



ERA+ Clinical Leadership in Nursing Education



Blog: Nursing in Portugal: excellence in education, challenges in retention

In Portugal, the education and training of nurses is one of the best in Europe. However, at national level, the average number of nurses per 1,000 inhabitants is below the OECD average (7.4 nurses per 1,000 inhabitants, compared to the OECD average of 9.2). It is therefore important that healthcare contexts are attractive to the retention of new nurses.

At national level (mainland and islands) we have a total of 20 public and 18 private schools teaching undergraduate nursing programmes, master's degrees and postgraduate training.

The bachelor's degree lasts 4 years and has 240 ECTS (8 semesters). The training of general nurses is regulated at European level, with a view to recognising their professional qualifications among the EU Member States. Therefore, the training cycle of general nurses include the programme set out in the European Directive (2005/36/EC).

It ensures scientific, technical, human and cultural training for the provision and management of general nursing care for the person throughout the life cycle, the family, groups and the community, at the different levels of prevention. It also aims to ensure the necessary training:

- Participation in the management of health services, units or establishments;
- Participation in the training of nurses and other health professionals;
- The development of research practice within its scope.

For the 2nd cycle of studies, graduate nurses can attend master's degrees (90 ECTS) in specialised areas recognised by the national Order of Nurses, with the title of specialist nurse. This qualification gives access to the national career that includes the category of nurse, specialist nurse and nurse manager.

Nursing education is supervised by the ministry responsible for higher education, which liaises with the ministry responsible for health in order to: The strategic planning of training; Defining curricular structures; Setting annual vacancies; Monitoring evaluations and audits.

Nursing graduates can work as nurses, whose practice in Portugal is regulated by Ministerial Order (no. 799-D/99) and by European Directive 2005/36/EC and requires registration with the Portuguese Order of Nurses.

Clinical leadership is a newly concept that is still not widely discussed in Portugal in the academic context and in clinical practice. Therefore, clinical leadership is not part of the core competence description for general nurses. The areas of competence for general nurses defined by the Portuguese Order of Nurses are: professional responsibility, ethical and legal responsibility, the provision and management of care and

professional development. The formulation of the competency profile for general nurses was the result of a consensus-building process, starting with the ICN Framework of Competencies for the Generalist Nurse, which was published in 2003.

Therefore, bringing the discussion of the concept of clinical leadership and its core competences to students, nurses and educators at a national level is extremely relevant. At CESPU (biggest national private health higher education institution) we are networking with partners from other educational institutions as well as the Order of Nurses, so disseminating the project and its results nationwide will be taken into account.