

 Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte Health Service Executive		Office of the National Director of HR, Block D, Floor 2, Parkgate Business Centre, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01 6352827 Fax: 01 6352813 E-mail: nationalhr@hse.ie
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4th May 2007.

HSE HR Circular 007/2007

**To: Each Assistant National Director of Human Resources
Each Director NMPDU**

Re: Sponsorship for Public Health Service Employees wishing to train as Nurses/Midwives

As you will be aware, the HSE operates a sponsorship scheme for eligible and experienced public health service employees wishing to train as nurses/midwives. Details of this sponsorship scheme have been revised to incorporate the new midwifery and children's nursing degree programmes and the expansion of the scheme to all health service employees directly involved in patient/client care, and are set out in the following paragraphs.

1. Number of Sponsorships

Funding for 54 sponsorship places will be made available this year (2007). The maximum number of sponsorships available in each functional area of the Health Service Executive, based on the number of undergraduate places in each such area, is as follows:

	Number
HSE Dublin/Mid Leinster (Former ERHA Area - 13) (Former HSE- Midland Area - 3)	16
HSE Dublin/North East (Former ERHA Area - 7) (Former HSE- NE Area - 4)	11
HSE West (Former HSE- Western Area - 6) (Former HSE- NW Area -4) (Former HSE- Mid-West Area - 3)	13
HSE South (Former HSE- Southern Area - 10) (Former HSE- SE Area - 4)	14
Total	54

2. This is the maximum number of sponsorships which can be awarded.

3. **Eligibility**

The sponsorship scheme is open to employees in the Irish Public Health Service, such as support staff, **who are directly involved in the delivery of care to patients/clients.**

4. Applicants must have at least **two** years relevant service in the Irish public health service on the 1st day of January of the year in which they apply for sponsorship, and must qualify as a Mature Code Applicant for a place on the Pre-registration Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme under the system operated by the Central Applications Office (CAO) on behalf of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI's). They may be employed on a full-time or part-time basis, either in a permanent or temporary capacity. Where employed on a part-time basis, they must have been working an average of not less than 15 hours per week.
5. The sponsorship scheme is not open to public health service employees who
 - (a) are currently undertaking a pre-registration nursing/midwifery education programme, or
 - (b) have withdrawn from a pre-registration nursing/midwifery education programme within the five-year period immediately preceding their application for sponsorship or
 - (c) have deferred the acceptance of a place on a pre-registration nursing/midwifery education programme from a previous year.
6. **Application to CAO**

An eligible employee intending to apply for sponsorship must first of all make a formal application through the Central Applications Office (CAO) as a Mature Code Applicant, for a place on the Pre-registration Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme at one of the thirteen Higher Education Institutions that are involved in the delivery of the programme. The CAO Handbook and Application Form are available from the CAO. This can be accessed from www.cao.ie The Nursing Careers Centre's information booklet *Nursing A Career for You*, obtainable from An Bord Altranais, 31/32 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2, contains valuable information including details of all the nursing/midwifery training places available throughout the country. Alternatively this information can be accessed on-line at www.nursingcareers.ie
7. An employee should only apply for sponsorship to undertake a nursing degree in the area of care (general, psychiatric, Intellectual disability, midwifery or children's) in which his/her employing agency is involved in delivering.
8. **Satisfactory Employment Record/Verification of Service.**

In order to qualify for sponsorship, an applicant must have a satisfactory service record and fulfil the relevant service requirement. This must be verified by the applicant's employer on the sponsorship application.
9. **Acceptance of sponsorship conditions by employer.**

The applicant's employer must accept the conditions attached to the sponsorship.
10. **Applications for Sponsorship**

In order to be eligible for sponsorship, employees who have applied through the CAO as Mature Code Applicants must successfully pass the written assessment test and interview administered by the Nursing Careers Centre (NCC) of An Bord Altranais, and be offered a place on the Pre-Registration Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme. Mature Code Applicants who are called for interview by the NCC are notified of the result of their interview and of their performance in the written assessment by the end of June. Applications for sponsorship should be made to the Director of the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit (NMPDU) in their area before the closing date for receipt of sponsorship applications outlined on the Sponsorship Application Form together with a copy of the results of the assessment process. (Appendix 1 – Sponsorship Application)

Employees who are then deemed eligible for sponsorship and who are subsequently offered a place by the CAO on the Pre-registration Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme, should inform the Director of the NMPDU supporting the area within which the employee is working of the

offer. Such notification should be made within ten working days following receipt of the offer of a place and a copy of the offer should be sent to the NMPDU.

11. Award of Sponsorships

Subject to the following paragraphs, sponsorships within the approved complement (see paragraph 1 above) may be awarded by each functional area of the HSE to applicants employed in its functional area who have successfully passed the written assessment test and interview carried out by the Nursing Careers Centre and who have been offered a place by the CAO on the Pre-Registration Nursing Midwifery Degree Programme. Sponsorships not awarded or not likely to be awarded will be reallocated to other functional areas based on their applicant numbers and their number of round zero offers.

- 12.** The first applicants to be considered for sponsorship are those who receive an offer of a place by the CAO in Round Zero in early August. Each Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit should draw up an order of merit list of such applicants employed in its functional area on the basis of their scores at the written assessment carried out by the NCC. (This score is given in the notification referred to in paragraph 10 above.) Sponsorships within the approved complement should be awarded to those placed highest in the order of merit, provided that they satisfy the criteria set out in this circular. The relative positions of applicants with equal scores on the order of merit list should be determined by reference to the length of their respective relevant service in the Irish public health service. The Nursing Careers Centre will confirm the written assessment scores of applicants for sponsorship upon request from the Directors of the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units.

If sponsorships are still available to be awarded following Round Zero, the procedure outlined in paragraph 11 should be repeated in respect of applicants for sponsorship who receive an offer in the next round. If necessary, the procedure should be repeated in each subsequent round of offers until such time as all available sponsorships are awarded or until there are no applicants left.

13. Service Commitment

Each successful applicant for sponsorship will be required to give a written undertaking (Appendix 2) to their sponsoring public health service employer that they will:

- (a) immediately register as a nurse/midwife with An Bord Altranais following successful completion of the four-year nursing/midwifery degree programme, and
- (b) following satisfactory employment selection procedures, work as a nurse/midwife for that particular employer for a period of five years service, initially accepting the terms, conditions and salary associated with a staff nurse/midwife position. (See paragraph 16 below in relation to service commitment required of part-time employees).

In exceptional circumstances, all or a portion of the five-year nursing service commitment may, with the prior agreement of the public health service employer concerned, be given in the employment of an alternative Irish public health service agency. HSE employees directly involved in patient care who are not directly attached to a nursing department (e.g. Ambulance personnel) will be facilitated with sourcing an appropriate nursing/midwifery employer by the workforce planning function of their local Nursing and Midwifery Planning Development Unit, (NMPDU). Each employer has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the service commitment contract.

14. Third Level Fees/Registration Fees

All participants will have their registration fees paid as part of this sponsorship. A sponsored employee who already holds a primary degree or is not covered under the Department of Education and Science free tuition fees initiative will be required to pay her/his own third level tuition fees. A sponsored employee who commenced, but did not complete, an undergraduate programme within the last five years will be required to pay the third level tuition fees in respect of the academic years in question. A sponsored employee who is required to repeat any element of the programme will also be required to pay her/his own associated third level fees.

15. Retention of Salary

A public health service employee who is sponsored in accordance with the terms of this circular will remain on the payroll of her/his public health service employer. S/he will retain her/his existing substantive salary throughout the four years of the nursing/midwifery degree programme, and will continue to be entitled to normal incremental progression up to the maximum of that scale, up until full registration with An Bord Altranais and the taking up of duty as a staff nurse. Sponsored employees will not receive any extra remuneration or allowances during the period of training other than premium payments where appropriate. During the interim period between programme completion and full An Bord Altranais registration, participants will have an employment commitment on the terms and conditions of their substantive post

16. Part-time Employees

Part-time employees who are awarded sponsorship will be required to become full-time employees for the four-year duration of the nursing/midwifery degree programme. Following successful completion of the programme, they may, with the prior agreement of their employer, revert to working part-time (provided the part-time work is not less than half-time).

17. Annual Leave

Sponsored employees shall retain their annual leave entitlements throughout the four years of the nursing/midwifery degree programme. However, annual leave may only be taken outside of academic semesters and allocated clinical time in full consultation with the employer.

18. Availability for Work

Sponsored employees will be required to work during all periods outside of academic semesters, except when they are on annual leave or undertaking supernumerary clinical placements as part of the nursing/midwifery degree programme.

19. Repeat Year

A sponsored employee who is required to repeat a year of the nursing/midwifery degree programme must remain in employment with her/his public health service agency for that year, working in her/his substantive grade, with the exception of time required for theoretical instruction, clinical instruction or examinations. The sponsorship arrangement in relation to salary and fees will be discontinued for the duration of the repeat year but will recommence after the employee has successfully completed the repeat year. However, salary will be paid in respect of time actually worked for the agency during the repeat year.

20. An employee who does not remain in employment during a repeat year will have her/his sponsorship terminated and will be required to repay all moneys received under the sponsorship as determined by the employer. Such repayments shall be made to the public health service agency where s/he was employed.

21. Repayment of Salary

A sponsored employee who does not remain in employment with the sponsoring employer during the period of the degree will have her/his sponsorship terminated and will be required to repay salary and fees as outlined in paragraph 23 below.

22. A sponsored employee who fails to honour her/his written undertaking to work as a nurse/midwife for her/his employer for a period of five years immediately following successful completion of the nursing/midwifery degree programme and registration with An Bord Altranais shall be required to repay to that employer on a pro-rata basis the value of the salary received by her/him during (a) academic semesters, and (b) all supernumerary clinical placement periods outside of those semesters.

23. Discontinuation or Non-Completion

A sponsored employee who discontinues or otherwise does not complete the programme will:

- (a) If remaining in employment with the sponsoring employer be required to repay to that employer all third level fees paid on her/his behalf over a period determined by that employer, and
- (b) if not remaining in employment with the sponsoring employer be required to repay to that employer on a pro-rata basis the value of the salary received by her/him during:
 - (i) academic semesters, and
 - (ii) all supernumerary clinical placement periods outside of those semesters, and
 - (iii) all third level fees paid on her/his behalf.

24. The National HR Directorate funds the costs of this initiative through the NMPDU's.

All enquiries should be directed to the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units, which will also provide any background information required.

25. Review of Sponsorship Scheme

The sponsorship scheme will be kept under review



Martin McDonald
National Director of Human Resources

Cc **Mr. John Magner, Assistant National Director of HR – Professional Education & Development**
Mr. Willie Murphy, Asst. National Director of HR – Shared Service Transition.

SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

APPENDIX 1

**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE EMPLOYEES
WISHING TO TRAIN AS NURSES
HSE HR Circular 007/ 2007**

Closing date for completed applications is:

N.B. This is an eight page document and all pages must be included in the application

APPLICANT DETAILS

NAME (Block Letters)	<i>Surname</i>	<i>First Names</i>	<i>Maiden Name</i> (if applicable)
HOME POSTAL ADDRESS			
WORK ADDRESS			
CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER	<i>Home</i>	<i>Mobile</i>	<i>Work</i>
Payroll Ref. Number ➡		PPS Number ➡	
If you hold work visa or green card please give details.	<i>Issued by</i>	<i>Date Issued</i>	<i>Expiry Date</i>

ELIGIBILITY FOR SPONSORSHIP

Do you qualify as a Mature Code Applicant for a place on the pre-registration Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme under the system operated by the Central Applications Office (CAO) on behalf of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI's)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please insert your CAO Number		
Please enter the Course Code(s) applied for with CAO in the order that you wrote them on your CAO application: e.g. WD865, TR411 etc		
Please enter your score as advised by the Nursing Careers Centre (NCC).		
Have you been offered a place on the Pre-Registration Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you currently undertaking a pre-registration nursing/midwifery education programme?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you withdrawn from a pre-registration nursing/midwifery education within the five-year period immediately preceding this application for sponsorship?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you deferred the acceptance of a place on a pre-registration nursing/midwifery education programme from a previous year?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you already hold a primary degree	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes please insert university, degree and year obtained	<hr/> <hr/>	

SERVICE RECORD

Please give particulars in date order of all employment and experience within the Public Health Services starting with your most recent position.

	To	Full name & address	Position Held & main duties &	No. of
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From		of employer	responsibilities	hours employed per week

SERVICE RECORD continued

From	To	Full name & address of employer	Position Held & main duties & responsibilities	No. of hours employed per week

SERVICE RECORD continued

From	To	Full name & address of employer	Position Held & main duties & responsibilities	No. of hours employed per week

I, the undersigned, hereby declare all the particulars given above to be true. I am aware that wilful misrepresentation of any fact either in written form or otherwise for the above sponsorship will disqualify my application.

Applicants Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

YOUR EMPLOYER MUST COMPLETE AND SIGN THIS SECTION OF THE SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION.

I verify that _____
(Applicants Name)

of _____
(Applicants home address)

is currently employed as _____
(Title of Post)

in _____
(Hospital/Location/Service name)

and that he/she fulfils the service requirement for this sponsorship application i.e. he/she has at least two years service directly involved in the delivery of care to patients/clients within the Irish Public Health Service on 1st January 2007 based on the attached service record. (Where employed on a part-time basis he/she has been working an average of not less than 15 hours per week.)

I further verify that his/her service record has been satisfactory and I support his/her application for sponsorship and accept the sponsorship conditions outlined below.

Director of Nursing/Services: _____ (Block Letters)

Signature: _____

Hospital/Location: _____

Hospital/Location Stamp

Sponsorship Conditions (Employer).

Retention of Salary.

The sponsored student will remain on the payroll of his/her existing employer and will retain his/her existing substantive salary throughout the four years of the nursing/midwifery degree programme and will continue to be entitled to normal incremental progression up the maximum of that scale, up until full registration with an Bord Altranais and the taking up duty as a staff nurse. Salary will be re-imbursed to the employer by their local Nursing & Midwifery Planning & Development Unit and details of salary and increment dates should be notified to the NMPDU by the student's employer.

Part-time employees.

Part-time employees who are awarded sponsorship will be required to become full-time employees for the four-year duration of the nursing/midwifery degree programme. Following successful completion of the programme, they may, with the prior agreement of their employer, revert to working part-time (provided the part-time work is not less than half-time).

Annual Leave.

The sponsored student will retain his/her annual leave entitlements throughout the four years of the nursing/midwifery degree programme. However, annual leave may only be taken outside of the academic semesters and allocated clinical time in full consultation with the employer.

Availability for work.

Sponsored employees will be required to work during all periods outside of academic semesters, except when they are on annual leave or undertaking supernumerary clinical placements as part of the nursing/midwifery degree programme.

Repeat year.

A sponsored employee who is required to repeat a year of the nursing/midwifery degree programme must remain in employment with his/her public health service agency for that year, working in his/her substantive grade, with the exception of time required for theoretical instruction, clinical instruction or examinations. The sponsorship arrangement in relation to salary and fees will be discontinued for the duration of the repeat year but will recommence after the employee has successfully completed the repeat year. However, salary will be paid in respect of time actually worked for the agency during the repeat year.

An employee who does not remain in employment during a repeat year will have his/her sponsorship terminated and will be required to repay all moneys received under the sponsorship as determined by the employer. Such repayments shall be made to the public health service agency where he/she was employed.

The Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit (NMPDU) will be notified if a student is repeating a year.

Repayment of Salary/Discontinuation or Non-Completion.

A sponsored employee who does not remain in employment with the sponsoring employer during the period of the degree or who discontinues or otherwise does not complete the programme will have his/her sponsorship terminated and will be required to repay salary and fees as outlined below: -

- (a) if remaining in employment with the sponsoring employer be required to repay to that employer all third level fees paid on his/her behalf over a period determined by that employer, and
- (b) if not remaining in employment with the sponsoring employer be required to repay to that employer on a pro-rata basis the value of the salary received by him/her during:
 - (i) academic semesters, and
 - (ii) all supernumerary clinical placement periods outside of those semesters and
 - (iii) all third level fees paid on his/her behalf.

Service Commitment.

On successful completion of the nursing/midwifery degree programme and registration with An Bord Altranais and following satisfactory employment selection procedures the sponsored employee will return to their place of employment and work as a nurse/midwife for a period of five years as part of the service commitment undertaken by the sponsored student. In exceptional circumstances, all or portion of the five-year nursing service commitment may, with the prior agreement of the public health service employer concerned, be given in the employment of an alternative Irish public health service agency. HSE employees directly involved in patient care who are not directly attached to a nursing department (e.g. ambulance personnel) will be facilitated with sourcing an appropriate nursing/midwifery employer by the workforce planning function of the local Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit (NMPDU).

Each employer has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the service commitment contract.

If the sponsored student fails to honour his/her written undertaking to work as a nurse/midwife for his/her employer for a period of five years immediately following successful completion of the nursing/midwifery degree programme and registration with An Bord Altranais he/she shall be required to repay to that employer on a pro-rata basis the value of the salary received by him/her during (a) academic semesters and (b) all supernumerary clinical placement periods outside of those semesters.

Liaison with HEI's and NMPDU.

The employer will liaise with the Higher Education Institution (HEI) with regard to attendance of the sponsored employee and with the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit (NMPDU) with regard to recoupment of salary costs for the student and placement on completion of the programme.

What to send with your completed application form.

Please enclose the original letter issued from the Nursing Careers Centre (NCC) advising you of your NCC interview results.

Where to send your completed application form.

The completed application form and documentation should be sent to the Nursing & Midwifery Planning & Development Unit,
Address.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

Closing date.

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is _____

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF ALL DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED.

SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT AND SERVICE COMMITMENT

In respect of
**Payment of Sponsorship for the Pre-Registration
 Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme.**

I, the undersigned of

 (Address)

Intend to undertake the pre-registration Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme,
 commencing at

 (Name of Higher Education Institution)

in _____ 2007, and of four years duration, leading to the
 (Date)
 award of

Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Nursing

 (Please insert specialty:- General, Midwifery Psychiatry, Intellectual Disability
 Children's)

In return for the four-year sponsorship to be paid to me by the Health Service
 Executive, I hereby undertake to: -

- (a) Immediately register as a Nurse/Midwife with An Bord Altranais, following successful completion of the four-year Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme.
- (b) Following satisfactory employment selection procedures, work as a Nurse/Midwife in the Public Health Service functional area/employment from which I was sponsored for a period of five years, initially accepting the terms, conditions and salary associated with a staff nurse/midwife position for a period of five years thereafter (unless prior agreement is reached with the Health Service Executive).
- (c) *Become a full-time employee for the duration of the Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme (only if you are currently working part-time).
- (d) **Work during all periods outside of academic semesters, except when I am on annual leave or undertaking supernumerary clinical placements as part of the Nursing Degree Programme.

I undertake to keep my employer informed and updated on my progress on the Nursing/ Midwifery Degree Programme and I understand that I must notify my employer if I have to repeat a year of the Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme. In the event of being required to repeat a year of the Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme, I understand that: -

- (a) I remain with my current employer working in my substantive grade, with the exception of time required for theoretical instruction, clinical instruction or examinations.
- (b) The sponsorship arrangements will be discontinued for the duration of the repeat year, but will recommence after I have successfully completed the repeat year
- (c) My salary will only be paid in proportion to time actually worked for my employer during the repeat year.
- (d) If I do not remain in employment during the repeat year, I will have my sponsorship terminated and will be required to repay all funding received under the sponsorship to the Health Service Executive.

I further understand that if I discontinue or otherwise do not complete the programme I will

- (a) if remaining in employment with my sponsoring employer be required to repay to that employer all third level fees paid on my behalf over a period determined by my employer, and
- (b) if not remaining in employment with my sponsoring employer be required to repay to that employer on a pro-rata basis the value of the salary received by me during
 1. academic semesters, and
 2. all supernumerary clinical placement periods outside of those semesters, and
 3. all third level fees paid on my behalf

**Following successful completion of the programme, sponsored employees may, with the prior agreement of their employer, revert to working part-time (so long as the part-time work is not less than half-time).*

***Sponsored employees shall retain their annual leave entitlements throughout the four years of the Nursing/Midwifery Degree Programme.*

Dated this _____ day of _____ 2007

Signed by: _____

In the presence of _____
Director of Nursing