



Trends in Nursing Education in Italy

1. Brief Overview of Nursing Education Pathways

- In Italy, there are two main categories of nurses requiring a university bachelor's degree: Registered Nurses (RN) and Registered Paediatric Nurses (RPN). Once a Registered Nurse or a RPN, nurses can pursue further education in the form of a Master's or Doctoral degree, which is more oriented towards an academic career (Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of nursing categories in Italy and related education requirement

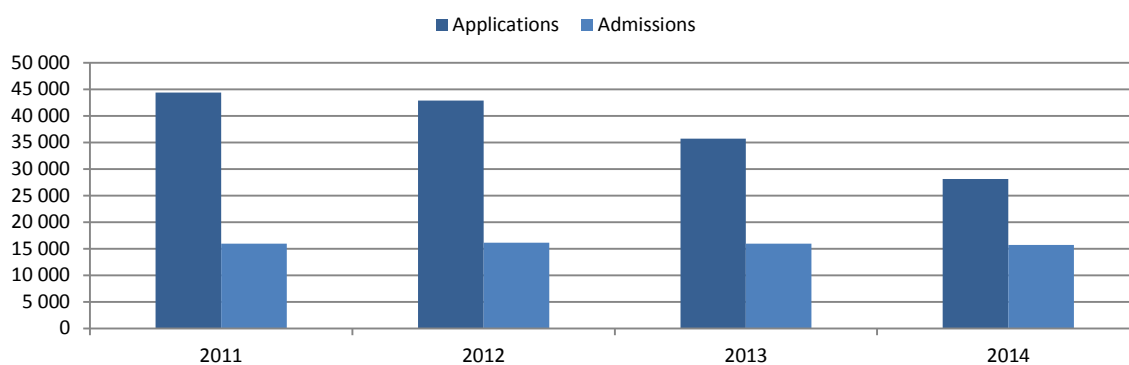
Nursing Education Level	Nursing Title	Education Requirement
Initial Nursing Education	Registered Nurse (RN) Registered Paediatric Nurse (RPN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three-year Bachelor's degree.
Advanced Nursing Education	Nurse Specialist (Infermiere Specialista) <i>This title however is not yet certified in Italy</i>	<p>Once qualified, nurses can undergo further training in order to practice more complex tasks in their area of specialty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master of Nursing Sciences (1 or 2 year course) which can be based on clinical practice, management, teaching or research <p>In addition, there are also PhD programmes for nurses who want to become university professors or researchers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctorate (3 year course)

Source: Infermieri professionali, assistenti sanitari e vigilatrici d'infanzia (IPASVI) National Nursing Federation, <http://www.ipasvi.it/static/english.htm>.

2. Trends in Admissions to Nursing Schools

- Figure 1 shows annual applications and admissions to nursing programmes (Bachelor's degree) in Italy in recent years. Between 2011 and 2014, the number of students admitted in general nursing programmes has remained relatively stable, at around 16,000 per year, while the number of applications has dropped by nearly 40%. When the global economic crisis started in 2008, applications to nursing education programmes increased due to perceived greater job security of nurses working for the NHS (Bortoluzzi & Palese, 2010). However, the employment rates of new nurse graduates have fallen markedly in recent years in Italy, with only 63% of them finding a job one year after graduation in 2012, down from 94% in 2007. This has led to a reduced number of applications in nursing programmes in recent years (Mastrillo, 2014).

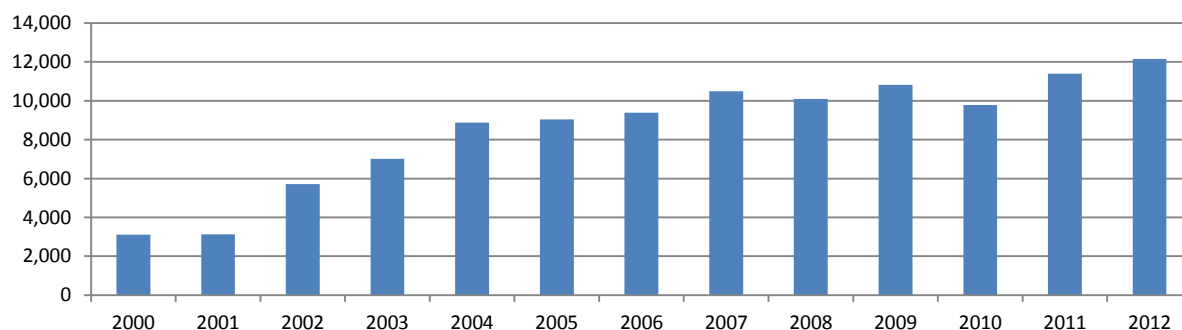
Figure 1. Applications and Admissions to Initial General Nursing Programmes, Italy, 2011 - 2014



Source: <http://www.ammissione.it/statistiche-professioni-sanitarie-2014-2015/>.

- Figure 2 shows a longer time trend of graduates from nurse training programmes in Italy from 2000 to 2012. In general, these graduate numbers reflect the admission rates three years earlier (minus those students who didn't complete their studies). From 2000 to 2012, the number of students who graduated from nursing programmes almost quadrupled, rising from 3 106 in 2000 to 12 153 in 2012. This large increase, which started in 2002, mirrors the strong growth that also occurred in France.

Figure 2. Total Nursing Graduates, Italy, 2000 - 2012



Source: MInistry of Education; "Survey on Graduates and Exams" (www.miur.it).

3. Advanced nursing education

- In 2004, the first Master of Nursing science programmes were introduced in Italy to enable nurses to increase their knowledge in certain areas of specialisation or to work as nurse manager or in education and research. This was followed by the introduction of PhD programmes in 2006 (IPASVI, 2015).
- In 2006, a new legislation and related regulation established the title of 'Nurse Specialist' and the qualification requirements for this role. However, this new role has yet to be implemented in practice (IAPN, 2015).
- Although post-graduate education is accessible and recommended for nurses to increase their skills and competencies and perform more complex tasks, there is no specific requirement for nurses to pursue such post-graduate training to play more advanced roles. This means that general nurses who have not pursued any higher education can still perform complex clinical procedures, according to their experience, but without any formal recognition in terms of title.

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