Heading in the right direction for a career in Nursing/Midwifery Management
This brochure provides clarification of the management 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 management 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 manager.

Most nurses/midwives would not consider a management 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.

The opportunity to act as “in charge” for the shift is probably the first thing to pursue. Being “in charge” of the shift means that you are responsible for the coordination of the ward/unit for that shift. You will be accountable for decisions which affect the entire team and planning for the following shift.

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 non-direct clinical care aspects of nursing/midwifery.

Seek out a person who you believe is an exceptional leader and management role model and approach him/her to see if they would mentor you to achieve the same level of respect and expertise in your career.

If you are confident in being “in charge” for a shift you might like to approach the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager (N/MUM) regarding relief when he/she is on leave. You might like to construct a professional development plan for the areas in which you have limited experience or the skills and knowledge you still need to develop to make this a reality.

A commitment to lifelong learning is a critical aspect of any career in nursing/midwifery. There are many and varied education opportunities. Considering that management is not just about managing it is also about leading, this opens up other professional and personal development options.

Management and leadership programs are conducted locally within your LHD and at universities and other education providers including the College of Nursing. A number of universities offer a continuum of qualifications in management and/or leadership starting at a Graduate Diploma level.

The N/MUM role

The NSW Public Health System Nurses’ & Midwives’ (State) Award states that the N/MUM is the:

“Registered Nurse/Midwife in charge of a ward or unit or group of wards or units in a public hospital or health service or public health organisation”.

There are 3 levels of N/MUM under the NSW Health Award and they are specific to the position and not the person in that role. The level is usually dependent on the complexity of the service and the number of beds and staff the N/MUM manages.

As stated previously there are a number of relevant educational programs you might like to pursue to support the N/MUM role.

The N/MUM role is pivotal to the co-ordination of patient care, ward management and leadership for the professions of nursing and midwifery and to ensure the delivery of high quality patient care and efficient use of resources.

The Conceptual Framework for the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager Role (NaMO) further illustrates the purpose and broad functions of the role. As the manager and leader of the nursing or midwifery unit, the N/MUM will demonstrate capability through his/her attitude, skills, behaviour and attributes.

The N/MUM should:

- have broad nursing/midwifery experience and knowledge
- have patients, families and carers as the central focus of service delivery
- have professional integrity
- demonstrate ethical conduct
- have accountability
- be an advocate
- enable others
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• cultivate collaborative relationships and effective team work
• be committed to advancing the profession of nursing/midwifery and care provision

Are you up to the challenge?

Nurse/Midwifery and Service Managers

There are numerous opportunities for nurses and midwives to extend their management expertise beyond the ward/unit.

The Nurse or Midwifery Manager might be employed in a supportive role such as patient access, quality and safety or human resources or in roles as coordinators of a clinical stream or large service within a hospital, community setting or Local Hospital District (LHD).

Nurses and midwives with the appropriate skills and experience have the opportunity of taking on senior executive roles such as hospital or LHD Directors of Nursing and Midwifery and in healthcare in general.

A qualification such as a Masters in Health Service Management might be appropriate for nurse or midwifery managers and executives. What is important is that you seek out education opportunities to address your individual learning needs.

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 management and leadership programs.

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

Useful contacts for career progression

Pay and conditions for N/MUMs and Nurse Managers

Nursing & Midwifery Office (NaMO) ‘take the lead’

NSW Aboriginal Nursing & Midwifery Strategy

Nursing and Midwifery Unit Managers Society of NSW
www.numsociety.org.au

Australian College of Health Service Management
The Institute of Nursing Executives of NSW & ACT
www.ACHSM.org.au

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