

Higher Diploma and Masters in Health Sciences (Primary Care)

H.Dip.: Part-time one year; Masters: Part-time one year | Closing date for applications—H.Dip. 19 April, 2006; Masters: 30 June, 2006 | Commences: 4 September, 2006

The course places an emphasis on knowledge and skills required for effective teamwork, affording students opportunities to work together in a multidisciplinary group.



Programme description

Primary care is the first point of contact that people have with the health and personal social services. The central importance of primary care has received recent recognition in the Health Strategy (2001) and the Primary Care Strategy (2001). The Higher Diploma and Masters in Primary Care are directed at a wide range of specialists including general practitioners, public health and practice nurses, administrators, social workers, community dietitians, community welfare officers, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists, area medical officers, health promotion officers, and others. The course places an emphasis on knowledge and skills required for effective teamwork, affording students opportunities to work together in a multidisciplinary group.

Programme aims and objectives

Higher Diploma:

1. To allow the development of a critical approach to practice by examining own work, learning about work of others and by developing a critical approach to published work.
2. To increase understanding of human behaviour in relation to health and illness in order to gain greater insight into the behaviour and needs of patients and other health care professionals.
3. To provide training in research methods and an appreciation of the existing body of research findings to equip students to undertake their own research and critical inquiry.
4. To develop relationships and management skills for teamwork within the changing health care environment.

Masters:

As above, with the addition of the following aim:

5. To successfully develop and perform a piece of research within the primary care setting and in so doing develop relevant expertise in research methodology.

ECTS weighting

Higher Diploma—60 ECTS.

Programme fee and funding

Academic year 2006–2007—Masters.

E.U. students: €5,430.

Academic year 2006–2007—H.Dip.

E.U. students: €3,900.

(Fees for non-E.U. students will be posted online: www.nuigalway.ie/postgrad/fees.)

Programme Content (Subject to Change)

Course title	ECTS	Examined
Primary Care	9	Group Project, Semester 2
Research	9	Group Project, Semester 2
Health Promotion	10.5	Assignment, Semester 2
Health Economics	10.5	Assignment, Semester 2 (optional)
Ethics	10.5	Assignment, Semester 1 (optional)
Psychology	10.5	Assignment, Semester 1 (optional)
Sociology	10.5	Assignment, Semester 1 (optional)
Evidence-Based Health Care	n/a	
Management	n/a	

The North Western and Western Health Boards are very supportive of Board employees participating in the course, and provide a range of financial supports dependent on the student's relationship with the Board.

Minimum entry requirements

The Higher Diploma is open to health professionals and health service administrators. Preference for places will be given to those working in the primary care sector. The Masters is open to those who have achieved honours in the Higher Diploma.

Selection criteria

Selection is based on the candidate's relevant professional experience, their ability/opportunity to adapt the learning they will gain to their daily work, and their academic record.

Examination arrangements

Assessment is by means of regular assignments during the year and presentation of a group project at the end of the year. Masters students must submit a dissertation.

Career opportunities

The Primary Care Strategy document *Primary Care—A New Direction* (2001) sets out a new direction for primary care as the central focus of the delivery of health and personal social services in Ireland. The strategy proposes that primary care be "an integrated, interdisciplinary, high quality, team-based, and user-friendly set of services for the public". At present there is little opportunity for primary care specialists to learn and interact together in a structured educational environment to develop the skills required to work in such a system. The Higher Diploma and Masters in Primary Care will equip

students to implement the requirements of this changing national policy context within the primary care workplace setting.

Programme Director

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