

**Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Care Nursing**  
**Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care Nursing**

## **1 Background**

The proposal is to rename the Postgraduate Certificate in Women Centred Clinical Care to Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Care Nursing and to introduce a Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care Nursing. In the 2002 Commonwealth budget, funding was allocated to general practice to support the employment of practice nurses (PNs). This funding was extended in the 2005 budget and included an allocation to support the training of PNs in key areas including cervical screening and chronic disease management. PNs in rural and regional areas can also claim MBS rebates for cervical screening and a number of other procedures. There are currently at least 900 PNs working in general practice in Victoria. The Department of General Practice has widely recognised expertise in women's health research, in women centred clinical care and research on the management of chronic diseases. A Postgraduate Certificate in Women Centred Clinical Care has been developed and was offered for the first time in 2004. There are 8 practice nurses enrolled in this course, 39 have successfully completed one of the core subjects (580:890 Taking a Pap test: Theory and practice) and a further 16 are currently undertaking the subject. We expect a number of those nurses who have completed the Pap test subject to elect to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in 2006. The development of a Postgraduate Diploma would provide these nurses with access to subjects that would enable them to carry out a wider range of clinical and health promotion activities.

The subject on research methods would enable students at diploma level to elect to undertake some research training so that they can contribute to the development of research capacity building in general practice. The Commonwealth Government provides funding through the Primary Health Care Research and Evaluation Development (PHCRED) strategy to the Department of General Practice to support research capacity building through education and training. The Department has received significant research funding to develop educational interventions in youth health and diabetes care specifically for practice nurses. The postgraduate offerings will enable these tools to be formalised into subjects through which practice nurses can gain university qualifications.

The department is keen to engage with Victorian primary health care practitioners working in rural and regional areas through providing access to a quality course for PNs. The department is also keen to work collaboratively with Melbourne Sexual Health through utilising their existing subjects into the Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma.

The new Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma would enable health professionals to provide more comprehensive and evidence based care in the significant areas of sexual and reproductive health, youth health and chronic conditions. At the same time it would teach strategies for health promotion in a primary care setting. Commonwealth Government policy priorities in primary health care include an enhanced role for the practice nurse and this has been recognised in the various funding initiatives offered and in the creation of scholarships for these nurses to train in areas of need. Due to their geographical location and work commitments, most of this cohort would not be able to access a program offered on-campus. Students who have completed one or more of our current subjects are located across Victoria as well as in South Australia and Queensland.

## **2 Course/Program Objectives**

### **Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Care Nursing Objectives**

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Provide an evidence-based approach to clinical care in a range of basic clinical areas of their choice (e.g. chronic disease, health promotion, women's health and youth health) that builds on their previous clinical nursing experience

- Communicate with patients in primary care using a patient-centred and preventive approach
- Contribute to the management of clinical conditions in primary care.

### **Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care Nursing Objectives**

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Provide further evidence based approaches to a greater range of advanced clinical areas of their choice that builds on the previous subjects completed
- Practice effectively patient centred and preventive clinical care
- Manage the clinical care of patients across their lifecycle in a holistic way and engender health promotion strategies in primary care.

### **Generic Skills**

On completion of these courses, students should be able to:

- Communicate effectively and appropriately with others
- Evaluate evidence and implement best practice using an evidence based approach
- Work with colleagues to develop best practice in the delivery of health related programs
- Undertake new tasks and learn new skills that enhance knowledge and ability.

## **3 Entry Requirements**

### **Applicants for the Postgraduate Certificate are selected from:**

Australian and overseas qualified nurses who hold a 3 year degree or diploma of nursing or an approved equivalent AND have at least two years professional experience in a clinical setting.

### **Applicants for the Postgraduate Diploma are selected from:**

Australian or overseas qualified nurses who hold a 3 year degree or diploma of nursing or approved equivalent AND have at least two years professional experience in a clinical setting.

OR

Australian or overseas qualified nurses who have successfully completed the Postgraduate Certificate in Women Centred Clinical Care.

## **4 Course/Program Structure**

The course will consist of eleven 12.5 point subjects from which students choose four subjects for a certificate and eight subjects for a diploma;

Year 1/2

Semester 1

- 585-890 Taking a Pap test: Theory and Practice
- 585-891 Significant Issues in Women's Health
- 505-883 Sexually Transmissible Infections
- 585-895 Diabetes Management in Primary Care
- 585-897 Youth Health in Primary Care

Semester 2

- 585-892 Responding to Women in Primary Care.
- 585-893 Communicating with Women in Primary Care
- 585-894 Asthma Management in Primary Care
- 505-884 Sexual and Reproductive Health
- 585-896 Promoting Health in Primary Care
- 514-831 Research and Evaluation for Practice

## **5 Availability of Course**

The course is to be available to fee-paying Australian and overseas students from Semester 2, 2006.