

**ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (APEL)
Graduate/Postgraduate Diploma (Nursing/Public Health Nursing)
2011/2012**

The Graduate/Postgraduate Diploma (Nursing/Public Health Nursing) is a graduate/registration programme. As such candidates are required to meet both the entry requirements of An Bord Altranais and the Universities/college education providers (NUIG, UCC, UCD, and STACS).

The academic entry requirements for the Graduate/Postgraduate Diploma (Nursing/Public Health Nursing) include holding a NQAI Level 8 qualification (Honours Degree or Higher Diploma). However, third level institutions are committed to widening access to academic programmes. Students who do not meet the NQAI Level 8 requirements may be considered for entry to the programme through the Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) process. APEL is the framework for accreditation for prior experiential learning.

APEL takes account of experiential learning which is learning achieved through work, the community or related setting. Experiential learning is judged and recognised as being worthy for consideration for entry to a programme of study not for credit within the programme. The APEL process is of particular value to candidates who for a variety of reasons such as geographical location, family commitments or other personal reasons are unable to undertake formal educational programmes such as an Honours Degree or Higher Diploma. The focus of APEL accreditation is on the outcomes of the learning rather than on the experience of learning. For example, it might include a personal reflection following a study day on infection control and how the principles are applied in clinical practice. The focus might be on what changes he/she made, the resources accessed, the people contacted as well as the impact on the individual and family he/she cared for. Included in the process is a critical evaluation of the changes on individual and family care. A search of the literature is included to provide the evidence base for the change.

ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Candidates applying for consideration for entry using APEL are required to submit relevant evidence in accordance with appropriate guidelines. The following guidelines are based on the framework developed by the National Council for Professional Development of Nurses and midwives on portfolio development for nurses and midwives (National Council for Professional Development of Nurses and Midwives, 2006)¹. The following guidelines are specific to the above programmes.

The candidate is required to submit a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their suitability for admission to the programmes.

The Portfolio assessment requires the candidate to submit the following:

- Personal information
- General education
- Professional education
- Employment history
- Continuing professional development

The portfolio should demonstrate how the candidate's clinical experience to date has prepared them for the role of a Public Health Nurse. Candidates must

¹ The guidelines of the National Council for Professional Development of Nurses and midwives on portfolio development for nurses and midwives can be found using the following link <http://www.ncnm.ie/files/Portfolio%20Guidelines%202nd%20Ed.pdf>

critically reflect on the domains of competence that demonstrate their suitability for Public Health Nursing. (An Bord Altranais, 2005)².

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PORTFOLIO

- **Cover page** with the following details
 - Name
 - Address
 - An Bord Altranais PIN
 - Word Count for Section 2
 - Signed Declaration

- **Section 1:**

Relevant Professional History.

Within this section you are required to describe in essay style your relevant professional history highlighting and discussing your achievements in the following areas. Please limit this section to one page only, no grids or tables are to be included. (This section is not included in your word count).

- General education
- Professional education
- Employment
- Continuing professional development

- **Section 2:**

Demonstration of suitability for Public Health Nursing Programme

Within this section you are required to write 200 words on each domain of competence. This section of the portfolio should contain no more than 1500 words. This allows the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, critical thinking, reflection and application of continuous professional development to nursing practice. In summary the five domains of competence are:

- Professional and ethical practice.
- Holistic approaches to care and integration of knowledge
- Interpersonal relationships
- Organisation and management of care
- Personal and professional development

When a candidate is critically discussing a domain that refers to recent relevant achievements³ (within 5 years), the candidate must use a different learning experience for each domain (i.e. a course, conference, study day, or research article may only be referred to once. Evidence of attendance at courses, conferences, or study days must be included. Each 200 word submissions must cite recent relevant literature pertaining to your learning experience. Please provide references for research articles only. Hard copies not to be included.

- **Section 3:**

Referencing and General Layout of Portfolio's This section is not included in the word count

² The Requirements and Standards for Public Health Nurse Registration Education Programmes can be found using the following link http://www.nursingboard.ie/en/publications_current.aspx?page=3

³ When a candidate is critically discussing a domain that refers to recent relevant achievements (within 5 years). The candidate must use a different learning experience for each domain: a course, conference, study day, or research article may only be referred to once.

- Pages should be numbered at the bottom centre, and the whole portfolio including the evidence from section 2 should be stapled together at the top left-hand corner only. Do not bind or put in folders.
- A minimum of 2.5cm margin should be allowed on the left hand side of each page and at the top and bottom of the text.
- Scripts should use one side only of each A4 sheet.
- Line spacing used should be 1.5 and fonts used Times New Roman 12.
- A full Reference list alphabetically arranged, separately numbered by page and distinct from the main text should be included at the end of the text. Referencing format must follow the Harvard method. i.e. http://www.ucd.ie/library/students/information_skills/harvard.html
- No Appendices to be included.
- One copy of the assignment must be submitted
- Submission to follow Post-Graduate Application Centre (www.PAC.ie) directions
- Stay strictly within the word limit as outlined above.

Declaration

Please include this declaration statement in the portfolio cover page and ensure that you sign and date it:

I Hereby declare that this work is entirely my own and that I have acknowledged the writings, ideas, and work of others. Furthermore I have not knowingly allowed another to copy my work.

..... DATE

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The portfolio will be assessed on a pass/fail judgement on the following criteria:

(see next page Appendix 1)

- Presentation and adherence to guidelines
- Exposition of knowledge and comprehension. Analysis and critical thinking
- Interpretation, integration and application to practice
- Use of supporting literature
- Reflection

Appendix 1

Assessment Criteria Candidate must pass each criteria Pass/Fail System 50% Pass 50% Fail

Criteria	Presentation & Adherence to Guidelines	Exposition of knowledge and comprehension. Analysis and critical thinking.	Interpretation, integration and application to practice.	Use of supporting literature	Reflection
Grade /Fail 0-50%	Work is illegible. Poor use of English. Presentation does not meet criteria required	Contents lack relevance. Professional focus is not understood or explained. Theoretical concepts and frameworks inappropriately selected. Theories and facts do not support propositions. Work is descriptive in nature	Wrong interpretation of brief/questions. Restricted ability to draw on professional experience and link theory to practice.	Limited evidence of supporting reading without using argument and discussion. Some inaccuracies in citation of research/literature.	Limited evidence of reflection on experience. Limited evidence of evaluation of practice.
Grade Pass 50%	Work is clearly presented with good use of English demonstrated Presentation meets the criteria. Appropriate presentation of illustrated material.	Content demonstrates relevant and adequate understanding/explanation of professional focus. Correct use of facts and theories to support arguments avoiding generalisations. Some evidence of creativity. Good evidence of analysis.	Interprets brief correctly. Irrelevant material is discriminated. Adequate evidence of being able to evaluate a situation in a logical way identifying aspects of problem solving relevant to nursing. Able to set own experiences within a wider context and take an objective stance	Adequate evidence of supportive reading with use of argument and discussion. Evidence of wider reading. Accurate citation of relevant research/literature	Work shows evidence of reflective analysis of experience. Evidence of evaluation of own practice. Able to defend and justify own stance

Ⓜ Adapted with the kind permission of the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Health and Social Science, University of Brighton.

REFERENCES

An Bord Altranais (2005) Requirements and Standards for Public Health Nurse Registration Education Programmes. An Bord Altranais. Dublin. Document.

National Council for Professional Development of Nurses and Midwifery [2ndEdition] (2006) Portfolio Development for Nurses and Midwives. NMC Dublin. Document.