Programme Specification for MSC Primary Care (District Nursing) 2011/2012

Teaching Institution:
London South Bank University

- London South Bank University
- Nursing and Midwifery Council

Faculty of origin:
HSC

Highest Award within the Programme:
MSC Primary Care (District Nursing)

- BSc (Hons) Primary Care (District Nursing)
- Post Graduate Diploma Primary Care (District Nursing)

Reference Points:
Internal:

- LSBU Mission Statement and Strategic Plan
- LSBU Core Skills Policy
- LSBU Academic Regulations

External:

- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA, 2001)
- Nursing and Midwifery Council Standards for Specialist Practice (2001)
- Standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers (NMC 2006)

Rationale & Aims:
These programmes are intended for experienced qualified nurses who wish to practise in primary care as a district nurse in a variety of settings including homes, health care settings and workplaces. Graduation from the programme confers a recordable qualification with the Nursing and Midwifery Council as a Specialist Practice Qualification (SPQ) in district nursing and V100 prescriber from the community practitioner’s formulary.

The BSc/PG Dip Specialist Practitioner (District Nursing) programme builds on the existing programmes that
have been delivered by the Department of Primary & Social Care since 2002. Feedback from past students, graduates of this programme, Practice Teachers who have supported the delivery of this programme, commissioners and employers has been utilised to develop the curriculum that is proposed here.

In line with Modernising Nursing Careers (DoH 2006) and the consultation Commissioning Framework for Health and Well Being (DoH 2007) which focuses on helping people to stay healthy and independent, as well as Framing the Nursing and Midwifery Contribution: driving up the quality of care (DH, 2008), Towards a Framework for Post Registration Nursing Careers: consultation response report (DH, 2008), NHS Next Stage Review: our vision for primary and community care (DH, 2008) which focuses on helping people to stay healthy and independent, as well as Framing the Nursing and Midwifery Contribution: driving up the quality of care (DH, 2008), Towards a Framework for Post Registration Nursing Careers: consultation response report (DH, 2008), NHS Next Stage Review: our vision for primary and community care (DH, 2008) and Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS (DH 2010), which aims to put patients and the public first with increased choice and control, these programme will provide a career pathway for nurses working in primary care settings or those who wish to transfer their skills to primary care to enable them to practice as district nurses, leading skill-mixed teams to provide innovative services to patients and clients in a range of settings outside of an acute hospital.

The District Nursing course is a distinct pathway and group of units that have a clear professional focus and sit within the Primary Care scheme under the continuing professional development Framework.

The course is informed by a number of key policy initiatives that address the fitness for purpose of a modern district nurse working in primary care. A modern district nurse needs to be visionary and business minded in responding to different commissioning patterns and new business models and this course is designed to address the challenges of leading and managing in an environment with changing patterns of service delivery in primary care, in response to documents such as Commissioning a Patient led NHS, (DoH 2005), Practice Based Commissioning (DoH 2006), Payment by Results (DoH 2006), NHS Next Stage Review: our vision for primary and community care (DH, 2008) and Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS (DH 2010).

Changes in the NMC regulations have enabled modifications in the way in which community specialist practitioner programmes are offered to reflect the fact that there is now a need to provide a more flexible learning route for qualified nurses working in a primary care setting. Employers recognise the particular issues generated by the context of working in primary care and that staff need a particular set of skills, knowledge and competence to work effectively in these areas. For example, nurses are often working alone and in a range of settings that are not set up as health care environments, making complex decisions about patient care and dealing with a variety of collaborative relationships and professionals.

This programme will enable nurses to gain competence and confidence in working as a district nurse in primary care settings and enhance their development for leading and managing a team in a dynamic and innovative way that enables the members of that team to care for more acutely ill patients in primary care as well as promoting independence whenever possible.

The National Health Service (NHS) has a clear strategic vision, which aims to transform the services that clients receive. The NHS is, and will remain, committed to delivering the plans set out in National Standards, Local Action (Department of Health 2004), Delivering Choosing Health: making healthier choices easier (DoH 2005) and Our health, our care, our say (DoH, 2006); NHS Next Stage Review: our vision for primary and community care (DH, 2008) and Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS (DH 2010).

The emphasis is on care close to home to:
· Promote health and emotional well being with stronger local services and support to reduce the prevalence of physical and mental illness

· Develop services to support people in maintaining independent lives in their own homes reducing avoidable hospital admissions

· Provide for timely hospital discharge with support from appropriate community services

· Increase community capacity to support the shift of appropriate services from acute hospitals to convenient and safe local facilities.

Additionally, the Course team has been cognisant of the Chief Nursing Officer’s work on “Modernising Nursing Careers” (2006) during the curriculum development of these academic awards.

The Specialist Practitioner Qualification (SPQ) standards of proficiency will be achieved on this programme by students following a specific pathway comprising 50% theory and 50% practice. This provides comparability of proficiency when recording the qualification with the NMC, whilst ensuring that the specific knowledge, skills, values and proficiencies pertaining to each defined area of primary care nursing are achieved for safe and effective practice.

The overall aim of the programme is to prepare competent, innovative and reflective district nurses who are fit for purpose and able to practice competently and safely in primary care, meeting the NMC regulations for a community specialist qualification in nursing in the home (district nursing). The Standards for Specialist Education and Practice (NMC 2001) underpin the key principles of primary care practice in the context of district nursing. Specialist practice is the exercising of higher levels of judgement, discretion and clinical decision making in clinical care to enable the monitoring and improvement of standards of care through supervision of practice, clinical audit, the development of practice through research and teaching, the support of professional colleagues and the provision of skilled professional leadership. For district nurses this has been focused on four broad areas:

· Clinical practice

· Care and programme management

· Clinical practice development

· Clinical practice leadership.

Additionally, this programme will aim to enable students to:

· Build on a body of clinical expertise consolidated at post qualifying level.

· Develop further clinical assessment, analytical and clinical decision making skills,

· Utilise their leadership and management skills to negotiate and influence creative service improvements

· Work with a range of professionals and agencies across health and social care, local authority, voluntary and independent sectors
· Articulate the complexities of working in primary care and strategies to manage the uncertainties of care and service provision managed by a range of health and social care professionals

· Demonstrate that they are capable of challenging professional boundaries using sound rationale

· Develop some specific competencies to enable progression towards the proposed standards for an advanced nurse practitioner level by the NMC (2006)

Programme Outcomes

Honours level – degree level students “will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, they will have developed analytical techniques and problem solving skills” relevant for a specialist practice qualification in district nursing. “They will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements, and communicate theory effectively” (QAA Higher Education Framework).

Postgraduate Diploma level – students will show “originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems. They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgements, personal responsibility and initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments” (QAA Higher Education Framework).

A. BSc (Hons) degree level students will acquire knowledge and understanding of:

A1 The diversity of assessment methods for the identification of individual, groups and specific population’s health and wellbeing needs

A2 The complexity of collaborative working with a range of professionals, agencies both statutory and voluntary, service users and the public to promote health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in health

A3 Developing, implementing, evaluating and improving practice on the basis of research, evidence, audits and evaluation in the context of a clinical governance system

A4 Planning proactive approaches to the prevention of ill health and contribute towards public health and health promotion initiatives to protect the public including those who are at risk such as older people, people with long term conditions and other vulnerable groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers.

A5 Ethically and effectively leading and managing individuals, teams and finite resources

A6 Appraising policies and influencing change to improve health and wellbeing
A7 Safe, competent and cost-effective prescribing within the limitations of the community practitioner’s formulary, including legal and ethical issues and the principles of pharmacology

A8 Applying leadership and management skills to develop staff in teams to improve health and wellbeing and to promote independence when possible

**Postgraduate Diploma Level students will acquire knowledge and understanding of:**

A1 The rationale and need for the diversity of methods for the assessment of individual, groups and population’s health and wellbeing needs

A2 The tensions and dilemmas of collaborative working with professionals, agencies, service users and the public to promote health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in health, and the complexity arising from the different perspectives

A3 Critical appraisal skills for developing, implementing, evaluating and improving practice on the basis of research, evidence, audits and evaluation and identifying opportunities for further research at Masters level in the context of a clinical governance system

A4 Planning creative and proactive approaches to the prevention of ill health and contribute to innovative public health and health promotion initiatives to protect the public, including those who are at risk such as, older people, people with long term conditions and other vulnerable groups, such as asylum seekers and refugees.

A5 The need for a range of skills to ethically and effectively lead and manage individuals, teams and finite resources

A6 Critical appraisal of policies and the development of innovative approaches to influence change at both a local and strategic level to improve health and wellbeing

A7 Safe, competent and cost-effective prescribing within the limitations of the community practitioner’s formulary, including legal and ethical issues and the principles of pharmacology

A8 Leadership and management skills and the ability to critically analyse the different approaches in the effective management and leadership of staff within teams to promote creative approaches to improve health and wellbeing and to actively promote independence when possible.

A9 Examining research as a method of enquiry that creates new insights into professional practice

A10 Evaluating the philosophical assumptions underpinning differing research methodologies and their contribution to the advancement of practice
Dissertation

A11 Research as a method of enquiry that creates new insights into professional practice and enhances the quality of the health care environment.

A12 The philosophical assumptions underpinning traditional and interpretative research methodologies and their contribution to the advancement of professional practice.

B. BSc (Hons) degree level students will develop and integrate intellectual skills with practice to:

B1 Demonstrate reflective, critical and evaluative thinking to analyse experiences and develop new insights into primary care practice at all levels

B2 Integrate theories learned in the classroom to develop new and innovative primary health care strategies

B3 Recognise and challenge own value judgements, in order to treat all people with respect and dignity

B4 Present logical, reasoned and critical arguments to inform decision making in practice

B5 Articulate the contribution of primary care to improving health and wellbeing, including collaborative working and the promotion of independence.

B6 Demonstrate the ability to analyse, and implement, evidence-informed practice

B7 Identify and interpret problems, and develop potential solutions

Postgraduate Diploma level students will develop and integrate intellectual skills with practice to:

B1 Demonstrate reflective, critical and evaluative thinking to analyse a broad range of experiences and develop innovative and original ways of working in primary care practice at all levels and degrees of complexity

B2 Critically evaluate and integrate theories learned in the classroom to develop creative and opportunistic primary care strategies to respond to complex and unpredictable practice environments

B3 Appraise critically and evaluate own value judgements, in order to treat all people with respect and dignity and use interpersonal skills to challenge others in the process of providing quality care

B4 Present logical, reasoned, critical and innovative arguments to inform decision making in practice in breadth and depth
B5 Examine and debate the contribution of a primary care service to improving health and wellbeing, including collaborative working and the promotion of independence, in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

B6 Demonstrate the ability to critically analyse, and implement evidence-informed practice and disseminate evidence from a variety of sources

B7 Identify and interpret familiar and unfamiliar problems, developing creative and innovative solutions

B8 Synthesise information from a number of sources in order to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively

B9 Make sound judgements and justify solutions to complex practice issues

C. BSc (Hons) degree level students and Postgraduate Diploma students are both assessed at level 6 in practice and therefore for “The Role of the District Nurse Unit” and “Health Assessment for Advanced Practice” unit will develop practical skills in primary care at level 6 in their defined areas of practice, to enable them to:

C1 Practice safely, effectively and competently within defined areas of practice

C2 Work in partnership with members of the public, other professionals and agencies to promote and improve primary care services, safeguard vulnerable people and protect the public

C3 Plan evidence-based, achievable, culturally-sensitive user-centred, innovative, pro-active health care

C4 Inform others about pertinent legislation and policies particularly with regard to adults.

C5 Identify threats to promoting independent living with a long term condition, collaborate to promote public health and health gain at individual, family and community levels by proactively contributing to health promotion and public health initiatives

C6 Undertake a range of health and risk assessments using reliable and valid tools where available

C7 Communicate effectively by valuing all individuals and respecting their dignity

C8 Contribute to policy development and influence change to improve the health and well being of the population

Additionally, Postgraduate Diploma level students will achieve the learning outcomes C1-C8 at a higher cognitive level for all written assignments related to units other than "The Role of the District
Nurse Unit” and the “Health Assessment for Advanced Practice” unit. They will demonstrate the ability to:-

C9 Synthesise knowledge and information, showing originality and creativity in planning ways of improving practice

C10 Critically reflect on own role in taking the initiative in unpredictable professional environments

Dissertation

C11 Design a research project that advances professional practice and creates new knowledge

D. BSc (Hons) degree level students will acquire and develop transferable skills demonstrating that they have the competencies in:

D1 Using a variety of effective verbal and written communication skills, which demonstrate that they value and respect the dignity of individuals, families and groups in primary care

D2 Working independently and as part of a team, working collaboratively with other agencies as required

D3 Developing their professional practice by maintaining a professional portfolio and utilising personal development plans

D4 Gaining IT skills and using the internet as a resource

D5 Integrating theoretical models with practice in new, complex and challenging situations

D6 Demonstrating objective judgement and ethical decision-making, embracing moral and legal principles, in relation to the areas of their practice

D7 Questioning and changing current practice within their area of practice

D8 Utilising effective, self-directed learning

D9 Developing time management strategies and the ability to meet deadlines

D10 Advanced clinical assessment skills

Postgraduate Diploma level students will acquire and develop transferable skills demonstrating that they have the competencies in:
D1 Using a variety of effective verbal and written communication skills creatively, which demonstrate that they value and respect the dignity of individuals, families and groups in primary care

D2 Working independently and effectively as part of a team, clearly identifying the need to work collaboratively and pro-actively with other agencies, as required

D3 Developing, enhancing and critically appraising their professional practice by maintaining a reflective professional portfolio and utilising appropriate personal development plans

D4 Gaining advanced IT skills and using the internet as a resource to access a broad range of material

D5 Integrating theoretical models with practice in new, complex and challenging situations

D6 Demonstrating objective judgement and ethical decision-making, embracing moral and legal principles, in relation to the areas of their practice

D7 Questioning, challenging and changing current practice within their area of practice

D8 Utilising effective, self-directed learning

D9 Developing time management strategies and the ability to meet deadlines

D10 Demonstrate creativity in managing and leading change within a dynamic practice environment

D11 Use information with a degree of originality

D12 Advanced clinical assessment skills

Entry Requirements
In order to be considered for entry to BSc (Hons)/post graduate diploma Primary Care (district nursing) programmes, applicants will be required to have met the following conditions:

1. Current registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council as a first level nurse

2. Applicants should normally have completed two years, recent and relevant, post-registration practice in order to have consolidated pre-registration outcomes and to have gained a deeper understanding of
professional practice. Applications are welcome from nurses who wish to transfer from the acute services into primary care who can fulfil the entry criteria.

3. Support in practice from their employer who will organise a practice teacher to facilitate their development in all areas of the programme to enable them to fulfil the outcomes required, and identification of a qualified nurse prescriber to assess their competence in these outcomes and a doctor or qualified Nurse Practitioner to support the development of their health assessment skills

4. A suitable learning environment that enables their development at specialist practice level

This is in line with NMC standards to support learning and assessment in practice that came into force in September 2007.

Attendance at LSBU training and study days for practice teachers will be recorded with feedback to PCTs at the end of each academic year.

**Applicants for the BSc (Hons) programmes**

- Relevant Diploma in Higher Education in Nursing award or prior academic attainment equivalent to 60 CATS points minimum at level 5 (previously known as diploma level) in relevant subject areas, normally, including research appreciation.

- APEL/APL will be considered as part of the entry process, particularly for applicants with evidence of substantial professional experience.

**Applicants for the Postgraduate Diploma programmes**

- Normally 2:1 Honours degree or above in a relevant subject area. Applicants holding a 2:2 Honours degree may be considered if they have substantial practice experience in an area related to the one in which they wish to practice.

**Applicants for the MSc programme**

- Students will have successfully completed the Post graduate diploma Primary Care (District Nursing)

- Students wishing to proceed to the Masters by dissertation must do so within 2 years of completing the Post graduate diploma

**Programme Structure**

At BSc (level 6), the programme will be prescribed with the student completing the following six units:
Unit: Evaluating Research for Practice (Core unit)

Unit: Health Assessment for Advanced Practice

Unit: Leading Practice in Primary Care (Core Unit)

Unit: Long Term Conditions: Principles of Care

Unit: The Role of the District Nurse

50% of the programme will be spent in a practice environment as part of the NMC requirements for specialist practice. The focus will be on the assessment of prescribed practice learning outcomes and competencies, but also on the continuing development of advanced clinical expertise, to ensure that as a team leader, the student is able to manage the increasingly complex needs of patients being cared for in primary care who would previously have been managed in hospital. This unit will also incorporate the competencies for prescribing from the community practitioner’s formulary (V100).

Unit: Work Based Learning Project

This unit is normally at the end of the period of study and will focus on a service development project that will be agreed in partnership with their employer.

At Post Graduate Diploma (level 7), the programme will be prescribed with the student completing the following six units:

Unit: Research methodology and Strategy (Core Unit)

Unit: Health Assessment for Advanced Practice

Unit: Leading Practice in Primary Care (Core Unit)

Unit: Long Term Conditions: Principles of Care

Unit: The Role of the District Nurse

50% of the programme will be spent in a practice environment as part of the NMC requirements for specialist practice. The focus will be on the assessment of prescribed practice learning outcomes and competencies, but also on the continuing development of advanced clinical expertise, to ensure that as a team leader, the student is able to manage the increasingly complex needs of patients being cared for in primary care who would previously have been managed in hospital. This unit will also incorporate the competencies for prescribing from the community practitioner’s formulary (V100).

Unit: Work Based Learning Project

This unit is normally at the end of the period of study and will focus on a service development project that will be agreed in partnership with their employer.

These 6 units will meet the requirements for the NMC Specialist Practice Qualification to enable the student to record a district nursing qualification.
For students on the prescribed pathway leading to a qualification as district nurse, practice competencies will be evidenced in a practice portfolio throughout the programme of study demonstrating attainment of the practice competencies that are specific to each unit.

It is anticipated that the majority of students will enter this programme on a full time basis, being sponsored or seconded from their place of work to undertake the course full time over one academic year, or part time over two academic years, whilst being supernumerary in practice. The structure of the programme is designed to allow prospective applicants the chance to complete the programme either full time over one year or part time or to access units of study individually. The programme length is 51 weeks full time, with 50% theory and 50% practice.

Additionally all units are available as stand alone units for practitioners who have particular needs and want to access individual units of study, but who do not wish to progress towards a specialist practice qualification.

A flexible programme approach is necessary in the current health care climate and students, therefore, will have the option of undertaking the course full time over one year, or up to five years part time from the date of registering for the district nursing award. This is in line with the preferred model expressed by our primary care providers.

The programme comprises six units of study with a credit value of 20 CATS points each. Each unit of study equates to 200 hours divided into practice time, taught hours and self directed study. Students will be expected to maintain a learning log that shows their development in practice equivalent to 122 days.

Post Graduate Diploma students will study four units at level 7 units apart from the Level 6 ‘Role of the district nurse’ unit and the Level 6 ‘Health Assessment for Advanced Practice’ unit. This is acceptable within LSBU course regulations.