

 <p>Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte Health Service Executive</p>		<p>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</p>
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Circular 009/2006

9th May 2006

**To: Each Asst. National Director of Human Resources
Each Director Nursing & Midwifery Planning & Development Unit**

**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, suitable 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.

Number of Sponsorships

- 1 Funding for 54 sponsorships will be made available this year (2006). 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.

Eligibility

- 3 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 Neither is the sponsorship scheme 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.

Application to CAO

- 6 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. 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.
- 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 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. Employees intending to apply for sponsorship should send a copy of that notification to the Director of the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit in their area, within ten working days of receiving such notification.

Applications for Sponsorship

- 9 Applications for sponsorship from eligible employees who are offered a place by the CAO on the Pre-registration Nursing Midwifery Degree Programme should be addressed to the Director of the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit supporting the area within which the employee is working. Such applications should be made within ten working days following receipt from the CAO of an offer of a place on the Pre-registration Nursing Degree Programme and should be accompanied by a copy of the offer. (Appendix 1)

Award of Sponsorships

- 10 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.

- 11** 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 9 above.) Sponsorships within the approved complement should be awarded to those placed highest in the order of merit, provided of course 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.
- 12** 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.

Satisfactory Employment Record

- 13** In order to qualify for sponsorship, an applicant must have a satisfactory service record. As part of the selection process the Directors of the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units will obtain verification of satisfactory service record from the applicant's employer. (Appendix 2)

Service Commitment

- 14** Successful applicants for sponsorship will be required to give a written undertaking to their sponsoring public health service employer that they will
- (a) immediately register as nurses/midwives with An Bord Altranais following successful completion of the four-year nursing/midwifery degree programme, and
 - (b) Following satisfactory employment selection procedures, work as nurses/midwives for that particular employer for a period of five years service, initially accepting the terms, conditions and salaries associated with a staff nurse position.(see paragraph 17 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 (i.e. Ambulance personnel) will be facilitated and transferred to an appropriate nursing 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.

Third Level Fees/Registration Fees

- 15** 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.

Retention of Salary

- 16** 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 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

Part-time Employees

- 17** 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

- 18** 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.

Availability for Work

- 19 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

- 20 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.

- 21 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.

Repayment of Salary

- 22 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 24 below.

- 23 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 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.

Discontinuation or Non-Completion

- 24 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.

25 The National HR Directorate funds the costs involved through NMPDU's. Enquiries should be directed to our Nursing and Midwifery Planning & Development Units, which will also provide any background information required.

Review of Sponsorship Scheme

26 The sponsorship scheme will be kept under review.



Martin McDonald,
National Director of Human Resources.

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

Service Commitment in Respect of the Payment of Sponsorship for the Pre-Registration Nursing Degree Programme

I, the undersigned, of _____ (address)

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

_____ (name of Institute of Education)

in _____ 2006, and of four years duration, leading to the award of BSc in

_____ Nursing (title of qualification).

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 Nurse with An Bord Altranais, following successful completion of the four-year Nursing Degree Programme.
- (b) Following satisfactory employment selection procedures, work as a Nurse in the Public Service (former Health Board, Public Voluntary or Mental Handicap Agency) of the Health Service Executive's functional area for that particular employer for a period of five years service, initially accepting the terms, conditions and salaries associated with a staff nurse 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 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

In the event of being required to repeat a year of the Nursing 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 also understand that if I fail to honour my written undertaking to work as a nurse for the Public Health Service in the Health Service Executive's functional area for a period of five years following successful completion of the Nursing Degree Programme, I shall be required to repay to the Health Service Executive, on a pro-rata basis, the value of the salary received by me during a) academic semesters and b) all supernumerary clinical placement periods outside of those semesters, over a period determined by that employer.

*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 Degree Programme.

Dated this _____ **day of** _____ **2006**

Signed by _____

In the presence of _____
Director of Nursing

Application for Sponsorship for Public Health Service Employees wishing to train as Nurses

Closing date for return of completed Application Form _____

Name in Full: _____
(Block Letters)

Postal Address : _____

Tel No. (Work) _____

Tel No. (Home) _____

Date of Birth: _____

Maiden Name: _____
(if applicable)

Current Salary: _____

Course Code(s)
Applied for with CAO: _____
(e.g. WD 865, TR411 etc)

SERVICE RECORD

Give particulars in date order of all employment and experience within the Public Health Services.

From	To	Position Held and Main Responsibilities (please indicate reason for leaving)	Full Name and Address of Employer

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.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

I support _____ (name of applicant) application and confirm the above service record is correct and accurate.

Signature of Director of Nursing: _____

Date: _____

N.B. Please enclose the following documentation, originals only (if you have not done so already):

- 1. A letter from the Nursing Careers Centre indicating success at interview.**
- 2. A letter from the Office of Civil Service and Local Appointments Commission indicating overall score from written assessment and return to:**

**Nursing & Midwifery Planning and Development Unit,
Address:**