



South African Nursing Council
Regulating nursing, advocating for the public

CIRCULAR 5/2023

**TO: NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH
NURSING EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (NEIs)
ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

SUBJECT - PRESCRIBED LECTURER: STUDENT RATIOS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF NURSES

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this circular is to share with the National Department of Health, Provincial Departments of Health, Nursing Education Institutions (NEIs) and relevant stakeholders about the revised Lecturer: Student Ratios in facilitation of theory and Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The South African Nursing Council (SANC) is a statutory body which functions in terms of the Nursing Act, 2005 (Act No. 33 of 2005). It has a responsibility to establish, improve, monitor and control the conditions, standards and quality of Nursing Education & Training and Practice within the ambit of the Nursing Act and any other applicable laws.
- 2.2 The SANC engaged with Education and Training Stakeholders regarding the issue of Lecturer: Student Ratios because of the view that the current ratios are inadequate to meet the needs of the country and many students currently being admitted to higher education studies. It was also indicated that Nursing education and training has become very expensive considering that an increase in the number of students requires simultaneous increase in the number of Lecturers and other resources to ensure quality education and training. The benchmarking exercise was conducted with other countries including African countries in particular. Although there are variations, it became clear that other countries also have approved Lecturer: Student Ratios guidelines.
- 2.3 The Council deliberated on this matter in the ordinary meeting held on 30-31 March 2023 and resolved to approve the revised Lecturer: Student Ratios below.



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Table 1 below depicts the revised ratios for undergraduate programmes for theory and Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

Table 1: Undergraduate programmes

Programmes	Theory (Lecturer: Student Ratios)	WIL: Clinical Facilitator/Preceptor/: Student Ratios
Higher Certificate in Nursing	1:50	1:25
Diploma in Nursing	1:50	1:25
Advanced Diploma in Midwifery	1:50	1: 10
Bachelor of Nursing	1:50	1:25 and 1:10 for Midwifery component

Table 2 below depicts the revised ratios for Postgraduate Diploma programmes (Clinical and non-clinical) for theory and WIL.

Table 2: Postgraduate Diploma Nursing programmes

Programmes	Theory: Lecturer: Student Ratios	WIL/Practicals: Clinical Facilitator/Preceptor/: Student Ratios
Clinical programmes	1:50	1:15
Non-clinical (Nursing Education and Health Services Management)	1:100	The practicals should be conducted in line with the Memorandum of Agreement with clinical facilities for Health Services Management and Nursing Education Institutions for Nursing Education.

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Nursing Education Institutions must ensure that distribution of teaching workload is fair and realistic to ensure quality teaching. Other factors to be considered include e.g. the weighting of the modules in terms of credits.
- 3.2 Increase in student numbers is not automatic, Nursing Education Institutions must still apply for extension of accreditation scope as stipulated in Sub-regulation 7(1) of the Regulations Relating to Accreditation of Institutions as Nursing Education Institutions (Government Notice No. R.173 of 8 March 2013).
- 3.3 The Nursing Education Institution must have offered the programme for at least a year before applying for an increase in the number of students.
- 3.4 The Letter of Support is still required for utilization of clinical facilities in the public sector, especially where the clinical spaces are more than what was allocated.

- 3.5 The Memorandum of Agreement signed within the last five (05) years will still be valid except where the clinical placement spaces are increased more than what was approved in terms of the (MOA/MOU).
- 3.6 Situational analyses conducted within the last five (05) years are still valid except where there have been major changes in respect of the services offered.

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