

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PRACTICE NURSING

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this course different from those already on offer?

The three criteria that were used when this Graduate certificate was developed were: “Accessible, Affordable and Flexible”. This course has been designed to address these barriers to Post-Graduate study and we believe that this Course is the best on offer in this respect.

What courses are studied within this Graduate Certificate?

There are currently 4 course components:

Practice Nursing 1

Incorporating 3 modules

Practice Nursing 2

Incorporating 3 modules

Advanced Health Assessment

USC Elective (6 options currently)

I am hospital trained Registered Nurse can I enrol in this Certificate course?

Yes, all Registered Nurses who are employed in General Practice, or have access to a General Practice environment, can undertake this course and obtain a Graduate Certificate at successful completion.

I am an enrolled nurse can I undertake this Graduate Certificate?

As a pre-requisite for this award is a Bachelor of Nursing or equivalent, Enrolled Nurses are not able to enrol in the full Post-Graduate Certificate. However, you can undertake the first three courses and will be awarded a Certificate of Completion for each module successfully completed. The studies that are undertaken will not be recognised as a bridging course to attain Registered Nurse status; neither will it change your Scope of Practice.

How long would each course take?

Ideally each course should be completed within 6 months however an extension up to 12 months per course could be considered on application.

Are there prescribed starting dates or can I start at any time?

Starting dates will align themselves to University semesters i.e. February and July. However for Courses 1-3 this will be at the discretion of your local Division and will be dependent upon resourcing and capacity. Course 4, facilitated by USC, will have to be commenced at the start of either Semester 1 or Semester 2 and be completed in the time frame dictated by USC.

If commitments and circumstances change would I be able to defer the assessment for a module or delay completion of the course for a short time?

With consultation with the tutor, individuals apply to defer or delay their progress for Courses 1-3 for a period of up to 12 months. For course 4 this application would need to be approved by SCU.

If I complete a course do I have to start on the next course immediately?

There is no requirement to do this study continuously. Your option to resume study at a later date will however be determined by the availability of the course through your local Division of General Practice. A particular course may or may not be offered by the Division at the time you want to resume study. You should discuss this with your course coordinator at the Division.

Do I have to register for the full Graduate Certificate course and enrol at the University at the outset?

No. You are welcome to register with your local Division to undertake some or all of courses one, two and three. You can then decide whether you wish to complete the Graduate Certificate, which would be highly recommended.

How much will this cost me?

The cost of the first three courses will be at the Division's discretion to recover costs associated with delivering the program but would not be expected to exceed \$300 per course.

The fourth course requires University registration and the fees per course are \$1500. This cost is tax deductible. There may be opportunities to apply for a scholarship to offset this cost. Your Division will have details of such opportunities.

Do I need to purchase textbooks?

There will be no compulsion to purchase textbooks for the first three courses. It would be at the university's discretion as to the requirements for the fourth courses. For courses 1-3 references will be provided within the course information and study guide to access resources on-line. Access to the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) library is permitted and this includes on-line access.

How much attendance would be required of me at workshops for the first course?

The participants in the Course will be invited to attend an introductory workshop. This will give an overview of the Course, study guide, overview of the content of courses 1 and 2 and an academic skills writing workshop. The extent of workshops offered would be decided by the local Division in discussion with the nurses. Whether attendance is optional or required would depend on the model for delivery that the division offers. Some Divisions will be in regions where attendance in person may not be possible and a teleconference may be preferred.

Would there be other workshops suggested?

A formal suggested workshop would be scheduled for early in the normal program of Course 3 but again, the Division, in consultation with the nurses may choose a different pattern of workshops for their delivery model.

Where would the workshops be held and how long would be their duration?

The workshops would most likely be held locally and organised by the Division. They would run for approximately 3 hours and be held in the evening but course participants could vary this arrangement in discussion with their local Division.

Could informal local study groups be formed?

Yes, and it would be encouraged for participants to arrange these.

Regarding the fourth course administered from the USC would full-time attendance be required?

Course 4 is undertaken through the University as a distance education course with on-line support. It can be undertaken from any location.

Are there any concessions regarding Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A pre-requisite for registering for the commencement of the first course through the Division is the recognised qualifications of Registered Nurse or Enrolled Nurse. The Division is not empowered by the University to assess and recognise any additional prior learning. A great aspect of this course is that the University will recognise courses 1, 2&3 as pre-approved courses if you choose to commit to complete the qualification by undertaking the final course with the Sunshine Coast University.

Will there be a contact person who will be available for reference and assistance?

Assistance will be provided for academic or administrative problems through the course coordinator and course tutor. There may be one person or two people covering these two roles depending on the Division but there will always be at least one person to support you. Their names and contact details will be in the study guide.

Will I have to take exams?

There are no exams in courses 1-3 in the Graduate Certificate Program. There are 2 written assignments in each course, with the exception of Practice Nursing 3 where there are 2 written case studies and 2 linked clinical skills assessments. Assessment in course 4 is determined by the University and may change from time to time.

I haven't studied for a while and may require help, would this be available?

It would be available to you. The introductory workshop of the first course has an academic writing skills workshop, which should also be of help. There will also be extensive (as required) written feedback on assignments. These courses can be as individual or group oriented as the participants choose. Your writing skills will develop with support during the courses and these skills will benefit you in many areas of your nursing practice in the future.

What next?

This Certificate is the first step in continuing further study at Post-graduate Diploma and Masters level and it lets you step into further study at little or no financial cost, in a flexible time-frame, until you are ready to make that commitment.