning outcomes between 7-9 as applied to nursing and midwifery standards on the National Framework of Qualification grid.
   d. The 8 sub-strands on the National Framework of Qualification grid.
   e. The Award-type on the National Framework of Qualification grid.
   f. Refer to the ‘Requirements and Standards for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes – incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications’ (An Bord Altranais, 2010).

6 Submit the education programme/units of learning to the appropriate Education Officer for approval by the Education and Training Committee of An Bord Altranais (Statutory requirement (Part IV 36 (1) (d) Nurses Act 1985).

7 Where approval has been withheld by An Bord Altranais conditions that will determine approval at a future date will be forwarded to the programmes/units of learning development teams.
Appendix 9
Process of Approval for Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Programmes/Units of learning

Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education

Post-registration nursing and midwifery education forms part of continuing professional development and represents a lifelong learning process that takes place after the completion of an initial programme leading to Registration as a nurse or midwife. The principle of lifelong learning is intrinsic to the policies of An Bord Altranais and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. It consists of planned learning experiences, which are designed to augment the knowledge, know-how and competence of registered nurses and midwives for the enhancement of nursing/midwifery practice, education, administration and research.

Process for Approval

When submitting Post-Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education Programmes/Units of Learning to An Bord Altranais for approval such programmes must be consistent with the following standards, requirements and professional guidance:

1. The explicit reference in the stated learning outcomes to:
   a. The National Framework of Qualifications 10-level structure of awards – classified as Major, Minor, Special-purpose or Supplemental type – and with reference to entry, transfer and progression arrangements.
   b. The knowledge, know-how and competence to be developed during the programmes/units of learning in accordance with the level indicators published by the National Qualification Authority of Ireland.
   c. The Nursing and Midwifery Standards for NQAI Levels 7-9.
   d. The An Bord Altranais Domains of Competence.

On completion of each programme/unit of learning an evaluation report must be submitted to An Bord Altranais and the relevant awarding bodies together with the names and Personal Identification Numbers of all participants where appropriate who have successfully completed and become eligible for a named award.

An Bord Altranais approval will apply for a maximum of five years from date of approval, following which re-application will be necessary. This will ensure curricular content and learning outcomes are responsive to changing needs and requirements for knowledge, know-how, competence and technology.
Appendix 10
Membership of Initial Steering Committee

Ms. Anne Carrigy, President of An Bord Altranais (Chairperson).
Mr. Ken Brennan, Board Member, An Bord Altranais.
Dr. Gary Brown, Institute of Technology, Tralee.
Ms. Mary Courtney, NMPDU Directors Group.
Prof. Seamus Cowman, Faculty of Nursing, RCSI.
Dr. Gerard Fealy, Heads of Schools of Nursing in Universities (CHIU).
Ms. Anne Gallen, National Workforce Planning Group.
Ms. Barbara Garrigan, Association of Directors of Centres for Nurse Education.
Ms. Eilish Hardiman, Association of Directors of Nursing and Midwifery.
Ms. Jenny Hogan, National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery.
Ms. Barbara Kelly, FETAC.
Ms. Angela Lambkin, FETAC.
Ms. Patricia Larkin, Department of Health and Children.
Ms. Aideen O’Connor, Heads of Nursing Studies in Institutes of Technology (later replaced by Mr. Des Cawley).
Dr. Kathleen MacLellan, National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery.
Ms. Fiona McMahon, Health Service Employers Agency.
Ms. Catherine McTiernan, Board Member, An Bord Altranais.
Dr. Anna Murphy, NQAI (later replaced by Dr. Jim Murray).
Ms. Mary Sheridan, HETAC.
Ms. Sheila Sugrue, Board Member, An Bord Altranais.
Mr. John Sweeney, Heads of Schools of Nursing (CHIU).
Dr. Katie Sweeney, Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology.
Mr. Sean Treanor, Department of Health and Children.

Subcommittee Membership:

Mr. Ken Brennan, Board Member, An Bord Altranais.
Dr. Gary Brown, Head Nursing Department, Institute of Technology, Tralee.
Mr. Des Cawley, A/Head of Nursing Department, Institute of Technology, Athlone
Prof. Seamus Cowman, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.
Ms. Anne Gallen, Manpower Planning, Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit.
Ms. Barbara Garrigan, Director Centre for Nurse Education, St James’s Hospital.
Ms. Jenny Hogan, National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery.
Ms. Mary Sheridan, Head of Standards Management, Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC).
Mr. John Sweeney, CHIU, Lecturer, National University of Ireland, Cork.
In attendance:

Dr. Anne-Marie Ryan, Chief Education Officer, An Bord Altranais.

Mr. Thomas Kearns, Acting Chief Education Officer, An Bord Altranais (Project Lead).

Dr. Mary Hodson, Project Coordinator, An Bord Altranais.

Ms. Ursula Byrne, Education Officer, An Bord Altranais.

Mr. Leo D’Arcy, Education Officer, An Bord Altranais.

Ms. Brenda Connaughton, Project Administrator, An Bord Altranais.
References:


Web addresses:

An Bord Altranais - www.nursingboard.ie
Department of Health and Children - www.dohc.ie
Further Education and Training Awards Council - www.fetac.ie
Health Service Executive - www.hse.ie
Higher Education and Training Awards Council - www.hetac.ie
National Council for The Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery - www.ncnm.ie
The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland - www.nqai.ie