Heading in the right direction for a career in Nursing/Midwifery Education
This brochure provides clarification of the education career pathway for Registered Nurses and Midwives in NSW and will assist you in understanding the opportunities and possible direction for your career progression.

The simple diagram below depicts the important Registered Nurse/Midwife career pathway points.

Although it is possible to move between all areas on the pathway, it is becoming more evident that a clear pathway opens up more opportunities and ensures a higher degree of success. Keep in mind:

A career in nursing or midwifery does not just happen. You will need to do some exploring and decision making to ensure that you are on the right track for the career you aspire to.

Legend: The pathway outlined in blue depicts an education pathway.
Where do I start?

Many of the opportunities to enhance your nursing/midwifery education experiences can be gained on the job. The following are some examples of steps you can take to ensure that you “have what it takes” to be a successful educator.

Most nurses/midwives would not consider an education pathway until they have substantial clinical experience. You will start to acquire skills as a clinical leader the moment you start to work in a team. Do not underestimate the learning you gain from coordinating care, communicating and encouraging your nursing/midwifery team.

All RN/RMs are responsible for mentoring school students on work experience placement and nurse/midwifery students on clinical placement. Also take the opportunity to orientate and precept new staff to your ward/unit.

It is important to keep up to date with professional issues. One way to do this is to network with other colleagues and to become a member of the relevant professional groups and associations.

Nominate yourself to be involved in projects and committees based on the ward/unit as well as across the hospital or service. These experiences will enhance your exposure to the nondirect clinical care aspects of nursing/midwifery.

Seek out a person who you believe is a role model with exceptional capabilities to engage nurses/midwives and foster a learning culture. Approach him/her to see if they would mentor you to achieve the same level of respect and expertise in your career.

A commitment to lifelong learning is a critical aspect of any career in nursing/midwifery. There are many and varied education opportunities. You will need to substantiate your clinical knowledge as well as your skills and knowledge in education.

The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment studied through TAFE or the College of Nursing is a good starting course for CNEs. This nationally recognised course is for people who wish to develop the skills to be able to train and assess in the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. You will learn how to plan, organise and deliver training; plan and implement assessment activities; and how to design training programs that meet staff needs.

Education programs are also conducted locally within your LHD and at universities. A number of universities offer a continuum of qualifications in clinical practice and education.

Most of all in your preparation for a career in nursing/midwifery education seize every opportunity to:

- Take your colleagues on a walk with you and experience the satisfaction from enabling their learning and watching them flourish and grow into competent clinicians.

The Clinical N/M Educator role

The Clinical Nurse/Midwifery Educator provides for the delivery of clinical education at the ward/unit level. They are seen as an expert in the specialty, ward coordination and function and most of all are required to contribute to the development of their colleagues.

Under the Public Health System Nurses and Midwives Award a clinical N/M Educator:

- Delivers competent education in the ward/unit;
- Contributes to the development of colleagues;
- Supports less experienced staff and acts as preceptor for new staff;
- Acts as the preceptor in orientations to the ward/unit;
- Provides day to day clinical education support in the ward/unit;
- Provides one on one informal education;
- Provides support for skill development in clinical procedures;
- Provides support for professional development;
- Provides support for clinical policy development;
- Provides a ward/unit based in-service program.

You would imagine that it would be an obvious progression for a Clinical Nurse/Midwifery Specialist to move into a clinical educator role because after all they are experts in providing care for the patients on the ward/unit. The Clinical N/M Educator needs to shift his/her focus from providing patient care to enabling nurses and midwives to learn and grow. This requires particular skills and knowledge.
Andrea a CNE for 3 years suggests:

“just because a nurse is an expert in a particular specialty it doesn’t make them educator material. There needs to be an interest in teaching, lots of patience and an ability to relate to the needs of the individual. Flexibility and motivation are essential for the CNE role.”

The N/M Educator role

You might like to progress your education career to becoming a Nurse/Midwifery Educator. There are 3 grades of N/M Educator with incremental progression following 12 months satisfactory full time in the role to 2nd year and thereafter.

Grading for Nurse/Midwife Educator is dependent on the portfolio and responsibilities across a service or LHD inherent in the position and this can be determined by the employer.

Scholarships are available to RNs and RMs who are working in full or part time permanent positions in the NSW Public Health System. Application can be made for a scholarship if you are undertaking clinical and education qualifications.

See the Nursing and Midwifery Office website for application information and closing dates.

Useful contacts for career progression

Information regarding pay and conditions for Clinical N/M Educator and N/M Educator

Nursing & Midwifery Office

NSW Aboriginal Nursing & Midwifery Strategy
aboriginalnursing@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Australian Nurse Teachers Society (NSW)
www.ants.org.au

If you would like to discover the types of jobs currently available for Registered Nurses and Midwives in education positions have a look at the employment section of the NSW Health website at: