Introduction

This course provides postgraduate education for registered nurses who are educated to degree level or equivalent and have significant clinical experience. Students are expected to act as role models for colleagues and become effective leaders within Gerontological nursing practice. It is therefore essential that students are facilitated to develop their academic knowledge and skills to postgraduate level whilst still engaged in their chosen area of practice.

Aim

The aim of the course is to enable students to develop a sound academic base for Gerontological nursing practice. The educational framework facilitates students to develop their skills of analysis and critical awareness and to acknowledge the individuality of the ageing experience. Graduates of this course, in applying their learning, can be expected to promote and develop excellence in their practice setting.

Admission Requirements

The criteria for admission are as follows:

a) Registration as a nurse on the live register with An Bord Altranais
   and
b) Have a minimum of one year full-time or equivalent recent clinical nursing practice since first registration
   and
c) Hold an Honors Degree in Nursing Studies or equivalent
   or
d) Satisfy the Course Admission Committee that they have the ability to complete and benefit from the course.

Duration

The MSc/PG Dip course in Gerontological Nursing takes place over two academic years. The first year of the course comprises both academic and clinical components.
Year one: one academic year full-time (part-time study and full-time clinical placement). Year two: one academic year part-time.
Course Design

(a) Academic Component
The academic component comprises seven modules, which run concurrently throughout the two academic years.

In year one the students undertake the following modules:
- Contemporary Issues in Gerontological Nursing
- Gerontological Nursing: Concepts and Practice
- Research for Evidence Based Practice in Healthcare
- Advancing the Theoretical foundations of Gerontological Nursing
- Ethics and Law in Healthcare

In year two the students undertake the following modules:
- Developing Gerontological Nursing Practice
- Advanced Research Methods

Students also complete a Dissertation at the end of year 2.

(b) Clinical Component
The student must be employed, as a registered nurse, in a Department of Medicine for Older People for the duration of the course*. During this time the student will be required to undertake specialist clinical placements, as a staff nurse, either in the Department of Medicine for Older Persons, St. James’s Hospital, or in other approved clinical locations. In response to the needs of Registered Nurses employed outside of Dublin, it is possible for those nurses undertaking the MSc in Gerontological Nursing to complete their specialist clinical practice within their own HSE Region (as an outreach course) while continuing to complete the academic portion of the course at University of Dublin Trinity College and St James’s Hospital. This system is also in place for those nurses employed in hospitals in the Dublin area, with one or more Care of Older Persons’ facilities.

Students will be required to undertake clinical placements in the following specialist areas:
   i. Acute admission and assessment
   ii. Rehabilitation
   iii. Continuing Care

The assessment of clinical competence focuses on the acquisition of specialist competencies and on the accumulative learning acquired during the supernumerary 90 hours of clinical placement and the intervening consolidation periods of learning which takes place in the student’s base clinical site.
In order to fulfil the clinical component of the course, all five Domains of Competence must be achieved on completion of year one of the programme.

* Persons without a general nurse registration with An Bord Altranais may be required to work in a supernumerary capacity in a Department of Medicine for Older Persons, for the duration of the course.
Progression
All students register on the MSc course in the first instance. Students may choose to exit with a Postgraduate Diploma in Gerontological Nursing on successful completion of six modules. Students who successfully complete all the required elements of the M.Sc. course will be awarded an M.Sc. in Gerontological Nursing.

Course Content
The content is divided into seven modules of study

Contemporary Issues in Gerontological Nursing (30 contact hours)
The aim of this module is to facilitate the student to critically explore the knowledge, theories and approaches underpinning Gerontological nursing practice with particular reference to the organization and delivery of care in the community.

Gerontological Nursing: Concepts and Practice (30 contact hours)
This module facilitates Gerontological nurses to further develop the specialist knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to care for older persons in a holistic manner. The module specifically aims to advance Gerontological nurses’ scientific foundation for practice.

Theory and Practice of Research Methods for Healthcare (30 contact hours)
This module provides students with a thorough grounding in research methods in order to evaluate and conduct relevant research, and promote the provision of evidenced-based health care. Students will be able to create and promote a climate of inquiry and critical thinking in their area of practice.

Advancing the Theoretical foundations of Gerontological Nursing (30 contact hours)
This module explores the development of Gerontological nursing theory, critically analyses the practice/research/theory linkage and facilitates students to explore their area of practice through the use of reflection.

Ethics and Law in Healthcare (30 contact hours)
This module of study provides students with an opportunity to explore legal and ethical structures and frameworks that impact on professional practice and enables them to develop the knowledge, analytical and decision-making skills necessary to provide care that is legally and ethically sound. In addition, it aims to do so in conjunction with an explanation of bioethical dimensions of the organised provision of health care and of the relation between law and ethics in this context.

Developing Gerontological Nursing Practice (30 contact hours)
This module is designed to further develop students’ knowledge and understanding of ageing in contemporary society by exploring the implications and challenges of a rapidly growing older population for healthcare delivery. It will facilitate students in developing a critical awareness of the broader contexts and influences that impact on older person care.
Advanced Research Methods (30 contact hours)
This module consists of two options; these are quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods. The module builds upon and advances the knowledge and skills gained on the research module undertaken in year one of the MSc programme.
Aim - to reinforce the concepts associated with quantitative and qualitative research methods. In addition, the module provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan, prepare, conduct and evaluate research.

Dissertation
Satisfactory completion of a research dissertation (20-25,000 words) is a requirement for the award of the Master’s Degree.

Teaching / Learning Methods
- Lectures
- Practical work
- Group work
- Tutorials
- Reading and discussion
- Experiential learning methods (practical exercises, role play,) as appropriate
- Reflection and self-direction shall be facilitated

Assessment
Throughout the course emphasis is placed on the application and the integration of theory and practice.

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Applications should be submitted online at: www.pac.ie

The closing date for applications is 15 May 2009.

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www.tcd.ie/Nursing_Midwifery/courses/postgrad_mscgerontological.php