Module Description
Starfield has defined primary care as being ‘first-contact, continuous, comprehensive and co-ordinated care undifferentiated by gender, disease or organ system’. Recent national and international policy developments have stressed that primary care is best delivered by a team of professionals working in the community. This module aims to provide primary care practitioners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to allow them to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams within the changing health care environment.

Learning Outcomes
At the end of this module the practitioner will be able to:

- Analyse the development and role of primary care in the health services
- Explain the rationale, and underpinning evidence, for the four key elements of the Starfield definition of primary care
- Appraise various models of primary health care delivery
- Categorise healthcare systems (Beveridge, Bismarck or American).
- Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of primary care within different European countries, and compare them to the Irish system
- Describe, in an international context, the various factors which impact on the use of health services
- Evaluate the various international interventions used to manage demand
- Evaluate the structure and function of primary care teams, the factors influencing team work in primary care, and the effectiveness of primary health care teams
- Appreciate the roles and responsibilities of other members of the primary care team
- Describe the development and structure of the health services in Ireland
- Evaluate the factors influencing the development of the health services in Ireland
- Discuss the important features of the Primary Care Strategy, and the implications of the strategy for their own work
- Evaluate the degree to which the Strategy has been implemented and the barriers to full implementation.

Module Content
This module has 6 distance learning units (2 weeks each) supported by 2 half-day workshops.

1. Analysis of key features and effectiveness of primary care
2. Primary care morbidity
3. International systems of health care delivery
4. Primary healthcare teams and team-working.
5. Evolution and structure of health services in Ireland
6. Primary care strategy

The workshops cover the background to primary care public policy and a round-table discussion with a representative from HSE Primary Care Development.

Teaching and Learning Strategies
Online distance learning and face-to-face workshops.

Assessment Strategy
45%: continuous assessment (E-tivities and online participation)
55%: assignment on completion of module.