

BC AL/336/24/29

DEPARTMENT OF PAEDIATRICS

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WITH THE COMPLIMENTS
OF
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R.C.N. Commission on Nursing Education

1. The University of London is involved directly in nursing education by the provision of (a) undergraduate courses in the Faculty of Science that lead to an honours degree in nursing studies and the professional qualification of S.R.N.; (b) a part-time 2 year course leading to the M.Sc. degree in nursing studies. The University approves but does not provide courses leading to the qualification of Diploma in Nursing.
2. The University is aware that some of its graduates enter Schools of Nursing and those that have obtained a degree in a subject relevant to nursing receive the S.R.N. qualification after successfully completing a course of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years training instead of the 3 years normally required.
3. A substantial number of teachers of the University participate in nursing education by formal or informal teaching and by acting as examiners. In addition members of the clinical academic staff of the general medical schools and the postgraduate institutes work closely with nurses in the course of their clinical work, teaching and research. They have no doubt that well-educated nurses of high calibre are required for good patient care and health service management.
4. It is not surprising in view of the variety of interests and experience in nursing education held by University institutions and by individual members, particularly in the Faculty of Medicine that a wide range of responses has been

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c t'd received to the 14 key points identified in the questionnaire. These responses cannot easily be put into a University consensus. The purpose of this paper is to emphasise general issues that specify the rôle of the University in nursing education.

5. The University believes that while nursing will probably remain a mixed ability profession it will be greatly strengthened by the inclusion of more graduates. These should become leaders of clinical nursing teams, pioneers of teaching and research, and bringers of special knowledge and skills to management and administration. Those graduates who enter nursing from other disciplines or acquire degrees in other subjects after professional training bring to the profession a breadth of knowledge, maturity and understanding of life that is best obtained by a University education; the graduates in nursing studies in addition bring to the profession an awareness of nursing as an academic discipline.

6. Each of these paths to the graduate nurse has merit and the University believes that in the absence of a radical change in nursing education each should continue to be available, and that the numbers should be increased.

7. However, neither is a realistic model for a course leading to a single basic qualification. The degree followed by vocational training model requires a $5\frac{1}{2}$ years training period before qualification during which the student is part of the nursing work force for $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. The degree in nursing studies model is of shorter duration - 4 years -

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but throughout this period the student is supernumary to the work force. The cost of basic nursing education would be greatly increased to an extent that is unlikely to be acceptable in the present financial climate.

8. A total transfer of basic nursing education from Schools of Nursing to Universities would be associated with problems in the Universities of imbalance between vocationally orientated and non-vocationally orientated courses, science and arts students, and male and female students. It is also likely that other professions within the health sciences such as chiropody, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and radiology would seek similar arrangements.

9. In this connection the University recognises that there may be an identifiable body of knowledge, attitudes and skills that would be appropriate for a common course of study by entrants to the health professions. Such a course should be taught within the mainstream of higher and further education and those taking the course should be students and not employees.

10. Should such courses be set up within the University of London it would have to be decided whether they were to be in the Faculty of Science or of Medicine; associated with medical schools or with multi-faculty institutions teaching a wide range of physical and behavioural science courses, and to what extent multi-disciplinary teaching could be achieved.

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The University urges that opportunities remain available for post-basic nurses to pursue courses of higher education and to participate in research that will lead to doctorates or to masters degrees.

October 1984

T.E. Oppé