

# Introduction to practice nursing courses

The work of a general practice nurse (GPN) covers such a wide remit that not everything can be delivered in one module. There are, however, certain basics that need to be covered in introduction to practice nursing modules. These areas are highlighted in *Liberating the Talents*,<sup>1</sup> which provides national direction for primary care nursing. The core functions should include health promotion, first contact and long-term conditions. Below are a couple of examples of an introduction to practice nursing modules. The first is from Staffordshire University and the second is from South West Peninsula Deanery.

**Module title:** Introduction to practice nursing  
**Module code:** HEN56335-2  
**Group/award:** Individual modules/diploma in nursing  
**Number in group:**  
**Module tutor:**  
**Module tutor:**

	Session time	Title	Speaker
<b>Day:</b>	09.00–10.00	Introduction to module	
<b>Date:</b>	10.00–10.30	Coffee	
<b>Room:</b>	10.30–12.00	Consultation skills	
<b>Venue:</b>	12.00–13.00	Lunch	
	13.00–14.30	The role of the practice nurse today	
	14.30–14.45	Tea	
	14.45–16.00	The competency framework and meet mentor	

<b>Day:</b>	09.00–10.30	Infection control in primary care	
<b>Date:</b>	10.30–11.00	Coffee	
<b>Room:</b>	11.00–12.30	Principles of health promotion	
<b>Venue:</b>	12.30–13.15	Lunch	
	13.15–14.30	Childhood vaccinations and immunisations	
	14.30–14.45	Tea	
	14.45–16.00	Patient group directions and safe storage of medicines	

<b>Day:</b>	09.00–10.30	Principles of long-term conditions management	
<b>Date:</b>	10.30–11.00	Coffee	
<b>Room:</b>	11.00–12.30	Audit in long-term conditions management	
<b>Venue:</b>	12.30–13.15	Lunch	
	13.15–14.30	Health policy relating to primary care	
	14.30–14.45	Tea	
	14.45–16.00	Practical principles of long-term conditions management relating to coronary heart disease/asthma/diabetes	

	Session time	Title	Speaker
Day: Date: Room: Venue:	09.00–11.00 11.00–11.30 11.30–13.00 13.00–14.00 14.00–16.00	Ear syringing and examination: evidence-based practice Coffee Venepuncture: evidence-based practice Lunch Contraception and sexual health	
Day: Date: Room: Venue:	09.00–10.30 10.30–11.00 11.00–12.00 12.00–13.00 13.00–14.00 14.00–16.00	Wound care: evidence-based practice Coffee Wound care session continued Difficult dressings: a practical approach Lunch Tutorials	
Day: Date: Room: Venue:	09.00–10.30 10.30–11.00 11.00–12.00 12.00–13.00 13.00–14.15 14.15–14.30 14.30–16.00	Principles of screening Coffee New patient and well-person screening Lunch Cervical screening: epidemiology and laboratory perspectives Tea Taking cervical smears	
Day: Date: Room: Venue:	09.00–10.30 10.30–11.00 11.00–12.00 12.00–13.00 13.00–16.00	Travel health Coffee Travel health session continued Lunch Reflection on practice	
Day: Date: Room: Venue:	09.00–10.30 10.30–11.00 11.00–12.30 12.30–13.30 13.30–14.30 14.30–14.45 14.45–16.00	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and anaphylaxis Coffee Reflection of critical incidents Lunch Review of competency frameworks Tea Professional development: the way forward and module evaluation	

This introduction to practice nursing module is run at level 2 (diploma level) with 15 credits awarded to it. It comprises 8 study days over a 12-week period. Certificates are issued for the session on CPR and anaphylaxis to satisfy the requirement for annual updating. All students enrolling on this course will need a mentor to enable them to complete the clinical competence document. The document must be completed within 16 weeks of commencing the module. After successful completion of the course, the students' clinical competence framework will be returned and this can serve as a credible statement of basic competence in practice nursing. This will be reassuring to GP employers and primary care trusts (PCTs) employing the nurse to undertake bank work. The course is only intended to provide a basic competence that maximises patient safety within general practice. Students will be informed that undertaking this course does not negate the need for them to undertake more detailed training in specialist areas, such as cervical cytology, particularly if they wish to run nurse-led clinics in long-term conditions etc.

The learning outcomes for the course include:

- *analysis of the role of the practice nurse*
- *exploring current health policy relating to primary care*
- *exploring the concepts of clinical governance*
- *applying principles of long-term conditions management within the practice population*
- *applying principles of health promotion within the practice population*
- *examining principles of screening*
- *demonstrating competent practice in relation to:*
  - *immunisations and vaccinations*
  - *cervical screening*
  - *ear syringing*
  - *venepuncture*
  - *CPR*
  - *well-person screening*
  - *delivering health promotion*
  - *infection control*
  - *safe storage of medicines*
  - *wound care.*

## General practice nursing foundation programme

An academically approved programme designed to address the core competences and current educational requirements for nurses newly appointed to the role of general practice nurse.

This programme has the support of the Directorate of Workforce and Learning of the South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority, PCTs across the Peninsula and the Tamar Faculty of The Royal College of General Practitioners.

### Overall aim

The programme provides the nurse with the knowledge and skills required to undertake their new role and work effectively and safely within the environment of general practice. It also takes into consideration the workforce requirements of the employing organisation.

## Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of the programme are aligned with those of the Work Based Learning modules (NURB 348 and HEA 366) of the Faculty of Health and Social Work, University of Plymouth. There are specific learning outcomes for the taught clinical sessions relevant to the role.

## Course structure and content

Core themes running throughout the programme:

- *consultation skills*
- *legal, ethical and professional issues*
- *health and safety*
- *infection control*
- *health promotion and behavioural change*
- *clinical governance*
- *team work and leadership*
- *organisational issues.*

The 19 taught days are delivered at intervals in blocks of 1–3 days over several months. Clinical topics include ear care, tissue viability, immunisations and travel health, contraception, diabetes, coronary heart disease, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and mental health plus tutorial time. A total of 15 hours of one-to-one tutorial time with an experienced practice nurse educationalist is included in the programme. This usually takes place within the student's workplace and can be accessed immediately following appointment.

## The teaching team and methodologies

The programme tutors are all experienced health professionals and educationalists most of whom are currently working within general practice. They have all undertaken specific education to equip them to fulfil their role. Teaching methodologies include problem-based learning, one-to-one tutorials, demonstrations, video analysis, observational site visits, small group work, case analysis, lectures and reflective practice.

## Assessment

The assessment strategies are designed to measure the student's overall ability to function as a practice-based nurse working under the supervision of a senior colleague. The summative assessment is in two parts. The first is in the format of a structured, reflective portfolio and the second consists of a written report addressing the agreed learning outcomes of the Work Based Learning Programme. Assessment of the clinical outcomes is formative and is evidenced through the completion of the Competency Based Monitoring Log aligned to the *NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework, Version 7*.<sup>2</sup>

## Accreditation

Accreditation is through the Work Based Learning Module of the Faculty of Health and Social Work, University of Plymouth. On successful completion of the assignments, students can acquire 40 credits at Level 3 (Degree Level). Throughout the programme academic support is provided by Peninsula Postgraduate Health Institute and the Faculty staff. Students are not required to have gained a Level 2 diploma before accessing the programme and although the academic pathway is not mandatory we strongly encourage students to pursue the University pathway. Registration with the University requires the student to attend a registration and study skills day prior to undertaking the programme.

## Cost

The full cost of the programme is £1,600 per student including accreditation. The practice contribution is £450. Funding options may be available in your area. Dorf Ruscoe is the Programme Lead, and Jean Lyle is the Module Leader. For an application form please contact:

Peninsula Postgraduate Health Institute (Exeter)

PMS Building

Barrack Road

Exeter EX2 5AX

E-mail: [info@pphi.ac.uk](mailto:info@pphi.ac.uk)

For an informal discussion about the programme ask to speak to Annabel Tester – Programmes Co-ordinator on Tel: 01392 406816.

## References

1. Department of Health. Liberating the Talents, Helping Primary Care Trusts and Nurses to Deliver the NHS Plan. London: 2002. Available at: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/62/50/04076250.pdf>.
2. Department of Health. The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework. London: Department of Health; 2004. Available at: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/19/67/04071967.pdf>.