

NURSE EDUCATION IN EUROPE



Position Paper



POSITION PAPER ON NURSE EDUCATION IN EUROPE

To the European Commission.



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Namur, Belgium

Highlighting the crucial role of Nurse Education in Europe as a vital link in addressing the sustainability of the nursing workforce amidst the ongoing health crisis.

What is our position about this issue?

Globally, there are problems with securing a sustainable nurse workforce, whilst Nurse Education in Europe is experiencing several challenges. This position paper seeks to address some key challenges and make recommendations, drawing upon the recognition that nurse education is a vital link in the development of a sustainable professional nursing workforce.

First, **FINE** proposes that **there is currently a lack of clarity in the educational structure**, particularly related to Level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). There needs to be a clearer consensus definition of academic qualification agreed to meet the standards of Directive 2005/36 and become a Nurse Responsible for General Care. Secondly, in response to nurse shortages across Europe **a concerning trend is being observed, whereby regulators of member states reduce educational requirements**, thus risking the quality of patient care. There is a need for robust programmes in the Higher education system, designed and monitored to meet agreed professional quality standards for regulation. Thirdly, **nurses face challenges in mobility across countries due to inconsistent educational standards**, necessitating harmonization of nursing education programs and regular quality monitoring and assessment. Fourthly, **nursing education programmes need greater flexibility in order to incorporate advances in science and technology and prepare nurses for emerging healthcare realities**.

Furthermore, the wellbeing of nursing students and educators is of significant concern. Enhancing emotional support, ensuring safe learning environments, and broadening the definition of clinical learning to include supportive activities are essential steps to support students as they learn to become new professionals. Importantly, there is an urgent need for more qualified nurse educators and clinical mentors, requiring strategic planning and investment by countries and their HE providers to ensure an adequate supply. Finally, there is a need to bridge generational gaps through role modelling and promoting advanced nursing practice. These steps are necessary to optimize nurses' role in healthcare, with strong leadership needed to guide the development and evolution of nursing education programmes.

Addressing these issues aims to create a robust, adaptable, and supportive framework for nursing education, ultimately improving healthcare delivery across Europe.

The  recommendation are as follows:

Educational Structure and Standards

- **Continuum in Nurse Education Programme based on EQF levels:**
 - Level 4 to 5: Nursing care assistant or health care assistant or equivalent role.
 - Level 6 : Nurse responsible for general care.
 - Levels 6 to 8: Specialist nurse, advanced practitioner, or consultant.
- **Reserve the title of “Nurse Responsible for General Care”:** Specific to Level 6 (Bachelor degree) of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
- **Clarify** minimum academic requirements as per Directive 2005/36, reviewed in 2013.
- **Define** the duration of training in credits rather than hours and review the balance between theoretical and clinical learning.
- **Include** in the definition of clinical learning activities that are directly related to care situations, patients and teams, such as simulation, virtual reality, analysis of practice, clinical reasoning, case studies, critical thinking, problem based learning.
- **Maintain** Education Standards: Emphasize the importance of an education programme in Higher education System for nurses to address health challenges and the complexity of care: Revision of Directive 2005/36, Annex 5: Include scope and learning outcomes in the presentation.

Mobility and Harmonization

- **Enhanced** Mobility and Harmonization.
- **Promote opportunities** and channels for nurses to move across countries.
- **Harmonize nursing education** programs with periodic quality assessments.
- **Flexibility** in Program Delivery.
- **Adapt programs** to meet the needs of emerging science and technological advances in nursing theory and clinical practice.



Student and Educator Wellbeing

- **Promoting Wellbeing** focusing on the wellbeing of students and educators.
- **Include emotional support** and social prescribing as essential elements.
- **Safe Learning Spaces** for learning, especially in clinical settings including quality assurance and monitoring of learning experience.
- **Broadening Clinical Learning** through widening the definition of clinical practice learning opportunities to include activities such as (though not exhaustive) simulation, pedagogy, internship debriefing, practice analysis, and written reports.

Innovation and Leadership

- **Facilitate Authentic Leadership** to guide the development of education opportunities.
- **Humanize Care Delivery** through promoting kindness and empathy while embracing technological applications in care delivery.
- **Assure a Quality Workforce Supply** through urgent strategic planning and investment to ensure an adequate supply of nurse educators and clinical educators (mentors)
- **Bridge Generational Gaps** using role modelling as a learning vehicle to bridge generational gaps.
- **Promote Advance Nursing Practice** to optimise nurses' participation and input in health and social care systems.



and its stakeholders wish to contribute to upcoming policy development and strategy. We aim to provide information to enrich post-election debates and support the new Commission's mandate. Given the ongoing and critical situation of the shortage and the low influx of new students entering the nursing education pathway compounded by critical retention rates of student and qualified nurses, we expect the health workforce to be a priority once again. We propose the establishment of a European-targeted nurse education working group, reflecting the full spectrum of European nursing organizations, to serve as a platform for frequent consultations

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The mission, and vision of the

FINE is an international, non-governmental, nonprofit organization. Its mission consists in promoting excellence in nursing education, as well as nurse educators' education and maintenance in the countries of the **World Health Organization's European** region, so as to better address their populations' constantly evolving health needs.

FINE strategic goals :

- Promote excellence in nursing sciences education by properly preparing educators.
- Promote the added value and image of nursing education in Europe.
- Defend the interests of students and educators in nursing sciences, at every level.
- Influence the elaboration of policies related to nursing education at a European level.

Endorsing organisations:



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