



Faculty of Health, Science, and Technology

Programme Study Plan

Specialist Nursing in Intensive Care

Programme Code: VASIN

Programme Title: Study Programme for Specialist Nursing in Theatre Care

Credits: 60

Programme Approval: The Programme Study Plan was approved by the Faculty Board for Health, Science, and Technology on 15 November 2013 and is effective from the autumn semester of 2014 at Karlstad University.

Language of Instruction: Swedish

Degree Level: Master (60 credits)

Degree Type: Professional and general

Prerequisites: A Nursing licence issued by the Social Welfare Agency.

Special requirements: Nursing degree (180 ECTS credits) including degree project of at least 15 ECTS cr, or Bachelor's degree in health care, or equivalent qualifications.
Professional experience as a full-time nurse for at least 12 months.
Upper secondary level Swedish B/Swedish 2 B and English A.

General Information

The programme leads to a postgraduate diploma in specialist nursing in intensive care. Specialist nursing is a profession that requires great ability to work independently and to handle complex situation in the specialist area. An intensive care nurse works on the basis of six core competencies: patient-centred care, collaborative teamwork, evidence-based care, knowledge for improvement and development, safe patient care and informatics.

The intensive care nurse works with the complex situation of multiple-disease patients of all ages, often elderly persons. The duties require that the nurse can observe and evaluate the functions in patients of all age groups regarding physical and mental states and initiate and administer treatment. Special attention is paid the intensive care nurse's ability to lead and organise care work and to cooperate with other professional groups. The nurse is expected to be able to handle ethical dilemmas in connection with serious illness and death and to interact professionally with next-of-kins. All specialist nurses are expected to follow, implement and contribute to research and development as well as to initiate and lead quality improvement work. Intensive care nurses play a vital role in the planning and management of the care provided and in supervising students and instructing staff.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

The length, content and degree level of the study programme are regulated by statutes and guidelines ensuring that graduates meet the programme requirements, qualification requirements for further postgraduate studies, and EU requirements for nurses.

Chapter 1, § 9, of the Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434, 2006:173) states that postgraduate studies should largely build on knowledge acquired at undergraduate level or the equivalent. Master-level students are expected to deepen the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired at undergraduate level. Students are also expected to

- further develop their ability to integrate and implement theoretical knowledge in their work,
- develop their ability to deal with complex situations, questions and phenomena, and
- develop their ability to work independently and contribute to research and development work.

The *Higher Education Ordinance* (SFS 1993:100, 2006:1053) lists the national aims and objectives common to all educational programmes for specialist nurses. For a degree in specialist nursing to be awarded, students should demonstrate the ability to work independently as a specialist nurse.

Knowledge and understanding

To earn a degree in specialist nursing, students should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the scientific basis of the field, an understanding of current research and development, and an understanding of the links between science and proven experience and their importance to professional practice,
- demonstrate a specialised ability to plan, perform and evaluate as well as lead and coordinate health care.

Competence and skills

To earn a degree in specialist nursing, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a deeper ability to work independently and in collaboration with patients and their family members in identifying patient needs and formulating a care plan,
- demonstrate the ability to lead and evaluate care and treatment,
- demonstrate a deeper ability to initiate, carry out and evaluate health promotion and preventive care,
- demonstrate the ability to integrate theory and to analyse, assess and manage complex questions and situations,
- demonstrate the ability to take part in and supervise medical examinations and treatments including palliative care, and
- demonstrate the ability to advise and instruct pedagogically.

Judgement and approach

To earn a degree in specialist nursing, students should be able to:

- demonstrate self-knowledge and empathy,
- demonstrate the ability to make a holistic evaluation of a course of treatment on the basis of relevant scientific, societal, and ethical aspects with special focus on human rights,
- demonstrate a professional approach to patients and their family members, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify their own need for further knowledge and training.

Upon completion of the Study Programme for Specialist Nursing: Intensive Care at Karlstad University, students should also:

- demonstrate the ability to observe and evaluate the functions of organ systems in patients and the patients' mental state,
- demonstrate the ability to initiate and independently take medical measures, and
- demonstrate the ability to implement their specialist knowledge in the aftermath of major accidents and disasters.

In addition to the national objectives listed above, the specialist nursing programme at Karlstad University conforms to the national objectives which regulate general Master's degrees (SFS 2006:1053) as well as the laws and statutes which regulate theatre care nursing.

Programme Structure

The programme is partly web based and runs at full-time pace. The theoretical courses are full-time while the practical placement is undertaken on a part-time basis. Independent study is part of course components. Forms of instruction vary. The aim is to stimulate students to be active learners and to take personal responsibility for their own learning process, both individually and as a group. The aim is also for students to become better at working in teams, collaborating with others, and informing and instructing others.

The planning, conducting and evaluation of instruction takes place in consultation between student, teacher, and the supervising nurse at the practical placement. The content is gradually deepened and linked to the future field of work.

Students are assigned practical placement mainly in the counties of Värmland and Örebro. Other arrangements can be made provided quality is ensured and places are available. Students may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses in connection with the practical placement period.

Students are encouraged to take part in studies on other cultures and their health care systems in the hope of promoting cross-national and cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. Students are offered the opportunity to partake in international studies and activities at the university and they may apply to take certain courses or parts of courses abroad.

Programme Curriculum

The Study Programme for Specialist Nursing: Intensive Care comprises 60 ECTS credits. Students take four courses in intensive care nursing, including both theoretical and practical placement components. The practical placement period is 12 weeks full-time.

The main subject is nursing science with a focus on intensive care. Students also take medical science. The two subjects are integrated in the courses, thus encouraging students to take a holistic perspective. Students also take 7.5 ECTS credits in research methods as part of the other courses on the programme.

For a degree in specialist nursing to be awarded, students must complete and submit a degree project comprising 15 ECTS credits in the main subject nursing science with an emphasis on intensive care.

During the course of the programme, students will broaden and deepen previously acquired knowledge in the fields of nursing science and medical science, with a special emphasis on intensive care nursing.

The programme covers the following subject areas:

- Nursing Science: Intensive Care 30 ECTS cr
- Medical Science: Intensive Care, 30 ECTS cr

Courses

Students take the following courses:

- Intensive Care Nursing as a Profession, 15 ECTS cr
- Pathophysiology and Pharmacology 12 ECTS cr
- Intensive Care Nursing in Theory and Practice, 18 ECTS cr
- Degree Project: Intensive Care Nursing, 15 ECTS cr

See Appendix for further details.

Nursing Science with an Emphasis on Intensive Care Nursing

Nursing Science is the main subject on the programme. It is also the foundation for all professional intensive care nursing. Nursing aims to preserve patients' health and well-being, prevent ill health and disease, maintain and restore health in accordance with the needs of the individual, reduce suffering and enable patients to die with dignity. Central concepts of nursing are the human being, health, the environment, and treatment. A core part of nursing is the interaction between nurse, patient and next of kin, which must be imbued by a holistic, ethical and scientifically-based approach.

The intensive care nurse is responsible for and makes decisions on advanced care of patients with threatening or manifest vital organ failure, postoperatively and in intensive care units.

The intensive care nurse's field of work is characterised by situations requiring a high degree of readiness to act, ability to prioritise and to make quick decisions, flexibility and problem-solving skills.

Any action and treatment should be carried out in such a way that the patient's integrity is maintained and that it is as comfortable to the patient as possible.

Nursing as a scientific discipline is patient-centred and clinically-based. Research in the field provides nurses with evidence-based knowledge for their professional practice.

Medical Science with an Emphasis on Intensive Care Nursing

Medical science has a focus on specialised knowledge in the medical field, including pathology and pharmacology, including microbiology. In the area of hygiene the emphasis is on the susceptibility to infection in intensive care patients. In medico technology the main areas treated are: gas and electricity, common medico-technical apparatuses and equipment and monitoring with a focus on adequate and safe handling. Disaster medicine centres on traumatology and triage in connection with major accidents and disasters.

Degree Awarded

The professional degree awarded is
Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing – Intensive Care.

The general degree awarded is
Master of Science (60 credits). Major: Intensive Care

Transfer of Credits

Students have the right to transfer credits from other universities in Sweden or abroad. The recognition of previous education as credit for part of a course is subject to approval by the examiner. The recognition of previous education as credit for an entire course is subject to approval by the deputy dean.

Additional Information

Duration

The duration of the study programme is indicated by the number of credits it yields as a full-time study programme; 40 weeks is equivalent to 60 credits. (Chapter 6, §2 of The Higher Education Ordinance, SFS 2006:1053). The programme is part-time and an academic year then corresponds to 30 higher education credits.

Moving Up

In order to move up to the next level, students must meet any additional admission requirements specified in the course syllabus.

Local Regulations

Local regulations at Karlstad University stipulate the rights and obligations of staff and students.

Student Expulsion Procedures

As stipulated in the *Higher Education Act* Ch. 2, sect. 6, *SFS* 1992: 1434, and Regulations of Student Expulsion from Higher Education *SFS* 1987: 915, a student who suffers from mental disorder, abuses alcohol or drugs, or has been guilty of a serious offence endangering others or valuable property can be expelled until further notice. In such a case, the Vice Chancellor files a complaint to the Expulsion Board of Higher Education, which investigates the matter and makes a decision. A decision of expulsion shall always entail that the student must discontinue the education until further notice. The Expulsion Board of Higher Education is responsible for all Swedish higher education institutions.

Appendix I: Overview of programme structure

Overview of programme structure: Specialist Nursing – Intensive Care, 60 ECTS credits

Nursing 30 ECTS credits and Medical Science 30 ECTS credits are included in the programme. Theoretical courses are run part-time while practical placement is full-time. A Degree project, 15 ECTS credits is included and is introduced and carried out during terms 2,3 and 4.

Asepsis, hygiene, preoperative care with technique, topographical anatomy, research methods etc. are studied within the programme.

Term 1, autumn (part-time, 15 ECTS cr)

Course: Intensive care nursing as a profession 15 ECTS cr

Course: Pathophysiology and Pharmacology 12 ECTS Cr

Field studies

Term 2 (part-time, 15 ECTS cr)

Course: Degree project with an emphasis on intensive care
15 ECTS cr (3 ECTS cr in term 2)

Term 3, spring (full - time 12 weeks and then part-time)

Term 4 (part-time)

Course: continued Degree project with an emphasis on intensive care 15 ECTS cr (12 ECTS cr in term 3 and 4)

Field studies

Course: Intensive care nursing in theory and practice 18 ECTS c

Practical placement: 12 weeks fulltime 6 + 6 weeks