



**Council on Higher Education and South African Nursing Council
Joint Communiqué on access to the Postgraduate Diplomas in Nursing**

17 March 2023

Extensive engagements with the nursing education sector, including engagements facilitated by the Nursing Education Quad, a collective body with senior representation from the Department of Health, the Department of Higher Education and Training, the South African Nursing Council and the Council on Higher Education, have taken place to discuss the challenges to access posed by the articulation routes from legacy nursing qualifications to the Postgraduate Diplomas in Nursing communicated in the CHE's Communiqué 10 of 2022.

The discussions also took place in the context of the need to respond to the growing challenge around the availability of specialist nurses, and the need for qualified professional nurses and midwives to access the Postgraduate Diplomas in Nursing in order to become qualified as Nurse or Midwife Specialists.

A consultative workshop with a community of experts was convened on 14 February 2023 at which the following organisations were represented: Department of Health (DoH), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), South African Nursing Council (SANC), Council on Higher Education (CHE), Forum of University Nursing Deans of South Africa (FUNDISA), College Principals and Academic Staff of South Africa (CPASSA), NETCARE, Life HealthCare, Mediclinic and Private Health Education Providers of South Africa (PHEPSA).

The strong recommendation emanating from the stakeholder engagement was that as the country is in a period of transition as nursing education fully migrates to the higher education sector and that historical pathways that enabled the development of Nurse or Midwife Specialists need to be recognized. In the interests of ensuring that a sufficient number of specialist nurses are available for the health sector in the country, nurses who hold legacy qualifications that previously enabled them to access specialist studies should be allowed to access the Postgraduate Diplomas in Nursing. The Quad endorsed this recommendation and a formal letter from SANC also supported the recommendation.

The CHE's Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) considered the recommendation at its meeting on 13 March 2023, and resolved that a special concession is put in place as follows:

Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing: The Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Nursing is the qualification through which specialist nurses are developed. These are nurses who are already registered as Professional Nurses and Midwives, or a General Nurse with a Midwifery Qualification. After 1986, these nurses would have historically followed one of the following three legacy qualification routes, which on completion and with experience, enabled nurses to be admitted to specialist studies:

- 2-year Diploma (Bridging course) leading to registration as General or Psychiatric Nurse offered under Regulation 683 of 14 April 1989 as amended, followed by 1-year Diploma in Midwifery offered under Regulation 254 of 14 February 1975 as amended.

OR

- 4-year Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery offered under Regulation 425 of 22 February 1985 as amended.

OR

- 4-year Bachelor's Degree offered under Regulation R425 of 22 February 1985 as amended.

In addition to the minimum requirements for admission to the PGDip described on page 35 of the HEQSF (CHE, 2013) as follows: "The minimum admission requirements is an appropriate Bachelor's degree or an appropriate Advanced Diploma", Nursing Education Institutions offering the PGDip in Nursing can also consider applicants who have followed the three legacy routes above for admission to the PGDip in Nursing.

Institutions offering the PGDip in Nursing must take cognizance of the diverse qualifications routes that students have followed and put appropriate measures in place to support students, including addressing content and skills gaps where these may exist.

In the light of the special concession above, it should be noted that the articulation pathways described in decisions 5, 6 and 7 of the CHE's Communique 10 of 2022 are no longer necessary.

The HEQC further required that the access and progression of nurses from the legacy qualifications into and through the PGDip be closely monitored by the CHE, SANC, the DoH and the DHET, to address any challenges that may arise, and to advise the HEQC when the special concession is no longer required.

The CHE and the SANC are grateful for the strong collaboration and commitment to working together that enabled this decision to be reached, and the organisations look forward to continuing positive collaboration in the interests of ensuring the availability of sufficient quality nurses and nursing specialists for the health sector in South Africa.



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