

Proposed supervisors: Professor Christine Brown Wilson (School of Nursing and Midwifery), Dr. Karen McCutcheon (School of Nursing and Midwifery) and (potentially) Dr. Christine Slade, (University of Queensland).

Title: Embedding Digital Health Knowledge, Capabilities and Attributes into University Nursing Curriculum: a cross cultural study

Background: Digital health care is moving forward providing benefits to both individuals receiving health care and organisations providing it. Examples such as telehealth, use of wearable devices and the move towards electronic and patient held medical records means that nurses need to be equipped with a range of digital skills that they can apply in a dynamic health care context. To accommodate this, it has been suggested that nursing curricula should explicitly provide opportunities for nurses to understand the link between the use of digital health care and improved patient outcomes. Health Education England and the Royal College of Nursing have launched a digital literacy project to encourage all registered nurses and midwives to develop their digital capabilities. This research will consider how digital capabilities may be embedded into a revised nursing curriculum at Queens University Belfast using the theoretical lens of consensus curriculum development. A similar project is underway at the University of Queensland, providing a unique opportunity for a cross cultural curriculum development study. Working with colleagues at the University of Queensland, this research will collate and develop existing knowledge about the essentials of a digital healthcare curriculum being mindful of the lens of leadership, innovation and agility needed by graduates in a dynamic global health sector.

Aims and objectives of the study:

This study aims to engage with a range of stakeholders to develop and embed a set of nursing specific digital health criteria in nursing curricula through the following objectives:

1. Conduct a systematic review and synthesis of international literature in embedding digital capability in health care curricula;
2. Engaging nurse educators in Northern Ireland in a facilitated conversation through workshop participation about the potential value of and perceived priority areas to embedding digital healthcare in nursing curriculum;
3. To develop a set of essential digital healthcare criteria for inclusion in nursing curriculum and undertake a cross cultural comparison with a similar study conducted in University of Queensland Australia;
4. Engage with industry practitioners/ digital health experts and service users and carers in Northern Ireland and Australia (subject to funding) to review and refine the essential digital healthcare criteria for use in nursing curricula.

Methodology: This project will use a qualitative design including focus groups and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and workshops with nurse educators. There is also the potential to utilise Delphi techniques to explore cross cultural understandings between international stakeholders in the UK and Australia. There will be support to apply for further funding to spend time at the University of Queensland, Australia to facilitate cross cultural understanding and data collection.

Expected outcomes: a curriculum informed by understanding of the necessary and desirable digital capabilities needed by nursing graduates to become effective leaders in digital healthcare and the promotion of QUB School of nursing and midwifery as a sector leader in preparing graduates for digital healthcare through international curriculum innovation.