

## PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE IN NURSING: TEN YEARS TRAINING NURSES FOR INNOVATION IN HEALTH

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The changes that occurred in education and health in the beginning of the 21st century have pointed to the need to expand traditional academic training and promote professional qualification focused on the demands of the working world, with a quick return of knowledge production to society. Created from this perspective, the professional master's in nursing at the Federal University of Paraná, a visionary initiative, started its activities in 2011. With the pioneering spirit that is characteristic of this nursing school, it was the first program of this type in the state of Paraná and the fourth in Brazil.

Professional master is considered a public policy of both the Ministry of Education and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel: it is part of the National Policy of Permanent Education in Health. The proposal adds to traditional graduate programs the need for concrete contributions to society resulting from knowledge built in the academy. As a consequence, the professional master was created. It is connected with production logic, but takes into account the reality of the working world in health regarding technological development in settings other than the academy.

This paradigmatic change, which seeks oriented education of leaders in nursing to provide them with an extended view of their competences toward the future of the profession<sup>(1)</sup>, required the faculty to adapt and the students to make unexpected efforts. The first defended dissertations were a publicity that arose the interest of nurses in places in subsequent classes. The demands in health services to be met by the professional master originated in several settings: the university itself, which needed to promote professional training actions for nurses of its teaching hospital; public health secretariats; and public and private hospitals.

The pioneering spirit was followed by challenges: How to ensure quality in the training of nurses in the professional modality with the experience of academic master's in nursing as a starting point and meet the demands of nursing practice in society? How to keep a new graduate program infrastructure without a funding of its own? How would the existing faculty manage to have more activities and be responsible for another graduate program?

The answers to these questions were obtained by means of collective participation, and the convergence between successful academic studies and professional masters in countries such as Portugal and Canada<sup>(2)</sup> motivated the continuity of nurses' qualification. Additionally, the demands to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel produced results, and the commitment of the university regarding physical infrastructure and human resources made it feasible to keep the proposal of the new graduate program.

The program has recently changed its dynamics and is now heavily investing in studies on technological innovation oriented toward care, educational, and management processes, with the objectives of promoting changes in clinical practice and meeting the demands of society. In 2016, the sui generis proposal of the National Nursing Council in collaboration with the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel allowed this proposal to proceed by means of the Cooperation Agreement for Promotion of Professional Masters. This agreement has the goal of qualifying nurses who develop their activities by directly providing care in the Unified Health System (SUS, as per its acronym in Portuguese) so it is possible to improve work processes, which impacts professional practice.

In September 2021, when the Graduate Program in Healthcare Practice completed ten years of activities and showed consolidated characteristics of a professional master, it had conferred 112 master's degrees and relied on a faculty committed to technological development in nursing. The National Nursing Council's strategy of applying resources in professional programs allowed bolder studies, with development of technical and technological products that have a marked impact on clinical practice and, consequently, originate improvement in health care and quality of life of the population.

The Graduate Program in Healthcare Practice is in charge of projects that contribute to qualifying nurses who produce and apply technological innovations in the areas in which they develop their activities. With over 50 technologies registered in control and standardization agencies, the program achieved national recognition when it received the highest awards in Brazilian nursing. It won first place in the category Technologies, Research, Care, and Citizenship of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Brazilian Congress of Nursing Councils/National Nursing Council in 2019, had an innovative experience recognized by the Laboratory of Innovation in Nursing as successful and relevant for nursing and SUS, as promoted by the National Nursing Council and the Pan American Health Organization in 2020, was part of

two Nursing Now initiatives in 2021, and won first place in the category Public Policies, Education, and Management in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Brazilian Congress of Nursing Councils/National Nursing Council in 2021.

The perspective is making progress in the education of nurses by offering PhD titles, following the global trend of associating nursing with technological innovations.

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