Nurse Practitioner Training Programme: 

The Facts
Nurse Practitioner (NP) Training Programme: The Facts

Whilst a great many nurses in New Zealand have completed the required preparation for a clinical Master’s degree, relatively few have progressed to NP registration. To address this situation, The University of Auckland and Massey University have been awarded funding to pilot 20 NP training positions by Health Workforce New Zealand in 2016. This training programme seeks to increase coordination between potential NPs, their employers, tertiary education providers, and New Zealand Nursing Council. The aim is to align and promote NP preparation, registration and employment into a seamless pathway.

MN pathway for NP applicants

- This NP pathway is embedded in the MN programme already approved by CUAP and the Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ).
- The entry point to the final step of the pathway is a relevant Postgraduate Diploma (see entry criteria) and the completion point is a Master of Nursing (MN).
- This pathway will be delivered over 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time.

Objectives

- Prepare advanced practice nurses for NP roles and NP registration
- Provide a pathway within the approved MN programme that is specifically designed for prospective NPs
- Support 500 hours of closely supervised clinical time to practice the advanced nursing skills needed for NP registration, such as prescribing
- Synchronize NP registration processes with New Zealand Nursing Council
- Employer commitment to hire NP once registered following successful completion of training programme

Entry criteria

Nurses entering into the final NP MN year will have completed at least a Postgraduate Diploma and will undergo a formal application and acceptance process for 20 training positions.

Entry criteria:

- Four years clinical practice in a specific area of practice
- Clinical nursing postgraduate diploma qualification with B average or higher
- Written confirmation from employer indicating support for the student to enroll in the NP training programme, release for clinical supervision time and a commitment to hire the nurse upon NP registration
- Written agreement from a prescribing health professional such as a Nurse Practitioner or Medical Provider to provide one to one clinical supervision

Prerequisites

Advanced Practicum in Nursing and Prescribing in Advanced Nursing Practice have three pre-requisite papers which must be completed prior to enrolling in the final NP MN year:

- Advanced Assessment and Clinical Reasoning
- Advanced Pathophysiology
- Advanced Pharmacology
Curriculum

The NP pathway pilot is embedded in the postgraduate nursing courses that already exist within those delivered in University of Auckland and Massey Schools of Nursing. Therefore the pathway is constructed from courses already developed and successfully taught and in a sequence that systematically builds the competencies required for NPs by the Nursing Council of New Zealand (2008).

The requirements for the entire MN are made up of three consecutive qualifications:

- Postgraduate Certificate → Postgraduate Diploma → Master of Nursing

- Students should complete the postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma (which includes advanced assessment, advanced pathophysiology and, advanced pharmacology).

- They apply for acceptance in the Master of Nursing NP Training course (10 months in length full time, February to November). This programme includes two days a week of clinical practice for 10 months (500 hours of practice) with an employer who has committed to hiring the NP upon registration.

- To successfully complete the NP training programme, the student is required to complete a NP portfolio and submit it New Zealand Nursing Council for NP registration.

- Nurses may transfer credits from another university either at a completed post graduate Certificate or Diploma level.

- Students on the NP pathway will complete a maximum of 120 points to complete the final step – the MN.

- Individual academic advice is essential for these nurses using transfer credit to ensure they receive case-by-case guidance for enrolment into the appropriate courses to meet equivalent learning outcomes of the courses named above.

Courses within each step NP Pathway (or variation depending on University regulations)

Nurses on the NP pathway begin with a Postgraduate Certificate with required courses including:

- Advanced Assessment and Clinical Reasoning
- Advanced Pathophysiology

Followed by courses for the Postgraduate Diploma and these required courses:

- Optional courses in their clinical specialty
- Advanced Pharmacology

The final step is the Master of Nursing includes the following courses:

- Evidence Based Practice & Implementation (or variation)
- Clinical Project (or variation)

Plus two clinical practicums - taken in the final year of study consecutively

- Advanced Nursing Practicum – advanced diagnostic reasoning and treatment planning (250 hours clinical practicum component)
- Prescribing in Advanced Nursing Practice (250 hours clinical practicum component)
Clinical practice requirements

- Students enrolled in the training programme must have commitment from employers to support them during the programme and also commit to hiring them at the conclusion of the programme. This can either be through the student’s existing workplace, or through other employers indicating an identified need for an NP position.

- Each student will be required to commit to supervised (by a current prescriber) clinical practice time of a minimum of 16 hours per week (500 hours total) over the two practicum courses. This time must be outside of the student’s non-prescribing work hours.

- The employer who has committed to hire the student upon NP registration is reimbursed through Health Workforce New Zealand to fund the NP training student’s clinical time.

Access to supervised clinical time must be negotiated by the student with their employer before acceptance into the pathway and written agreement from their current employer must be provided. The pathway coordinator will assist students to organise this with their employers.

Clinical supervision

- Each student will be supervised in the clinical practice time in practicum papers by an appropriately qualified prescribing health professional (NP preferred).

- The appointment of a clinical supervisor must be negotiated with partner NP employers prior to enrolment in the practicum.

- The student must negotiate with their current employer prior to acceptance in the pathway with the support of the NP pathway coordinator.

For more information on the NP Training Programme, please contact the following representatives:

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