



Faculty of Health, Science and Technology

Programme Syllabus

Nursing Specialisation: Intensive Care

Programme Code:	VASIN
Programme title:	Nursing Specialisation: Intensive Care <i>Specialistsjuksköterska - intensivvård</i>
Credits:	60
Programme approval:	The programme syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board of Health, Science and Technology on 12 September 2024, effective from the autumn semester of 2025.
Language of instruction:	Swedish
Education cycle:	Second (Master's)
Degree type:	Professional The programme also fulfils the requirements of a general Degree of Master (60 credits)
Degree title:	Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing: Intensive Care Degree of Master of Science (60 credits). Main field of study: Nursing
Entry requirements:	Nursing licence issued by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare. A Degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (180 credits), including a degree project of 15 credits, or a Degree of Bachelor in Nursing (including a degree project of 15 credits), or equivalent qualifications. Professional experience in nursing corresponding to 12 months of full-time work. Swedish 3 or Swedish as a second language 3, and English 6/A. Equivalence assessment may be made.

General information

The degree programme Nursing Specialisation: Intensive Care at Karlstad University provides students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and professional skills required to work as a specialist nurse in intensive care as well as preparing them for further academic studies. The programme is designed to meet the future requirements of the intensive care nurse's lifelong learning in relation to developments in intensive care.

A specialist nurse in intensive care provides care and treatment for patients with failure in one or more organ systems. Intensive care includes preventive, acute, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care. The specialist nurse's specific area of expertise is nursing. In addition, the profession requires theoretical knowledge and practical skills in medical technology, ethics, pedagogy, work environment, sustainable development, scientific approach, knowledge of laws and regulations, as well as knowledge of working in major accidents and disasters.

The specialist nurse in intensive care uses evidence-based practices to provide care within a broad clinical context. This includes caring for patients in intensive care units, postoperative intensive care, supportive activities within the hospital, as well as follow-up of patients before and after intensive care. Characteristic of the specialist nurse's expertise in intensive care is that they work independently in both general and advanced intensive care through readiness to act and the ability to prioritise in advanced and complex nursing situations ¹.

Based on a person-centred approach, students are trained to assess the condition of intensive care patients, diagnose nursing needs and establish plans for health care measures. Students are also trained to perform nursing interventions and to initiate and independently carry out medical examinations and treatments for intensive care patients at different stages and ages from a diversity perspective.

The programme allows students to deepen their ability to handle ethical issues, interact with next-of-kin in a professional manner, plan and lead nursing work, collaborate in teams, use structured information and digital technology, and conduct systematic quality and patient safety work within the context of intensive care.

Programme outcomes

The content, duration and education cycle of the degree programme are regulated by the Higher Education Act, Chap. 1, Sect. 9 (SFS 1992:1434, 2006:173) and the Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100, 2006:1053), ensuring that graduates meet the programme requirements, qualification requirements for postgraduate studies and EU requirements.

Second-cycle courses and study programmes shall essentially build upon the knowledge acquired through first-cycle courses and study programmes or equivalent knowledge, and involve the acquisition of specialist knowledge, competence and skills in relation to first-cycle courses and study programmes. Second-cycle courses and study programmes shall, in addition to what applies to first-cycle courses and study programmes, involve the development of the student's ability to independently integrate and apply knowledge, as well as to handle complex phenomena, issues and situations. The education shall also allow for students to develop their potential for professional activities that demand considerable autonomy, or for research and development work².

¹ Kompetensbeskrivning avancerad nivå, Specialistsjuksköterska med inriktning mot intensivvård, the Swedish Society of Nursing, 2020, ²SFS 2006:1053, ³SFS 1993:100

The Higher Education Ordinance specifies the national outcomes for a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing^{2,3}. For a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing the student shall demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to work autonomously as a specialist nurse. In addition to national outcomes, the degree programme in specialist nursing at Karlstad University has been designed to meet the requirements for a general Degree of Master and applicable laws and regulations for a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing: Intensive Care ^{2,3}.

For a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing the student shall, in the specific specialisation:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge of the disciplinary foundation of the field and insight into current research and development work as well as the links between research and proven experience and the significance of these links for professional practice, and
- demonstrate specialised knowledge of the planning, management and coordination of health care measures.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate specialised skills in identifying health care needs and drawing up care programmes autonomously and in collaboration with the patient and those close to them
- demonstrate the ability to direct and evaluate health care interventions
- demonstrate specialised skills in initiating, undertaking and evaluating health promotion and preventive interventions
- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and also to analyse, assess and deal with complex issues and situations
- demonstrate the ability to participate in or undertake autonomously examinations and treatment, including palliative care, and
- demonstrate the capacity to act as a nursing instructor.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate self-awareness and the capacity for empathy
- demonstrate the ability to assess interventions using a holistic approach to individuals informed by the relevant disciplinary, social and ethical aspects and taking particular account of human rights
- demonstrate the ability to adopt a professional approach to clients or patients, those close to them and other groups, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and undertake ongoing development of his or her skills.

For a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing: Intensive Care, pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance, the student shall also:

- demonstrate the ability to observe and assess the functions of all organic systems and the mental condition of patients as well as the ability to initiate and undertake medical interventions autonomously, and
- demonstrate the ability to apply his or her specialist knowledge in connection with major accidents and catastrophes.

¹Kompetensbeskrivning avancerad nivå, Specialistsjuksköterska med inriktning mot intensivvård, the Swedish Society of Nursing, 2020, ²SFS 2006:1053, ³SFS 1993:100

In accordance with the national outcomes for a Degree of Master (60 credits), pursuant to the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), the student shall:

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both an overview of the field and specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work, and
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge and analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues autonomously as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames
- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing to report clearly and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or employment in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for his or her ongoing learning.

Programme structure

The degree programme is offered as a hybrid programme with physical meetings on campus in combination with distance teaching. Both the theoretical and practical part of the programme offer different types of work methods and approaches, designed to encourage active learning where the students take personal responsibility, individually and as part of a group, as well as offering students the opportunity to practice teamwork, collaboration, communication and their pedagogical skills. The theoretical studies and clinical placements are integrated so that they form a cohesive whole, a stimulating process and meaningful learning. Various pedagogical methods are applied, both for the theoretical components as well as during clinical placements. The language of instructions is Swedish, but some components may be taught in English. Literature in both Swedish and English is used in the programme.

The fundamental approach used in the programme is that each human being is unique, aware, reflective and has a natural need for knowledge and skills. The programme aims to create meaningful learning where the student understands how knowledge is interconnected, how it should be used and applied in new situations. Meaningful learning takes place when the student is actively engaged and has the opportunity to process the content in relation to their own prior understanding and knowledge. The starting point is lifelong learning in relation to continuous professional training and development. This means that the teaching supports the student's independent knowledge development, critical thinking, ability reflect and solve problems. The educational environment motivates and promotes active knowledge-seeking grounded in research and evidence, where various pedagogical methods enable active student participation in teaching.

Teaching and the planning, implementation and evaluation thereof, take place in collaboration between the students and the teachers. The courses gradually become more specialised and are continuously linked to nursing in practice. The programme places emphasis on sustainability, both in terms of quality and improvement efforts as well as sustainability in relation to nursing environments. Gender equality, human rights, ethics, values, communication and diversity perspectives are clarified in connection with, for example, the student's interaction with patients, families and various professional groups.

Karlstad University has partnerships with many other universities in Sweden and abroad, and has an organisation in place to support students who want to make use of the opportunity to study or do an internship abroad. Studies abroad must be designed in a way that allows the student to fulfil the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Internationalisation via digital tools can be used in order to provide the students with a deeper understanding of the nursing profession in intensive care in other countries and health from an international perspective.

Programme curriculum

The programme consists of 4 courses related to intensive care and include both theoretical and practical course components (18 credits) divided across two courses, simulation training at a clinical training centre as well as field studies.

It also includes the subject of medical science (30 credits) within intensive care, with a focus on pathology, pharmacology, medical technology, and disaster medicine. The programme also incorporates scientific method corresponding to 7.5 credits at master's level, which is integrated in the programme courses. For the Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Nursing and a Degree of Master (60 credits) to be awarded, students must complete and submit an independent project (degree project) comprising 15 credits in the main field of nursing with a specialisation in intensive care. During the course of the programme, students will broaden and deepen previously acquired knowledge in the main field of nursing combined with medical science and a special emphasis on intensive care.

Programme courses

- Basic intensive care, 15 credits
- Specific intensive care, 15 credits
- Degree project: Intensive Care, 15 credits
- Advanced intensive care, 15 credits

Credit transfer

Students have the right to apply for credit transfer from previously completed university courses in Sweden or abroad, subject to approval according to the current regulations.

Additional information

The local regulations for first and second cycle education at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff. Students are guaranteed clinical placement in Region Värmland and Region Örebro, but may also be placed in another region provided that the supervision model can be implemented and an agreement has been reached between the parties. Students may incur additional travel and accommodation expenses in connection with the placement period.

Attendance

One week of full-time studies (40 hrs) is the equivalent of 1.5 credits. The relation between scheduled classes and individual studies varies according to course content and jointly

comprise full-time studies. Parts of the degree programme require mandatory attendance, as specified in the course syllabus.

Moving on to the next level

The programme courses follow each other. To be eligible for courses in the degree programme, students must meet the specific entry requirements specified in the course syllabi.

Resit examinations

Students who do not pass a regular examination are offered at least two resit opportunities within one year of the original examination. At the second resit, students have the right to apply for another examiner to assess their examination. Students may not undertake resit examinations in order to improve a pass grade. Students not awarded a passing grade for placements have the opportunity to be reassessed on one occasion. Examinations requiring that the student completes a clinical placement period are, as far as possible, held in the next course round, but within one year at the latest.

Leave from or termination of studies

Students who wish to take leave from studies with a guaranteed place upon returning have to notify the study and career counsellor in writing, using a specific form. Students who wish to return to their studies following a leave period have to notify a study and career counsellor in writing.

Student expulsion procedures

A student who suffers from mental disorder, abuses alcohol or drugs, or has committed a serious offence endangering others or valuable property may be expelled until further notice. In such a case, the vice-chancellor files a complaint to the Higher Education Expulsions Board, where the matter will be investigated and decided on. A decision of expulsion shall always entail the student's discontinuation of the studies until further notice. The Higher Education Expulsions Board is responsible for all Swedish higher education institutions. (Higher Education Act Chap. 4 Sect. 6, SFS 1992:1434; Ordinance on the Expulsion of Students from Higher Education, SFS 1987:915.)

This programme syllabus will replace the previous version approved on 25 March 2023, HNT 2023/233.