

Nursing in Italy

Introduction

Training

Post-Basic Nurse Education

Types of Nurse in Italy

DIRECT ENTRY BRANCH NURSES

Basic (general care) nurse

Direct entry branch Nurses- Paediatric Nurse

Direct Entry Health Visitor (assistente sanitaria di Sanità pubblica)

Note

Post-Basic training

Providers of post basic specialist training

Regulation/Scope of Activity

Take up and pursuit of nursing activities

Title

Scope of activity

EC law

Appendix 1 BASIC NURSE TRAINING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Introduction

There are various grades of nurses,¹ access to which are by competitive examination,² for example

- Professional nurse manager with teaching and managerial functions³
- Professional nurse co-ordinator
(e.g. ward sister)

In the past the *capo sala* (nurse manager)⁴ needed a specific title to hold this post. This is no longer so following the adoption of the new contract⁵ because although the title is valued, it is no longer a compulsory requirement for occupying the position of head nurse.

Italy has allowed some devolved competence for nurse training to the regions (there are 20 regions). Regions were and still are responsible of defining the required number of nurses and with the funds of the health ministry were responsible of the financing of basic and post basic nursing courses. Now nurse education takes place within the universities, but what is the training? The situation of nurse training and regulation in Italy is in some confusion currently.

¹ D.P.R. 20 dicembre 1979, n. 761 (1). *Stato giuridico del personale delle unità sanitarie locali*. Altered by *CONTRATTO COLLETTIVO NAZIONALE DI LAVORO: DEL COMPARTO DEL PERSONALE DEL SERVIZIO SANITARIO NAZIONALE 1998/2001*.

² Angela Cosseta, "Italy" in Quinn & Russell *Nursing the European Dimension* (Scutari, 1993) p.pp.136-137

³ The *Dirigente e docente in Scienze Infermieristiche* (DDSI) is a hospital or university head of nurse services, or a co-ordinator of nurses.

⁴ The formal title is *Infermiere Abilitato Alle Funzioni Direttive* (AFD) and he or she is responsible for a ward.

⁵ This contract is the collective agreement on employment for nurses in the Italian National Health Service.

Training

The basic nurse training has just been “universitised” and is now settled. All the basic nursing education is now run by the university according to a national program (*tabella XVIII ter*).⁶ The shift of nursing courses to the university was a gradual process as existing courses had to be phased out and some universities started the nursing courses only in 1995. The previously existing nurse training courses started to be transferred to the universities in 1992 and the process was gradual and lasted 3 years. In 1996 all the courses were in the University but the old schools remained open until 1998 in order to allow the students to complete the course. Now all the basic nursing education is in the university.

Post-Basic Nurse Education

Post-basic nurse education is in the midst of a reform process that is as yet incomplete.

Several types of nurse education have stopped and their replacements are not yet fully agreed. Thus currently there is a confused situation. It is not clear when the situation will become clearer, but it is hoped that it will be by September when the new academic year starts.

Major changes were (in principle) brought about in the early 1990s,⁷ and nurse training was also altered by the Ministerial decree of 24 July 1996. In 1996 all the previously existing specialities were stopped.⁸ They have not yet in fact been replaced and a new set of rules is awaited.

⁶ Legge 341 del 19.11.1990 Riforma degli Ordinamenti Didattici Universitari.

⁷ Decreti Legislativi 502/92 and 517/93. Gazzetta ufficiale 7 gennaio 1994, No.4

⁸ The specialisation courses have never been formally suppressed. One of the reasons of the non-activation is due to the fact that the specialisation is not a compulsory requirement to work in specialised areas, therefore specialised nurses do not get an higher salary. Di Giulio.

Types of Nurse in Italy

DIRECT ENTRY BRANCH NURSES

Basic (general care) nurse

The course is established and its training components follow the requirements of the sectoral nurse directives.

Direct entry branch Nurses- Paediatric Nurse⁹

In principle there will be a paediatric nurse¹⁰ with a first Level University degree (three years duration). The contents of the degree are not yet decided. The universities will award the diploma of Paediatric nurse to those completing the course.¹¹

Direct Entry Health Visitor (assistente sanitaria di Sanità pubblica)¹²

The Health Visitor will also exist as a direct entry profession. The training is separate from that of nurse, and it is not considered to be a “nurse” profession as such. Again the contents of the programme have not yet been decided. The universities will award the diploma of Health Visitor to those completing the course. The following note explains the views of IPASVI on the position of health visitors (and paediatric nurses)

⁹ See Note on page **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

¹⁰ D.M. 17 gennaio 1997, n. 70 (1). Regolamento concernente la individuazione della figura e relativo profilo professionale dell'infermiere pediatrico.

¹¹ The Decree Law 338 of 30 aprile 1976 “Modifiche alla legge 19.7.40 n°1098 recante: “disciplina delle professioni sanitarie ausiliarie infermieristiche e di Igiene sociale nonché dell'arte ausiliaria di Puericultrice” I Corsi sono stati soppressi nel 1997 quando è uscito il profilo professionale dell'Infermiere pediatrico che ha preso il posto della Vigilatrice d'Infanzia. DM 70 del 17.1.97 . J Sansoni.

¹² See Note on page **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

Note

Our Health Ministry defined that paediatric nurses and health visitors have to have a separate course and are not a nursing specialisation. The *Federazione Nazionale Collegi IPASVI*¹³ strongly opposed to this decision and made an appeal to the Court of Cassation (we are still waiting for their decision). Basic courses for health visitors have not started and the post-basic courses were stopped. The same is true for paediatric nurses: the basic courses were stopped two years ago.¹⁴

Post-Basic training

Providers of post basic specialist training

There are three main providers of post basic specialist nurse training in Italy.

- Those trained under courses instituted by Ministerial decree from the Ministry of Health. These courses for Head Nurses and Health visitors were centrally regulated with a formal curriculum, exams and so on. Their results are nationally recognised. However, currently (June 1999) none of these courses are in fact operational.¹⁵
- Those trained by university course (*Corsi di perfezionamento*).¹⁶ Universities can create and run their own courses. Thus, for example there are courses in “wound care (Modena university), oncology (Milano university) and so on. There is no central register or record of such courses.

¹³ See footnote **Error! Bookmark not defined.** at page 325.

¹⁴ Di Giulio.

¹⁵ Di Giulio, Fax 28 April 1999

¹⁶ *I Corsi di perfezionamento (post laurea), delle Scuole di specializzazione e delle Scuole direttge a Fini speciali, sono regolamentati dal DPR 162 del 10.3.82 ma si possono trovare anche situazioni come DPR 28.10.91 dove la regolamentazione è fatta ad hoc. J. Sansoni*

- Those trained in hospitals, Institutes and by Associations.¹⁷ For example, the national cancer Institute of Milano and Genova organises a post-basic course in oncology. The Italian Society of Palliative Care organises courses for doctors and nurses involved in such care. The Mario Negri Institute of Milano organises two year courses for research nurses, for example.

These are now to be created a series of post-diploma complementary education courses for nursing specialities.¹⁸ In fact, in principle, there will be training for

- Intensive care nurses *infermiere di area critica*
- Elderly Care nurses *infermiere geriatrico*
- Psychiatric nurses *infermiere psichiatrico*
- Paediatric nurses *infermiere pediatrico*
- Public Health Nurses *infermiere disanità pubblica*

Nurses with these qualifications will be styled, for example, *infermieri pediatrici*. The problem is only that the details of the training have not yet been specified and Ministerial decrees are still awaited.

Thus once can see that in the light of the complexities of this situation where the specialised training programmes are not agreed, and what is agreed is subject to litigation it is not easy to assess the situation of nursing in Italy.

¹⁷ Questi corsi dei quali parli a lato, sono da considerare a livello legale come corsi di aggiornamento (refresher courses), possono durare più o meno a lungo e non danno alcun titolo particolare ufficialmente riconosciuto. Spesso le organizzazioni private come ad esempio l'Università Bocconi o altre Istituzioni, organizzano Corsi come fonte di lucro, pagati dai partecipanti o sponsorizzati dalle stesse istituzioni sanitarie. J Sansoni. Some of these courses can last a year, and so might be considered to be more than refresher courses, though they do not give rise to officially recognised titles

¹⁸ Decreto ministeriale 739/94

Regulation/Scope of Activity

Nurses are, in part, defined, (their profile and role in the Health Service)¹⁹ by the presidential decree of 1979.²⁰ This covers all personnel in the health service and is *de facto* in the course of amendment.²¹ Nurses are bound by their deontological code²² to keep up to date with relevant nursing skills and not to undertake activities for which they are not competent.²³

Take up and pursuit of nursing activities

Applicants for admission to nursing courses must be at least 18 years old and have passed the school-leaving exam (*maturità*). Applicants must have good physical and mental health and pass a multiple choice entry exam. The nurse courses are at university degree level. The *albi* (Rolls/Registers) for nurses are kept by Colleges of Nurses²⁴ in each province.²⁵ They are updated each December and published in February.²⁶ Registration on the *albo* allows practice throughout Italy.²⁷ The Colleges have disciplinary powers.

¹⁹ Decreto ministeriale 14 settembre 1994, n. 739, Gazzetta Ufficiale 9 gennaio 1995, n. 6

²⁰ Decreto del Presidente no. 761 del 20 dicembre 1979. Update supplied by EC Commission 22.12.1998 (final page).

²¹ See footnote **Error! Bookmark not defined.** on page 320.

²² Especially in Article 3 (May 1999)

²³ *Op. cit.* Article 3(3).

²⁴ DLCPS 13 settembre 1946 no. 233 and L. 29 ottobre 1954, n. 1049 Pubblicata nella Gazz. Uff. 15 novembre 1954, n. 262. Istituzione dei Collegi delle infermiere professionali, delle assistenti sanitarie visitatrici e delle vigilatrici d'infanzia.

²⁵ Collectively the Colleges of Nurses form the Federation -- *IPASVI*.

²⁶ Decree of the President of the Republic 5 April 1950, n. 221 Approval of the regulations for the application of Legislative Decree 13 September 1946, n. 233. Article 4 establishes the main documentary registration requirements. Registration is transferable to another province, Article 10.

²⁷ *Op. cit.* Article 13.

Title

The title of “professional nurse” (*infermiera*) was protected by law in 1929.²⁸

The law of 19 July 1940 reinforced the title.²⁹

The 1994 Ministerial decree,³⁰ in principle, put the five specialist areas³¹ into the post basic phase of nurse training. The implementation of this is in dispute and not yet finalised.

Scope of activity

The specialised courses giving rise to specialised qualification (*attestati di formazione*)³² to nurses will not reserve to them a specific area on nursing activity. They will help them in the employment market.

EC law

The classification of nurses in Italy is in some turmoil currently. The “specialisation” for the paediatric nurse and health visitor may become basic direct entry branches or post – basic specialisations. It is not known when the final decision will be made. The court of cassation has not yet ruled, and the Ministry of Health could activate the courses before judgment is given. If they decide to act before the court give its ruling, then they may need to revise their decision in the light of a subsequent judgment, but this could take years.

Should the direct entry branch route become the law then the migrant would need to use directive 89/48/EEC, subject to Article 2 restraints (see

²⁸ L'istituzione delle scuole per infermiere ed il relativo titolo professionale è stato regolamentato dal Regio Decreto 21/11/1929 n. 2330.

²⁹ L. 19 luglio 1940, n. 1098 Disciplina delle professioni sanitarie ausiliarie infermieristiche e di igiene sociale, nonché dell'arte ausiliaria di puericultrice.

³⁰ Decreto ministeriale del Ministero dell Sanita 14 sett. 1994, No.739 , Gazzetta ufficiale 9 January 1995.

³¹ Article 1 para 5.

³² In the future this might become a masters level qualification.

Introductory chapter). If the post basic specialisation route becomes operational then the migrant would need to use the sectoral nurse directives followed by the Treaty and case law of the European Court of Justice.

Appendix 1 BASIC NURSE TRAINING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

COUNTRY -	Italy	
NURSE QUALIFICATION e.g. nurse speciality	Diploma di Infermiere Diploma of Nurse	
LEVEL	First Level University Degree	
DURATION	Three years	
ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	High School Diploma (5 years) 18 years old	
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS e.g. medical, dental reports, police checks references (character/employers)	Selection multiple choice test (general culture) Medical certification (psycho-physic status)	
AGE	MINIMUM 18 y. o.	MAXIMUM
MANDATORY COMPONENTS (HOURS) FOR QULIFICATION	CLINICAL – THORETICAL - TECHNICAL -	3000 1600
TITLE OF THE AWARD e.g. Certificate/Diploma etc.	Diploma	
TITLE AWARDED BY	University	
STATUS OF THE TRAINEE	STUDENT	X
	APPRENTICE	
	EMPLOYEE	

BASIC NURSE TRAINING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

COUNTRY -	Italy	
NURSE QUALIFICATION e.g. nurse speciality	Paediatric Nurse	
LEVEL	First Level University Degree	
DURATION	3 years	
ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	Only the profile has been published	
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS e.g. medical, dental reports, police checks references (character/employers)	Same as for nurses	
AGE	MINIMUM 18 y.o.	MAXIMUM
MANDATORY COMPONENTS (HOURS) FOR QUALIFICATION	CLINICAL – 3000 hours THEORETICAL - 1,600 hours TECHNICAL -	
TITLE OF THE AWARD e.g. Certificate/Diploma etc.	Paediatric Nurse Diploma	
TITLE AWARDED BY	University	
STATUS OF THE TRAINEE	STUDENT	X
	APPRENTICE	
	EMPLOYEE	

BASIC TRAINING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Education separated from nursing

COUNTRY -	Italy	
QUALIFICATION e.g.	Health Visitor	
LEVEL	First Level University Degree	
DURATION	3 years	
ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	High School (5 years) Maturità 18 y.o.	
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS e.g. medical, dental reports, police checks references (character/employers)	Same as for nurses	
AGE	MINIMUM 18 y.o.	MAXIMUM
MANDATORY COMPONENTS (HOURS) FOR QUALIFICATION	CLINICAL – THEORETICAL - TECHNICAL -	3,000 hours 1,600 hours
TITLE OF THE AWARD e.g. Certificate/Diploma etc.	Health Visitor Diploma	
TITLE AWARDED BY	University	
STATUS OF THE TRAINEE	STUDENT APPRENTICE EMPLOYEE	X

BASIC TRAINING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Education separated by nursing

COUNTRY -	Italy	
QUALIFICATION e.g.	Midwifery	
LEVEL	First Level University Degree	
DURATION	3 years	
ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	High School (5 ys.) Maturità 19 y.o.	
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS e.g. medical, dental reports, police checks references (character/employers)	Selection multiple choice test (general culture) Medical certification (psycho-physic status)	
AGE	MINIMUM 19 y.o.	MAXIMUM
MANDATORY COMPONENTS (HOURS) FOR QUALIFICATION	CLINICAL * fulfil some defined practice requirement THEORETICAL TECHNICAL *	1600 hours 3700 hours
TITLE OF THE AWARD e.g. Certificate/Diploma etc.	Diploma	
TITLE AWARDED BY	University	
STATUS OF THE TRAINEE	STUDENT APPRENTICE EMPLOYEE	X

POST-BASIC/POST-REGISTRATION NURSE TRAINING WITHIN THE EU

COUNTRY -	Italy
NURSE QUALIFICATION/SPECIALITY	In principle Elderly care nurse Psychiatric nurse Intensive care nurse
LEVEL	
DURATION	
ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	Nurse diploma
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS & ENTRY EXPERIENCE	No details yet available.
AGE	MINIMUM - MAXIMUM -
MANDATORY COMPONENTS (HOURS) FOR QUALIFICATION	CLINICAL – THEORETICAL - TECHNICAL - No details yet available.
TITLE OF THE AWARD e.g. Certificate/Diploma etc.	
TITLE AWARDED BY	
STATUS OF THE TRAINEE	STUDENT APPRENTICE EMPLOYEE

NOTE:

Potentially the paediatric nurse and the health visitor may become post basic, depending on the outcome of the legal dispute described in the text