

Nursing in the Netherlands

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Introduction

In the Netherlands there are two levels of nurses, the first and second level nurses. The first level nurse is a higher level nurse who is capable of assessing the whole nurse situation and deciding the appropriate level of nurse care. The first level nurse will also direct the second level nurses. Nurses of both levels (first level and second level) are expected to recognise and analyse “actual threatening consequences of physical, mental pathological processes, disabilities or develop mental disorders on the individuals vital functions as well as counselling and assisting the individual in such conditions”.¹ There is now a new “nurse profile” but it still treats the Dutch nurse as a single entity.

The regulation of nursing in the Netherlands

For many years the law of 1921 for the Diploma Van Verpleegkundige² regulated nursing practice. It was last revised in 1977 and regulated the five basic nursing diplomas before its abolition in 1993.

The original 1865 law on the art of practice of medicine reserved all medical acts to qualified medical doctors. This in principle, would prevent nurse from giving injections. But since long time it was common law that nurses gave injections without direct supervision of medical doctors.

The 1993 Wet BIG (the individual Health Care Professions act) thoroughly overhauled this area of law. This law, amongst other things, annulled the actual ban on the unqualified practice of medicine thus paving the way to allow alternative medicine.

¹ Permanent Advisory Committee on Nursing Affairs “The Profile of the Nursing Profession” cited by Oud Nicholas in “The Netherlands” in Quinn and Russell *The European Dimension* (Scutari Press, 1993), p. 160.

Field of activity

Theoretically in the Netherlands anyone can in fact practice some types of nursing as it is neither legally defined nor protected in law as an activity as such. However the *Wet BIG* does designate certain activities as reserved: For example

Puncture and injections,
General anaesthetic;
Endoscopies and like procedures

Nurses can only undertake these procedures under orders from an authorised professional (i.e doctor, dentist). Midwives, which in the Netherlands is not a specialisation of nursing but an other profession, are directly authorised to perform some of the acts.

The law however does not indicate that only registered nurses can undertake such acts based on the relevant professional's order. Anyone competent can be authorised to commit such an act, the onus being on the primary professional to make sure that the person so ordered is in fact competent to perform the procedure.

Title

According to the *Wet BIG*, only those registered as *Verpleegkundige* can use the title and such registration only takes place once the registrar knows that the candidate has an appropriate diploma. This system came into force in 1995, and the registration requirements are set out below.

In law the diploma of *Verpleegkundige* used to allow five additional annotations. That is:

- the community nurse
- the social psychiatric nurse
- the paediatric nurse

- the obstetric and gynaecological nurse³
- The intensive care nurse.

The duration of each of these post-basic training are include in the annexes.

Specialist nurse training is currently no longer legally regulated or recognised, though there are provisions in the *Big Wet*, outlined below, that allow it to be regulated. All these nurses are currently added to the Big Register as plain nurses and not as specialised nurses.

Article 3 of the *Wet BIG* states that designation of nurse *Verpleegkundige* only applies to professional practitioners who have firstly undertaken the training required to gain a certificate from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport recognised institution and have registered with the BIG register. The *BIG register* registers nurses and does not distinguish titles amongst specialised areas of practice.² Employers and others can enquire from the *BIG register* whether the practitioner has the right to use a title. The employment market in fact is what demands and sorts types of nurse, as in many professions in the Netherlands.

Under article 14 of the *Wet BIG* regulation can be made recognising the legal titles of Nurse specialist. (ref.: ICN definition of Nurse Specialist)⁶. These have not yet been made. There are organisational criteria³ that must be met by the nursing organisations (associations of specialists)⁴ before such a regulation will be made. Such titles will only be usable by those registered as such in the *Big Register*.⁵

² But see note **Error! Bookmark not defined.** and accompanying text below.

³ *Wet BIG* Article 14.

⁴ With Ministerial approval – article 14(3) *Big Wet*.

⁵ *Big Wet* Article 14(2)b, article 17.

Registration

This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. Once awarded the title of *Verpleegkundige* is for life, with no further requirements for periodic registration. However, the Wet BIG, is creating the possibility to implement a periodic registration. At this moment discussion are taken place whether one should take advantage of this possibility. The education of nursing is regulated by governmental orders from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The law on nursing in this area was finally reformed with the WET BIG at the end of 1993.⁶ The WET BIG regulates eight health care professions. As a result of this law registration of nurses commenced on 1st December 1995. The educational rules are now contained in the law relating to education and professional education of 10th March 1999 (WEB) and the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW, 8th October 1992).⁷

Training

In the Netherlands education is divided into several streams. The general secondary educational system has three main options, the MAVO (four years), the HAVO (five years) and the VWO (six years), the latter being the entry requirement to university degrees. Professional education has two main options: the MBO (secondary professional education) and the HBO (higher professional education). Training of nurses is provided through both these systems (MBO and HBO). Situation before 1997

Before 1977 a nurse had the possibility to enter a post-basic course after an In service training : general nurse, (A), psychiatric nurse (B) or nurse for the

⁶ *Wet BIG* - Law Related to Professions in Health Care.

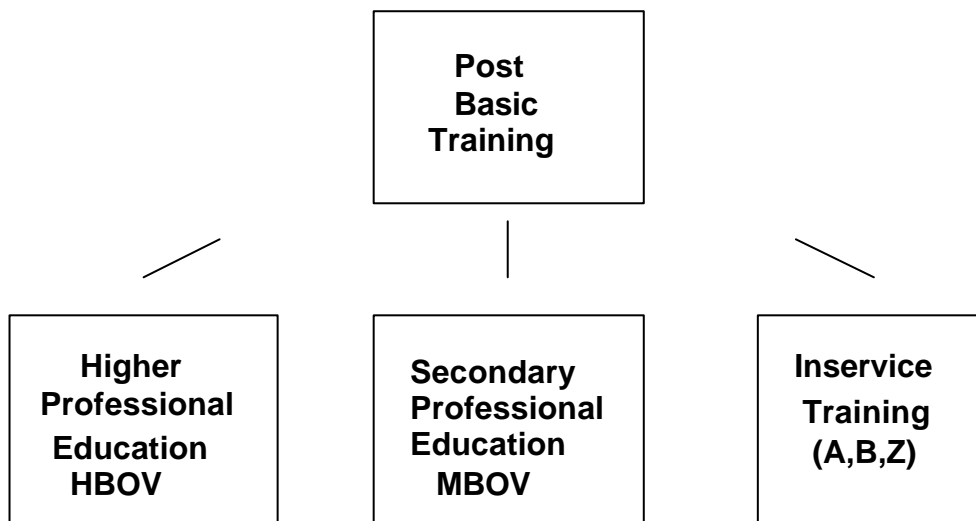
⁷ *WET* available from <http://www.minocw.nl/anderwij/be/1999/web/beok1/>

mentally handicapped (Z) or after a higher professional education programme (four years full-time), HBOV.

These programmes allow the different types of nurses to enter the post basic training.

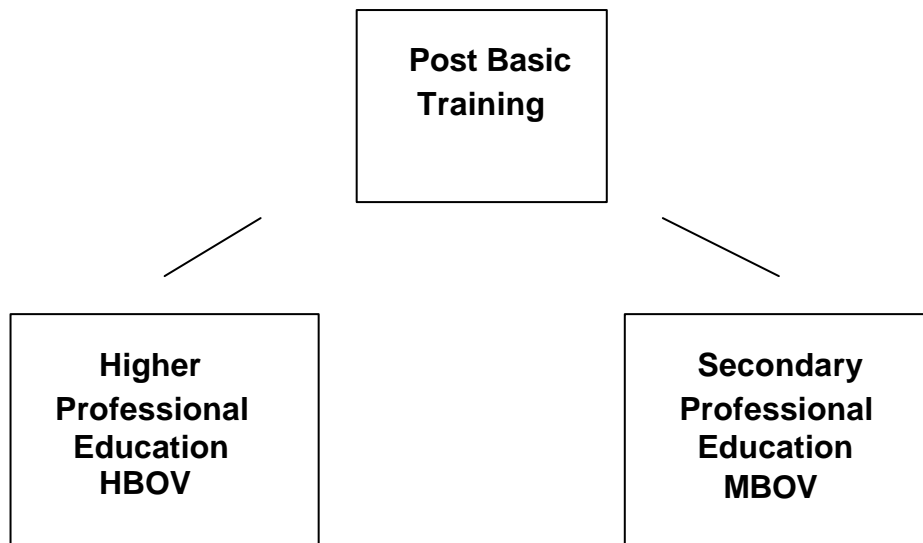
From 1972-1988 there was also a secondary professional education programme (MBOV) of three years full-time, which led to a nursing qualification based upon which the nurse could follow a post-basic programme. The MBOV stopped at 1988.

The MBOV, the HBOV and the inservice training for general nurses A are accepted under the EC sectoral directives.



Situation after 1997

Since 1997 the inservice training for nurses has ended. There are now two educational routes for nursing education, namely secondary professional education and higher professional education. The secondary professional nursing programme can be followed after four years secondary school (MBOV), the higher professional nursing programme can be followed after five years secondary school. Both programmes fulfill the criteria for being accepted under the EC sectoral directives.



Specialisation

All registered nurses, HBO-trained as well as MBO-trained, are entitled to enter specialist training courses (post-basic nurse training). As pointed out before, since the introduction of the Wet BIG, no specialist nurse training is legally regulated. But most specialist nurse training programmes are recognised by both the nursing associations and the employers.

Specialist nurse training is aiming on obtaining extra competencies and qualifications on professional specific skills. It is not possible to obtain those skills with clinical experience only. A substantial theoretical training and clinical training is necessary.

The recognised specialist nurse training are all aiming on a specific category of clients. The following specialist training are recognised by both the nursing associations and the employers at this moment:

- intensive care nursing of adults
- intensive care nursing of children
- intensive care nursing of neonatal
- cardiac care nursing

emergency nursing
dialysis nursing
paediatric nursing
obstetrics/gynaecology nursing
burns nursing
oncology nursing
cast technician
anaesthesia nursing
Operating room nursing
ambulance nursing
community nursing
occupational health nursing
social psychiatric nursing
psychiatric specialist nursing
clinical geriatric nursing.

Nurses can also undertake:
middle and higher management training
nurse teacher training
master training.

However as stated above the current rules recognise no post-basic specialised nurses.

EC Law

Only the basic nurse, *Verpleegkundige*, is currently recognised in law. Article 14 of the big Wet will eventually be used to designate new post basic specialist nurses, but this has not yet been done.

The pre-existing specialisations thus are not “legally regulated” or recognised in “registration” procedures under the *big Wet*.

The general nurses (*Verpleegkundige*) are recognised under the EC sectoral directives on nursing.

BASIC -REGISTRATION NURSE TRAINING WITHIN THE EU

Appendix 1 Basic training:

These charts are historical in nature. This training is discontinued:

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Psychiatric nurse		
Level	Basic		
Duration	40 months regular		
Entry qualification	Secondary education		
Entry requirements & entry experience	Health certificate		
Age	Minimum -	17	Maximum -
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	144	
	Theoretical	1320	
	Technical	1084	
	Total	2548	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Psychiatric nurse		
Title awarded by	Usually head of the college		
Status of trainee	Student	*	
	Apprentice	*	
	Employee		

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Preparatory period:

Theory hours:

Nursing	130
Health & Hygiene	300
Pathology	105
Social and Technical skills	125
Optional course	<u>30</u>
	690

Theory hours:

Nursing	160
Health & Hygiene	180
Pathology	140
Social and Technical skills	120
Optional course	<u>30</u>
	630

Basic training:

These charts are historical in nature. This training is discontinued:

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Mental Handicap Nursing	
Level	Basic	
Duration	40 months regular	
Error! Reference source not found.		
Entry qualification	Secondary education	
Entry requirements & entry experience	Health certificate	
Age	Minimum - 17	Maximum -
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 144	
	Theoretical 1320	
	Technical 1084	
	Total 2548	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Mental Handicap Nurse	
Title awarded by	Usually head of the college	
Status of trainee	Student *	
	Apprentice *	
	Employee	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Appendix 2 Sample post-basic training

These charts do reflect current training in the Netherlands. Although these trainings are not legally recognised, they are recognised by the nursing associations and employers.

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Intensive care nursing of adults	
Level	Post basic	
Duration Error! Reference source not found.	18 months	
Entry qualification	Registered nurse	
Entry requirements & entry experience	Working for 4 days a week at an intensive care unit	
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	260
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Certificate in Intensive care nursing	
Title awarded by	Clinical institutions	
Status of trainee	Student	
	Apprentice	
	Employee *	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Theory hours:	
Specialised nursing care	80
Professional Support	76
Medicine	84
Introduction, Evaluation and examination	<u>20</u>
Total of	260

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Intensive care nursing of children	
Level	Post basic	
Duration	12 months	
Entry qualification	Paediatric nurse	
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	240
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Certificate Intensive care nursing of children	
Title awarded by	Clinical institutions	
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *	

Please specify the theoretical hours:
Theory hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Error! Reference source not found. Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Intensive care nursing of neonatal	
Error! Reference source not found. Level	Post basic	
Duration	12 months	
Entry qualification	Paediatric nurse	
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	220
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Certificate Intensive care nursing of neonatal	
Title awarded by	Clinical institutions	
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *	

Please specify the theoretical hours:
Theory hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Cardiac care nursing	
Level	Post basic	
Duration		
Entry qualification		
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (eg. certificate/Diploma etc)		
Title awarded by		
Status of trainee	Student	
	Apprentice	
	Employee	

Please specify the theoretical hours:
Theory hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Emergency nursing	
Level	Post basic	
Duration	12 months	
Entry qualification		
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	240
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Certificate in accident & emergency	
Title awarded by	Clinical institution	
Status of trainee	Student	
	Apprentice	
	Employee	*

Please specify the theoretical hours:
Theory hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Dialysis nursing
Level	Post basic
Duration	15 months
Entry qualification	Qualified nurse
Entry requirements & entry experience	Minimum of 1 year experience
Age	Minimum - 22 Maximum – 45
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 1500 Theoretical 175 Technical - Total 1675
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Diploma in Dialysis nursing
Title awarded by	Union of dialysis nurses and doctors in nephrology
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Theory hours:	
Fundamental aspects of renal nursing	50
Predialysis phase	14
End-stage renal failure	
- haemodialysis	30
- Peritoneal dialysis	15
- transplantation	10
Acute renal failure	10
Self care/haemodislysis	4
Paediatrics	4
Interpersonal skills	38

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

	Paediatric nursing	
Nurse Qualification/ Speciality		
Level		
Duration		
Entry qualification		
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)		
Title awarded by		
Status of trainee	Student	
	Apprentice	
	Employee *	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Theory hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Obstetrics/gynaecology nursing	
Level	Post basic	
Duration	15 months	
Entry qualification	Registered nurse	
Entry requirements & entry experience	1 year post-qualification experience	
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	1275
	Theoretical	252
	Technical	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Certificate in Obstetrics & Gynaecology	
Title awarded by	Clinical institution	
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Theory hours:	
Medical Obstetrics/gynaecology	68
Neonatology	12
Nursing	92
Supplimentary subjects	80
Clinical hours:	
Gynaecology	300
Delivery rooms	375
Obstetrics	375
Extra mural care	75
Sick babies	150

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Burns nursing
Level	Post basic
Duration	12 months
Entry qualification	Registered nurse
Entry requirements & entry experience	Min. 1 year working experience Min. 2 months working of burn unit
Age	Minimum - 22 Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 170 Theoretical 70 Technical Total 240
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Certificate burns nursing training course
Title awarded by	Dutch association of burns nursing and Dutch Burn foundation
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Theory hours:

Burn wounds	7
Pain	3
Infection control	5
Inhalation trauma	7
Burn shock	7
Feeding the burn patient	7
Body temp. & neuro symptoms	3
Paediatrics	5
Psycho-social rehabilitation and Resocialisation	9
Fysical rehabilitation	3
Burn care management research and Education	11
Presentation	3
Total	70

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Oncology nursing	
Level	Post basic	
Duration	12 months	
Entry qualification	Registered nurse	
Entry requirements & entry experience	Currently working with oncology patients	
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	280
	Theoretical	200
	Technical	
	Total	240
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Certificate	
Title awarded by	Dutch Oncology Nursing Society	
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Cast technician
Level	Post basic
Duration	2 years
Entry qualification	Registered nurse
Entry requirements & entry experience	Some practical experience
Age	Minimum - 21 Maximum – 45
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 1512 Theoretical 139 Technical 145 Total 1796
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Diploma Cast Technician
Title awarded by	Nursing association, medical association and employers
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Theory hours:	
Cast techniques	12
Anatomy	22,5
Orthopedics	6
Traumatology	7
Radiology	3,5
Children orthopedics	3
Sports injury	3
Rehabilitation after amputation	1
Rheumatology	2
Plastic surgery	2
Examinations	21
Research and presentation skills	33
Organization, coordination, ethics and law	11
Healthcare instructions and information	5
Theory of education	7

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Anesthesia-assistent (it is not a necessity to be a nurse, and therefor not really a Post basic nurse training)
Level	HBO-V
Duration	36 months in general 30 months for nurses
Entry qualification	HAVO
Entry requirements & entry experience	Some practical experience
Age	Minimum - 17 Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 4200 Theoretical 815 Technical Total 5015
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma tc.)	Diploma Anesthesia-assistent
Title awarded by	Employers
Status of trainee	Student * Apprentice Employee *

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Anesthetical care and techniques	260
Medical support lessons	340
General support lesson	215

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Operating room nurse (it is not a necessity to be a nurse, and therefor not really a Post basic nurse training)
Level	HBO-V
Duration	36 months in general
Entry qualification	HAVO/VWO or registered nurse
Entry requirements & entry experience	Direct entry none Registered nurse ½ experience
Age	Minimum - 17 Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 4546 Theoretical 840 Technical Total 5386
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Diploma OR nurse
Title awarded by	employers
Status of trainee	Student * Apprentice Employee *

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Aspects of OR nursing technics
Anatomy/Fysiologie
Pathology
General Surgery
Gynaecology
Surgery of throat and nose
Surgery of jaws and mouth
Eye surgery
Orthopedic surgery
Plastic surgery
Urology
Thorax surgery
Neuro surgery

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Ambulance nursing	
Level	Error! Reference source not found.	
Duration		
Entry qualification		
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)		
Title awarded by		
Status of trainee	Student	
	Apprentice	
	Employee	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Community Nurse	
Level	Post basic	
Duration	2 years	
Entry qualification	Qualified nurse	
Entry requirements & entry experience	None	
Age	Minimum - 18	Maximum – 50
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	3200
	Theoretical	3800
	Technical	
	Total	7000
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Diploma Community Nurse	
Title awarded by	Union of district nurses	
Status of trainee	Student	*
	Apprentice	
	Employee	*

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Occupational Health Nursing
Error! Reference source not found. Level	Post basic
Duration	2 years fulltime and 2,5 parttime
Entry qualification	Registered nurse
Entry requirements & entry experience	Currently working as a nurse
Age	Minimum - 21 Maximum – 50
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 400 Theoretical 2980 Technical Total 3380 Occupational Health Nurse
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	
Title awarded by	Educational Institution
Status of trainee	Student * Apprentice Employee

Please specify the theoretical hours:

OHC Nursing	980
Organisation	300
Social Skills	300
Psychology	280
Sociology	120
Law	300
Computer	120
Language	120
Economy	120
Medicine	300
Guiding	40
Total	2980

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Error! Reference source not found. Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Social Psychiatric nursing	
Error! Reference source not found. Level		
Duration		
Entry qualification		
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)		
Title awarded by		
Status of trainee	Student	
	Apprentice	
	Employee	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Psychiatric Nurse Specialist	
Level		
Duration		
Entry qualification		
Entry requirements & entry experience		
Age	Minimum -	Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical	
	Theoretical	
	Technical	
	Total	
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)		
Title awarded by		
Status of trainee	Student	
	Apprentice	
	Employee	

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Post-basic/post registration nurse training within the EU

Nurse Qualification/ Speciality	Clinical Geriatric Nursing
Level	Post basic
Duration	1 year
Entry qualification	Registered nurse
Entry requirements & entry experience	Working on a geriatric clinic or geriatric unit at a psychiatric hospital
Age	Minimum - 20 Maximum –
Mandatory components (hours) for qualification	Clinical 216 Theoretical 240 Technical 40 Total 496
Title of award (e.g. certificate/Diploma etc.)	Diploma
Title awarded by	Nursing association and employers
Status of trainee	Student Apprentice Employee *

Please specify the theoretical hours:

Methodical working	20
Care planning	20
Prevention and health promotion	25
Nursing elements	25
Coordination and continuity of nursing	45
Caring of geriatric patients	40
Geriatric and psychiatric care	30
Somastic diseases	20
Quality assurance and promotion of expertise	15
Total	240