



# Creating Opportunities and Occasions to Promote a European Result-based Action for Training and Education - COOPERATE

## Study of the National Situation in Terms of Qualification Frameworks in Greece

Developed by InnovED & University of Thessaly

September 2022  
GREECE



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ  
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΙΑΣ

## Contents

1. Regulation and Legislation of the nursing profession and nursing assistant in Greece.....	3
1.1 Regulation and Legislation of the nursing profession in Greece.....	3
1.2 Regulation and Legislation of the nursing assistant in Greece.....	3
2. National situation in terms of Qualification Frameworks in Greece.....	4
2.1 Pre – registration nursing education and training .....	4
3. Post- registration nursing education and training in Greece .....	6
3.1 Obtaining a nursing specialty .....	6
3.2 Conditions for obtaining a nursing specialty.....	6
3.3 Specialist’s Training booklet .....	7
4. Definition of Learning Outcomes .....	7
4.1 Palliative and Supportive Nursing Care .....	7
4.2 Gerontological Nursing.....	9
4.3 Nursing Cardiovascular Diseases .....	10
4.4. Mental Health Nursing .....	11
4.5 Oncology Nursing .....	13
4.6 Pathological Nursing.....	14
4.7 .Children's Nursing.....	15
4.8 Surgical Nursing.....	16
5. Summary and Suggestions .....	18
References.....	19

# **1. Regulation and Legislation of the nursing profession and nursing assistant in Greece**

## **1.1 Regulation and Legislation of the nursing profession in Greece**

Nursing in Greece is regulated by the Hellenic Regulatory Board of Nurses (HRBN)[1]. This is a self-managed authority for registered nurses established in 2004 under Law 3252/2004. The internal organization of the HRBN is managed through legislative provisions. These are based on legislative authorization by the government, or by the collective body that manages the authority itself, whose decisions are approved and authorized by the Minister of Health. [2]. The aim of HRBN is: to ensure the health of the population through the maintenance of nurses' professional practice, to hold the Professional Register Records responsible for licensing and disciplinary procedures.

The current situation on nurse education in Greece is described below: In the beginning of 2019, the Greek Government is passing a series of legislations as a reform of Higher Education. Most of the technological educational institutions are either upgraded to universities or are being incorporated into existing universities as new faculties. This legislation is currently under implementation, and its consequences will be more visible from 2020 onwards. For nursing, those who previously graduated from technological educational institutions will have the opportunity for top-up programs to be upgraded to university graduates, whereas existing nursing students at technological institutions when they graduate are becoming by default university graduates. Regarding the certification processes, the diplomas provided upon graduation by the Higher Education Nursing Institutions (universities and technological educational institutes) testify to the adequacy of knowledge and nursing skills. All nurses are required to be registered by the HRBN. According to Eurostat data, there were 19.743 practising nursing professionals in Greece in 2015 (down from 19.973 in 2013). [3]

## **1.2 Regulation and Legislation of the nursing assistant in Greece.**

To become a nursing assistant in Greece, one must study in one of the nursing schools that belong to Secondary Education [Vocational Training Institute (IEK) or Technical Vocational High School (T.E.E) A' and B' cycles of the Nursing Assistant specialty, in Vocational School and Vocational High School (EPA.S and EPA.L)"Nursing Assistants" and in the Vocational

School of the Public Service Employment (EPA.S DYPA) of the "General Nursing Assistants" specialty].

More specifically in order to obtain a license to practice as a nursing assistant, the following are required:

a) Level 2 degree (Technical Vocational High School A`cycle of studies) in the specialty Nursing Assistants and twelve (12) months of practical training or

b) Level 3 degree (Technical Vocational High School B / study cycle) of the Nursing Assistant specialty and six (6) months of practical training or

c) Level 3 or 4 degree (Vocational High School ) of the Nursing Assistants and six (6) months of practical training or

d) Level 3 degree (Vocational School of the Public Service Employment) in the specialty General Nursing Assistant and six (6) months of internship

e) Level 5 Degree (Diploma of Vocational Training Institute) in the specialty Nursing Assistant General Hospital of Law 4186/2013 which has been obtained after successful participation in the certification exams of the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Professional Guidance (E.O.P.E.P.E.P. ) or

g) Level 5 Degree (Diploma of Vocational Training Institute) in the specialty "Nursing and Midwifery Assistant" of Law 4186/2013 for those who hold a Certificate of Professional Training until December 2021 and have passed the certification exams of the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Professional Guidance (E.O.P.E.P.E.P).

## **2. National situation in terms of Qualification Frameworks in Greece**

### **2.1 Pre – registration nursing education and training**

**Nursing education** in Greece is regulated by the Ministry of Health. Regulations are based on those established by the International Council of Nurses and on World Health Organization guidelines. In addition, committees within the nursing departments in provider institutions define the process and the criteria for developing specialist approaches related to practice and to specialization based on the specific requirements of each department.

**Training** of nurses in Greece conforms to EU standards for mutual recognition of qualifications according to European Community directive-regulating the free movement of European health professionals. For undergraduate studies, a student may pursue either a four-year undergraduate degree in a university or four-year undergraduate studies at a higher technological education institute (ATEI).[4] Both programmes require 240 ECTS credits for graduation. The academic degrees provide students with a professional degree. ATEI nursing schools and university nursing schools differ in the delivery of in-hospital training sessions. ATEIs provide training for a full year as trainee hospital employees, whilst university nurses receive training sessions during visits to university hospitals alongside their undergraduate studies.

**The basic nursing course** takes four years (approximately eight semesters), of which the eighth semester is dedicated to clinical practice. **Clinical training** is provided in nearby university and public hospitals, within their clinics and units.

## 2.2 Pre- registration nursing assistant education and training

The training program of the nursing assistant specialty from a public or private professional training institute is shown in the table.

SN	SEMESTER COURSES	A			B			C			D		
		THEORY	LAB	TOTAL	THEORY	LAB	TOTAL	THEORY	LAB	TOTAL	THEORY	LAB	TOTAL
1	NURSING I,II	4	4	8	4	4	8						
2	FIRST AID	1	2	3									
3	ANATOMY	2		2									
4	PHYSIOLOGY	2		2									
5	PHARMACOLOGY	1		1									
6	HYGIENE- MICROBIOLOGY	1		1									
7	PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN THE SPECIALTY		3	3									
8	SURGERY I,II				2		2	2		2			
9	PATHOLOGY				2		2						
10	GYNECOLOGY- PEDIATRICS				2		2						
11	ELEMENTS OF PSYCHIATRY - NEUROLOGY				1		1						
12	NURSING (PRACTICING IN THE HOSPITAL) I,II,III					5	5		14	14		16	16
13	STERILIZATION- DISINFECTION							1	1	2			
14	BLOOD DONATION							2		2			
15	DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES										2		2
16	ORTHOPEDIC										2		2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	11	9	20	11	9	20	5	15	20	4	16	20

Studying at Vocational Training Institute is a total of five semesters, divided into four semesters of theoretical and laboratory training with a total duration of up to 1,200 specialty teaching hours, according to the approved study programs and one semester of internship (πρακτική άσκηση) or apprenticeship( μαθητεία), with a total duration of 960 hours[5].

By completing his/her studies, the trainee has obtained all the knowledge that enables him/her to work in the entire range of care structures, such as: public or private hospitals, public or private clinics, community centers, nursing homes, chronic disease clinics, health centers, social welfare structures (day care center, home help program, etc.), psychiatric structures.

### **3. Post- registration nursing education and training in Greece**

#### **3.1 Obtaining a nursing specialty**

The acquisition of a nursing specialty promotes the theoretical and practical training of professional nurses in order to offer quality, documented, specialized and effective nursing care, in the entire spectrum of health care (primary, secondary and tertiary health care). In addition, it contributes to the production of new knowledge in the field of health by actively participating in research.

#### **3.2 Conditions for obtaining a nursing specialty**

The conditions for obtaining a nursing specialty include:

- a) Degree of tertiary nursing education (University or ATEI) or equivalent school of the country or abroad, officially recognized by the Interdisciplinary Organization for the Recognition of Academic Titles and Information (DOATAP).
- b) Member ID of the Hellenic Nurses Union , which must be valid or Certificate of Renewal of Registration in the Hellenic Nurses Union of the current year or Certificate of Registration in the Hellenic Nurses Union, for those registering for the first time, which is valid until the end February of the following year from its publication, in accordance with the provisions of par. 5 of article 4 of Law 3252/2004 (A').
- c) License to practice the profession of Nurse.
- d) Responsible declaration that they have not resigned from a permanent or of private law of a certain time position as a nurse of the National Health System, in the last year.

The training program has a duration of eighteen (18) months. Candidates can be trained in one of the following specialties [7]:

- Mental Health Nursing
- Palliative and Supportive Nursing Care
- Gerontological Nursing
- Nursing Cardiovascular Diseases
- Oncology Nursing
- Pathological Nursing
- Children's Nursing
- Surgical Nursing

### **3.3 Specialist's Training booklet**

The specialist's training booklet records the content of the training, the performance and progress, as well as the corresponding activity of the trainers. A detailed record is made of the nursing procedures and interventions that correspond to specific nursing roles, which the specialists performed during their training, in accordance with what is provided by law [8].

## **4. Definition of Learning Outcomes**

### **4.1 Palliative and Supportive Nursing Care**

The main purpose of the specialization is to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes of qualified nurses, so that they are able to advocate for the importance of Palliative and Supportive Nursing Care in patients with serious, chronic and life-threatening diseases and their families regardless of age, stage of disease, place of care, as well as to provide competently and compassionately quality, documented, specialized effective care. The table 1 describes the educational modules and the allocation of time of the specialty

**Table 1.** Palliative and Supportive Nursing. Educational Modules and Allocation of time

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<p><b><i>Palliative and Supportive Nursing Care</i></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The right of equal patient access to palliative care</li> <li>2. Communication in palliative care</li> <li>3. Ensuring the physical comfort of patients in the palliative care</li> <li>4. Basic principles of patient symptom assessment and management - Symptom complexes</li> <li>5. Psychosocial and mental support of the patient / family in the palliative care</li> <li>6. Care plan and clinical decision-making in the palliative care</li> <li>7. Palliative care of special and vulnerable populations</li> <li>8. Loss and mourning in palliative care</li> <li>9. End of life care</li> <li>10. Basic principles of organization and service quality improvement of palliative care</li> <li>11. Nursing leadership in palliative care</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathology department three (3) months,</li> <li>• Neurological / nephrology Department two (2) months,</li> <li>• Cardiology / Pulmonology Department two (2) months,</li> <li>• Pathological oncology department three (3) months,</li> <li>• Surgical oncology department three (3) months,</li> <li>• Inpatient palliative care services two (2) months,</li> <li>• Outpatient palliative care services three (3) months.</li> </ul>



## 4.2 Gerontological Nursing

The purpose of the specialty is to provide an educational framework that will encourage the development of analysis, critical thinking and problem solving skills as well as positive attitudes and behaviors by nurses so that they actively participate in healthy aging of older people, provide care to older people and their families, contribute to the creation of age-friendly communities and respond to the constantly changing needs of Gerontological Nursing. The table 2 describes the educational modules and the allocation of time of the specialty.

**Table 2.** Gerontological Nursing. Educational Modules and Allocation of time

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<b>Gerontological Nursing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aging. Conceptual definitions. Biopsychosocial extensions</li> <li>2. Documented gerontological nursing</li> <li>3. Communication and Counseling in elderly</li> <li>4. Active and Healthy Aging</li> <li>5. Disorders relating to aging</li> <li>6. Common diseases in the elderly</li> <li>7. Common geriatric syndromes</li> <li>8. Aging and Psychosocial consequences</li> <li>9. Homecare of the elderly and caregivers</li> <li>10. Pharmaceutical care of elderly people</li> <li>11. Nursing care of the elderly in emergency situations</li> <li>12. Palliative care of the</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathology Department one (1) month</li> <li>• Neurology Department one (1) month</li> <li>• Cardiology department one (1) month</li> <li>• Pulmonology Department one (1) month</li> <li>• Orthopedic department one (1) month</li> <li>• Surgical department one (1) month</li> <li>• Outpatient clinics of various specialties one (1) month</li> <li>• Adult ICU one (1) month</li> <li>• Emergency Department for adults one (1) month</li> <li>• Primary Health Care (PHC) unit four (4) months</li> <li>• Structures / Services providing home care five (5) months</li> </ul>

	elderly 13.Long- term care and rehabilitation of the elderly	
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### 4.3 Nursing Cardiovascular Diseases

The purpose of the specialty is to acquire theoretical knowledge and clinical experience, as well as to cultivate and develop skills and abilities. Nurses will be able to provide individualized and holistic care to adult patients with acute or chronic cardiac diseases. Upon successful completion of the residency, nurses will be able to know and apply the principles of providing evidence-based nursing care to patients with cardiac disease. The table 3 describes the educational modules and the allocation of time of the specialty.

**Table 3.** Nursing Cardiovascular Diseases. Educational Modules and Allocation of time.

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<b><i>Nursing Cardiovascular Diseases</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anatomy and Physiology of heart and blood vessels.</li> <li>2.Diagnostic approach to a patient with cardiovascular disease.</li> <li>3. Nursing care of patients with cardiovascular disease.</li> <li>4. Interventional procedures in the treatment of cardiovascular disease.</li> <li>5. The cardiology nurse in health care structures.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight (8) months in Cardiology Clinic</li> <li>• Two (2) months in a Cardiac Surgery Clinic or Clinic, in which patients who have undergone cardiac surgery are treated</li> <li>• Three (3) months in a Coronary Unit</li> <li>• Two (2) months in</li> </ul>

	6. Prevention of cardiovascular disease. 7. Cardiac rehabilitation. 8. Special issues in the care of patients with cardiovascular disease.	Cardiac Surgery Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One (1) month in heart surgery</li> <li>• One (1) month in cardiology</li> </ul> Emergency Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One (1) month in a Hemodynamic Laboratory</li> </ul>
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#### 4.4. Mental Health Nursing

The main purpose of the specialty is the advanced theoretical and applied clinical training of nurses in the specialized treatment of people with acute and chronic mental health problems and their caregivers, in order to provide quality and then mental health care, prevention and treatment across the spectrum of individual, family and community life. The table 4 describes the educational modules and the allocation time of the specialty.

**Table 4. Mental Health. Educational Modules and Allocation of time**

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<b>Mental Health Nursing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidenced based mental health nursing care</li> <li>2. Therapeutic environment - therapeutic relationship - therapeutic communication</li> <li>3. Advanced mental Health Nursing I : Crisis Intervention -</li> </ol>	Twelve (12) months in a Hospital Psychiatric Department, of which at least two (2) months in a Child Psychiatry and six (6) months in Community Mental Health Facilities and Mental Health Rehabilitation Facilities

	<p>Emergencies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>4.</b> Advanced Mental Health Nursing II: Anxiety Disorders- Somatoform and dissocial personality disorders</li><li><b>5.</b> Advanced Mental Health Nursing III: Psychotic Disorders</li><li><b>6.</b> Advanced Mental Nursing IV: Emotional Disorders</li><li><b>7.</b> Special Therapeutic Interventions and Advanced Psychopharmacology</li><li><b>8.</b> Mental Health Nursing in Obstetrics and Gynecology</li><li><b>9.</b> Advanced Child and Adolescent Mental Health Nursing</li><li><b>10.</b> Psychogeriatric Nursing</li><li><b>11.</b> Interdisciplinary Psychiatric Nursing</li><li><b>12.</b> Community- Social- Intercultural Mental Health Nursing</li><li><b>13.</b> Advanced Mental Nursing in Substance Addiction</li></ol>	
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## 4.5 Oncology Nursing

The purpose of the specialty is the theoretical and applied clinical training of nurses, so that on the one hand they support cancer prevention and early diagnosis programs, and on the other hand they provide specialized and quality nursing care to oncology patients, both in hospital and outpatient settings. The table 5 describes the educational modules and the allocation of time of the specialty.

**Table 5.** Oncology Nursing. Educational Modules and Allocation of time

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<b>Oncology Nursing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence- Based Nursing Clinical Practice – Resource and Personnel Management</li> <li>2. The context of Oncology care</li> <li>3. Pathophysiology of cancer and principles of therapeutic decision - making</li> <li>4. Health Promotion, prevention and early identification of cancer</li> <li>5. Main types of cancer</li> <li>6. Treatment and care of cancer patients – Patient safety</li> <li>7. The management of the main oncological problems</li> <li>8. The management of psychosocial problems of oncological patients</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• six (6) months in Pathological Oncology Departments [one (1) month in a Pain and Palliative Care Clinic]</li> <li>• six (6) months in Surgical Oncology Departments [one (1) month Surgery]</li> <li>• two (2) months in Day Care Units</li> <li>• two (2) months in Intensive Care Units (ICU) and Emergency Departments (ED)</li> <li>• one (1) month in Home care structures and/or in Preventive Control Departments</li> <li>• one (1 month) in Radiotherapy Departments.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>9.</b> Basic principles of outpatient care of oncology patients</p> <p><b>10.</b> Basic principles of Palliative Care for Oncology Patients</p> <p><b>11.</b> Special topics in Oncology Nursing</p>	
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## 4.6 Pathological Nursing

The purpose of the Pathological Nursing Specialty is to acquire theoretical knowledge and clinical skills in the care of patients with pathological diseases in the hospital environment. This purpose will be achieved through the nursing process, nursing diagnoses, nursing interventions and the evaluation of results in the context of the care of patients of the Pathology Department. The table 6 describes the educational modules and the allocation of time of the specialty.

**Table 6.** Pathological Nursing . Educational Modules and Allocation of time

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<b>Pathological Nursing</b>	<p>1. Purpose and context of Pathological Nursing Specialty</p> <p>2. Fluids and Electrolytes – Acid –Base Balance</p> <p>3. Diseases of the Endocrine System</p> <p>4. Diseases of the Cardiovascular system</p> <p>5. Diseases of the Hematopoietic System</p> <p>6. Diseases of the Nervous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathology Clinic Eight (8) months</li> <li>• Emergency Department of Pathology Three (3) months</li> <li>• Regular Outpatient Pathological Clinics One (1) month</li> <li>• Cardiology Clinic and Heart Attack Unit One (1) month</li> </ul>

	System 7. Diseases of the Respiratory System 8. Diseases of the Digestive System 9. Diseases of the Urinary System 10. Rheumatic and Collagen Diseases 11. Diseases of the Head, Neck and Sensory Organs 12. Communicable Diseases 13. Special Situations in Pathological Nursing 14. Special Topics in Pathological Nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulmonology Clinic One (1) month</li> <li>• Hematology Clinic One (1) month</li> <li>• Neurological Clinic One (1) month</li> <li>• Endocrinology Clinic One (1) month</li> <li>• Diabetes - Endocrinology Clinic One (1) month</li> </ul>
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#### 4.7 .Children's Nursing

The purpose of the Children's Nursing Specialty is to acquire specialized knowledge of nursing care for children that aims to develop critical thinking, so that the nurse can plan nursing care in a clear and methodical manner, using the modern scientific data of pediatric nursing. The table 7 describes the educational modules and the allocation of time of the specialty.

**Table 7.** Children’s Nursing. Educational Modules and Allocation of Time

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<b>Children’s Nursing</b>	1. Developments in Pediatric Nursing Care 2. Assessment and documentation of vital signs 3. Principles of drug administration. Fluid and	- Ten months (10) in Pathology / Pediatric Department - Two months (2) in Surgical Department and Surgery - One (1) month in Oncology

	<p>electrolyte balance in children.</p> <p>4. Pediatric pain management</p> <p>5. Nursing assessment and documentation of disorders by system</p> <p>6. Pediatric Emergency Department</p> <p>7. Peculiarities in newborn care</p> <p>8. The child in the operating room</p> <p>9. The child as a critically ill patient in the ICU</p> <p>10. Special topics in Pediatric Nursing</p>	<p>- Hematology Department</p> <p>- Two (2) months in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Children's</p> <p>- One (1) month in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)</p> <p>- Two (2) months in the Emergency Department</p>
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## 4.8 Surgical Nursing

The aim and objectives of the Surgical Nursing specialty are the acquisition and understanding by the trainees of theoretical and clinical knowledge in accordance with the modern concepts of combined therapy regarding: nursing and signimeiological assessment of patients with surgical problems. The table 8 describes the educational modules and the allocation time of the specialty.

**Table 8.** Surgical Nursing. Educational Modules and Allocation of time

Specialty	Educational Modules	Allocation of time
<b><i>Surgical Nursing</i></b>	<p>1.Evidence-based knowledge at the clinical level</p> <p>2. Principles of biophysics and biochemistry in clinical practical evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six (6) months in Surgical and Surgical oncology departments for adults,</li> <li>• six (6) months in TEP for adults (the three in the</li> </ul>



	<p>3. Preoperative assessment and preparation</p> <p>4. Perioperative care - Organization and management in the operating room</p> <p>5. Trauma, wound and ulcer healing</p> <p>6. Burn disease</p> <p>7. Laboratory: wound suturing, antiseptics, closed method of application of sterile gloves, the role of the instrument provider and the coordinator, placement of surgical instruments, surgical team by type of surgery</p> <p>8. Surgical pathology by system</p> <p>9. The postoperative care of the patient</p> <p>10. Cardiac Surgery Nursing</p> <p>11. Neoplastic disease, surgical oncology nursing</p> <p>12. Chemical Pharmacology - General principles of pharmacology</p> <p>13. Basic knowledge of new imaging methods</p> <p>14. Research methodology</p>	<p>surgical field),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• four (4) months in Surgeries,</li> <li>• two (2) months in ICU and ICU for adults, part of the specialty (not to exceed two (2) months in total) may be allocated to structures of pain, vascular access, palliative care and molecular gene therapy.</li> </ul>
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## 5. Summary and Suggestions

The covid pandemic in the last two years has highlighted the inadequacy of the health system of most countries. Health professionals faced an unknown pathogen with limited knowledge, personal protective equipment and tools to diagnose and treat COVID-19. The challenges and difficulties during the covid pandemic and post-covid addressed the great gap in training and education especially in this category of health professionals. Future challenges may include natural disasters, wars, emerging diseases and health professionals should be ready to face new challenges.

An educational program that could be of great interest and importance is the one with the general title: «**Communicable Diseases**». Educational modules could include:

1. Communicable Diseases
2. Epidemiology
3. Vaccination
4. Contact Tracing
5. Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication
6. Health Professional Self-Care and Mental Health
7. Infection Control in Long-Term Health Care Facilities &
8. Personal Protective Equipment.

The modes of training and education can include on line and face to face educational programs for nursing assistants. Training can be achieved through simulation of management of pandemic infection outbreaks in the most realistic manner possible to test or evaluate the capability of more than one function in the context of an emergency event. An in-situ simulation is an effective method that is close to real-life scenario, to measure the readiness and effectiveness of an emergency response plan. Hence, it is a useful tool to assess disaster preparedness against any type of outbreak. The table 9 describes educational modules and modes of training and education in communicable diseases.

Given the central role of nursing for the health of all nations, solutions for post-COVID challenges are essential, not optional, for governments, policymakers, managers and leaders of nursing, locally, nationally and internationally.

**Table 9.** Nursing Assistant in Communicable Diseases. Educational Modules and Modes of training and education

Nursing Assistants	Educational Modules	Modes of training and education
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<p><b><i>Training and Education in Communicable Diseases</i></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicable Diseases</li> <li>2. Epidemiology</li> <li>3. Vaccination</li> <li>4. Contact Tracing</li> <li>5. Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication</li> <li>6. Health Professional Self-Care and Mental Health</li> <li>7. Infection Control in Long-Term Health Care Facilities</li> <li>8. Personal Protective Equipment</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On line and face to face nursing programs</li> <li>• Virtual Reality (VR) — allowing high-fidelity simulations from remote settings.</li> </ul>
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