



**PRACTICAL NURSE
- VALUABLE WORK
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make
the future!**

Vocational Qualification in Social and Health Care

Those who complete a vocational qualification in social and health care become practical nurses. This qualification provides a versatile capacity to work as a practical nurse in the social welfare, health care and education sectors. The vocational qualification in social and health care consists of 180 competence points, divided into professional units (145 points) and shared units (35 points).

BECOMING A PRACTICAL NURSE

Comprehensive school graduates can apply for practical nurse training through the nationwide joint application procedure. Adults are also accepted as practical nurse students, if they are looking to change careers, and are interested in a diverse job and working with people. Rolling admissions allow access to studies throughout the year.

The education provider will decide which applicants to accept. The education provider will also decide whether to arrange an entrance exam or an aptitude test. It can choose not to accept individuals that are unsuited to the work based on their aptitude tests. Students are accepted based on the degree-specific requirements on health and capability, to name a few elements. With the help of so-called SORA legislation on inaptitude for specific studies, education providers can also intervene during studies if a student does not have the required aptitude.

The personal competence development plan (HOKS)

- A student's existing skills are identified. The studies will focus on the acquisition of the remaining skills. The skill goals have been described in the national qualification requirements.
- Education provided at a workplace as part of normal work duties is called workplace education and training. In practical nurse training, it means that skills are acquired by carrying out a practical nurse's duties at a workplace under supervision. Workplace education and training takes place through a training agreement or an apprenticeship. The national qualification requirements and the objectives recorded in a student's HOKS direct their workplace education and training.

Training agreement

- This is an agreement between an education provider and a workplace on training a specific student at the workplace.
- Training agreements are typically made for a single qualification unit at a time.
- A student is not an employee and is not paid.
- A student's working hours are generally the same as the normal working hours at the workplace

Apprenticeship

- Most of the skills are acquired by carrying out practical duties at a workplace. An apprenticeship agreement can be made for the entire qualification, a qualification unit or a smaller constituent part. The agreement is a fixed-term contract between a student, who must be aged 15 or older, and an employer.
- An apprentice is an employee and gets paid according to the collective labour agreement. A student's weekly work load is at least 25 hours.

A student practical nurse will demonstrate their competence in each qualification unit through genuine work performance. Receiving a diploma requires that all the compulsory qualification units have been passed through skills demonstrations.

COMPETENCE AREAS

The competence area of care and rehabilitation for elderly people

provides skills in promoting the social inclusion of the elderly and enhancing the clients' functional capacity. The main skills provided by the qualification unit on working in home care include planning, carrying out and assessing a home care client's services, treatment and rehabilitation, and honouring their right of self-determination.

The competence area of oral health care

provides skills in working with oral health care, and promoting oral health and client wellbeing. The students learn to use the working methods, equipment, materials and products of oral health care.

The competence area of nursing

is the most common one for finding employment in specialised medical care. The skills provided by this competence area are required in all medical care, regardless of the patients' age.

The competence area of children's and youth education and care

focuses, in its professional competence requirements, on the promotion of children's growth, wellbeing and learning, as well as the promotion of children's, young people's and families' health in different environments, both in early childhood education and care, and health care.

The competence area of mental health and substance abuse

work provides skills for working with mental health and substance abuse, and with the field's clients and networks. The professional competence requirements include the acquisition of knowledge on mental health and substance abuse work, care methods and pharmacological treatment.

The competence area of care for the disabled provides skills in promoting the social inclusion of the disabled and their functional capacity. Practical nurses who have completed the competence area of care for the disabled mainly work at clients' homes, in housing services and daytime activities, and as personal assistants.

The competence area of basic life support (BLS) is one of the competence areas of the vocational qualification in social and health care. An emergency practical nurse is a qualification title that describes the skills provided by this competence area. An emergency practical nurse can work e.g. in an ambulance or acute care, but not in early childhood education and care.

Pharmacological treatment

Pharmacological treatment is an integral and compulsory part of the practical nurse qualification. During the studies, pharmacological treatment is studied at the education institution and skills are demonstrated as part of practical work. This means that studies on pharmacological treatment and the related medication calculation studies must be completed according to the qualification requirements. The skills of practical nurses in employment are verified with a medication exam, based on the employer's requirements.

Practical nurses are central to the safe administration of medication. They carry out pharmacological treatment, monitor and assess the treatment's effects, and report these effects.

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PRACTICAL NURSES IN HEALTH CARE

A practical nurse can work in a wide range of jobs from primary health care to specialised medical care. Their workplaces include hospital wards, outpatient clinics, monitoring stations, intensive care units, A&E departments and emergency medical care units.

The optional qualification units provide additional and targeted skills for different operating sectors of health care, such as sample collection, operating in emergency situations and providing terminal care. The optional qualification units are also well-suited as continuing education to practical nurses who have already graduated, as work becomes more demanding.

Practical nurses in primary health care health centres

- In social and health centres, practical nurses work in various forms of primary health care, such as oral health care, social work, mental health and substance abuse services, and preventative care.
- Duties suitable for practical nurses in health centres include working according to the doctor and nurse work pair model, independent nurse's appointments and multi-professional teams.

At their own appointments, practical nurses take part in assessing treatment needs and monitoring chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, and carry out minor procedures independently. As part of multi-professional teams, practical nurses assess the need for services and take part in guiding patients towards further treatment.

Practical nurses at private clinics

- Individual practices offer a wide range of roles for practical nurses in customer service. Practical nurses provide guidance and advice, book appointments at an office, over the phone and at a reception, and assist with minor procedures, such as taking an ECG, measuring blood pressure, rinsing out ears and providing other treatment guidance.

Practical nurses in specialised medical care

- Practical nurse's jobs are widely available in inpatient clinics of internal medicine, surgery and neurology, as well as in outpatient clinics. Observation, monitoring, intensive and surgical wards, and A&E departments also hire practical nurses.
- A practical nurse's competence includes the monitoring and assessment of the effects of medication used for the most common internal medicine and neurological diseases, infections, cancers, eye and skin conditions, and memory disorders.
- Situations and patients change rapidly at outpatient clinics and the A&E. A practical nurse's job includes preparing, assisting in and carrying out treatment procedures independently. Providing patients with guidance and support is a key element in successful treatment and procedures.
- Working at an A&E takes concentration and quick decision-making skills. A practical nurse is an expert in primary care, rehabilitation and overall care. High-quality primary care guarantees high-quality specialised medical care.
- A practical nurse can also work in a paediatrics ward, outpatient clinics, at-home hospitals and inpatient maternity wards. In their work, practical nurses utilise information on children's growth and development, and factor in family situations and their effects on the wellbeing of families and children.
- Emergency practical nurses have a wide range of employment options available in specialised medical care and patient transport. Typical workplaces include emergency wards in hospitals (A&E, observation, intensive care, monitoring). At surgical outpatient clinics, emergency practical nurses provide immobilisation treatment. The work requires familiarity and use of emergency medical care methods and equipment.

Practical nurses in oral health care

- A practical nurse can work at private or public dental practices and clinics. The work entails caring for oral health, providing advice on it, and visiting schools and early childhood education and care units to educate children on oral health. The work is often done with a dentist, a client and the rest of the team in cooperation. The job title is dental assistant.
- A dental assistant uses a number of equipment in their work. Aseptic methodology and familiarity with the monitoring processes in instrument maintenance are key.

PRACTICAL NURSES IN SOCIAL WELFARE

A practical nurse can work in a variety of roles in social welfare, including housing services for the elderly and the disabled, daytime activity centres, substance abuse and mental health units, and home care.

Services for the disabled

- In the services for the disabled, work is carried out with clients of all ages, from babies to the elderly. The work is diverse in nature. For example, in the housing services for adults, practical nurses guide clients in things that maintain their ability to function, such as household chores and leisure activities. Caring for the basic needs and facilitating a life that suits a specific client are emphasised in the care of children and severely disabled individuals. Honouring the clients' right of self-determination and communicating through various means are a big part of a practical nurse's work.

Mental health and substance abuse work

- A practical nurse can work in housing services, substance abuse rehabilitation, outpatient clinics, daytime activity centres, home care and psychiatric wards, for example. The aim is to prevent, rehabilitate and reduce harmful elements. A practical nurse's job description is varied and focuses on the promotion of a client's ability to function while honouring their personal objectives and right of self-determination.

Residential care housing units for the elderly

- The duty of a practical nurse is to provide residents with comprehensive care. Practical nurses must be able to anticipate things. For example, when working with people with memory disorders, situations may change quickly. A practical nurse must use their extensive knowledge to carry out medical procedures, such as catheterisation and wound care, and assess residents' condition.
- A practical nurse has the professional skills to assess a resident's condition and react to their observations at the correct time. Residential care housing units are increasingly the last home for elderly people, and practical nurses will ensure their wellbeing for the rest of their lives.

Home care

- In home care, the work of a practical nurse mainly involves independently carried out home visits. The clients are often elderly people, but they may also be working age individuals suffering from illness or injury. The job description of practical nurses in home care is highly varied. For example, they carry out medical care at the clients' homes. Skills to make assessments are needed in case of unexpected and urgent situations that may arise during home visits. One of the pull factors of home care is the diverse and independent nature of the work.


PRACTICAL NURSES IN EDUCATION AND CARE

Early childhood education and care

- The competence areas of children's and youth education and care, and the care for the disabled (as long as the degree includes the unit Promoting a Child's Growth, Wellbeing and Learning) qualify a practical nurse to work at a daycare centre as a child carer.
- In their work, a practical nurse observes children, both in groups and as individuals, and is able to identify features of normal development and children's support needs. The daily work entails basic care, guiding playtimes and various other activities, such as diverse forms of expression: handicrafts, physical education, music, rich language development, ethical thinking, environmental education and media skills.
- Early childhood education and care also includes family daycare, which is one of the potential avenues of finding employment.

School assistant

- A practical nurse can work as a school assistant in various types of schools and other education institutions. The job description and duties are determined by the needs of the class and pupils, and may vary significantly even within a single school.
- A school assistant can work with several classes in general education, depending on the pupils' support needs and circumstances.
- School assistants also prepare study materials, monitor breaks, ensure general orderliness, maintain storages and carry out other school-specific tasks.



**A practical nurse is
a pharmacological
treatment specialist
in early childhood
education and care**

FUN AND USEFUL THINGS FOR STUDENTS

All students of social welfare, health care, education and guidance are welcome as student members in SuPer. As a student member, you will receive the same services and benefits as the employed members.*

The membership will remain free throughout your studies.

*) Students are not eligible for holiday support.

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