

Diploma in Nursing Conversion Course

The recently revised Diploma in Nursing of the Extra-Mural Studies Department (a three-year day-release course) is similar in structure and course content to much of the undergraduate nursing degree course. An opportunity for conversion from diploma to degree for highly able students therefore seems appropriate and the Department of Nursing Studies is proposing to offer a one calendar year course for diplomates of outstanding ability, leading to an honours BSc in Nursing Studies.

Staff from the Department of Nursing Studies have been closely involved in the validation and examinations for the Diploma and consider that "top slicing" a proportion of the students for eligibility would result in a group with adequate ability and prerequisite knowledge who would benefit from this course. Precedents for a one year course designed to build on prerequisite courses exist in the Education faculty where the BEd is awarded and in medicine for the intercalated honours BSc.

Rationale

Higher education opportunities for mature students and particularly for those in vocational posts have been advocated in the latest Vice-Chancellor's report. Providing a one year course for nurses rather than a post-registration three-year course should be seen as an economic way of building upon previous study and advancing professional education. This gives those who have previously not been able to enjoy higher education at least one year of study relevant to their future careers. There is substantial demand from Diploma students for a wider acknowledgement of the standing or academic currency of the Diploma in Nursing. Providing this course for a few will give an opportunity for the University to support the new Diploma course and commence an innovative scheme.

Details of the Course

From previous Diploma results over the last three years, it is estimated that up to twelve "excellent" students could be recruited annually. The programme will build on students' previous course work and knowledge while exploiting course units which are already available in the College. Research skills and their application to nursing care will be emphasised in this course. Three out of four units will be from the final two years of the BSc/RGN programme. Only one unit from the basic medical sciences will be of second year standard as it follows logically from the only first year biological unit in the Diploma.

Courses to be taken

			Year assigned to course unit
Research Project in Nursing	1 1/2	0744	4
Issues in Nursing	1/2	0743	4
Research Methods	1/2	0741	3
Sociology or Psychology Course (of students' choice)	1/2		3
Human Life Cycle	1	0720	2

Students' Prerequisite Grades and Finance

In order to register students should have achieved grades A or B in five out of six units in the Diploma in Nursing. (C grading will be acceptable for one or two first or second year courses in exceptional cases).

DES approval for this scheme will be sought in order to establish eligibility for a mandatory grant. However, as most nurses will be of senior staff nurse or sister grade and of "mature" status a bursary scheme may be set up at regional or national level through NHS funding sources. Academic approval for this course is necessary prior to negotiating these arrangements. The Department has already been awarded the necessary four student places, per annum.