

APN-EDU Nordic and Baltic network in advancing Advanced Practice Nursing Education

Shining the light on Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) roles and education

7.5.2024, Marianhamn, Åland

Principal lecturer Virpi Sulosaari, Turku UAS, Chair of the network



Nordic/Baltic
Advanced Practice Nursing
Educators network



Nordplus



Shining the light on Advanced Practice

Nursing (APN) roles and education

Tuesday May 7th, 2024 9.a.m- 15.45 p.m.

Helsinki time (GMT+3)

Address: Neptunigatan 17, the auditorium, 1th floor, Campus North, Åland University of Applied Sciences

Link: <https://turkuamk.zoom.us/j/69552272389>

Chair: Ragnhild Hellesø, professor, University of Oslo, Norway



Topic 1: Awareness and enhancement of the APN roles in health care (09.00-12.00)

9-9:10 Welcome by ÅUAS, Bettina Brantberg-Ahlfors, Vice rector, Åland University of Applied Sciences

9:10-9:30 APN-EDU Nordic and Baltic network in advancing Advanced Practice Nursing Education by Virpi Sulosaari, PhD, RN, principal lecturer, chair of the APN- EDU Nordic-Baltic network group, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland

09:30-09:50 Advanced Practice Nursing as a person-tailored practice in Danish primary health care. A realist evaluation by Susanne Søndergaard, RH, PhD, Aarhus University, Denmark

09:50-10:10 Discussion

10:10-10:30 Coffee break

10:30-10:50 Advances Geriatric Nursing In primary health Care by Erika Boman, RNT, PhD, Affiliated researcher, Åland University of Applied Sciences, Associate professor, Umeå University

10:50-11:20 Collaboration between education and organisation in implementing APN in health care: examples from a Norwegian

multiple-case study by Konstantinos Antypas, RN, PhD, Senior Research Scientist, SINTEF, Norway

11.20-11.40 Educating for Future: Flexible learning design by Elisabeth Østensen, RN, PhD, Associate professor at Lovisenberg Diaconal University College, Norway

11:40-12:00 Discussion and conclusions

12:00-13:00 Lunch

Topic 2: Perspectives on "Why to invest on APN?" (13.00- 14.00)

13-13.20 Career development – need for clinical career pathways by Anna Suutala, Senior Advisor, Finnish Nurses Association

13.25-13.40 Stories of APNs practices: Home care and nursing homes by Anne Blankholm, MScN/APN, RN, Aarhus Municipality, Aarhus, Denmark and Katrine Munk Vernersen, MScN/APN, RN, Aarhus Municipality, Aarhus, Denmark

13.45-13.50 Patients perspective

13.50-14.00 Discussion

14.00- 14.20 Coffee break

Roundtable discussion (14.20-15.20)

Roundtable discussion lead by

Ragnhild Hellesø, professor, University of Oslo, Norway

Ulf Wikström, Change Agent, Åland University of Applied Sciences

14.20-14.35 Different perspectives on APN, Input to the roundtable discussion:

The Government's perspective by Leena Kalle, Advisor, Chief Nursing Officer of Estonia, Health System Development Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia



2.6.2024

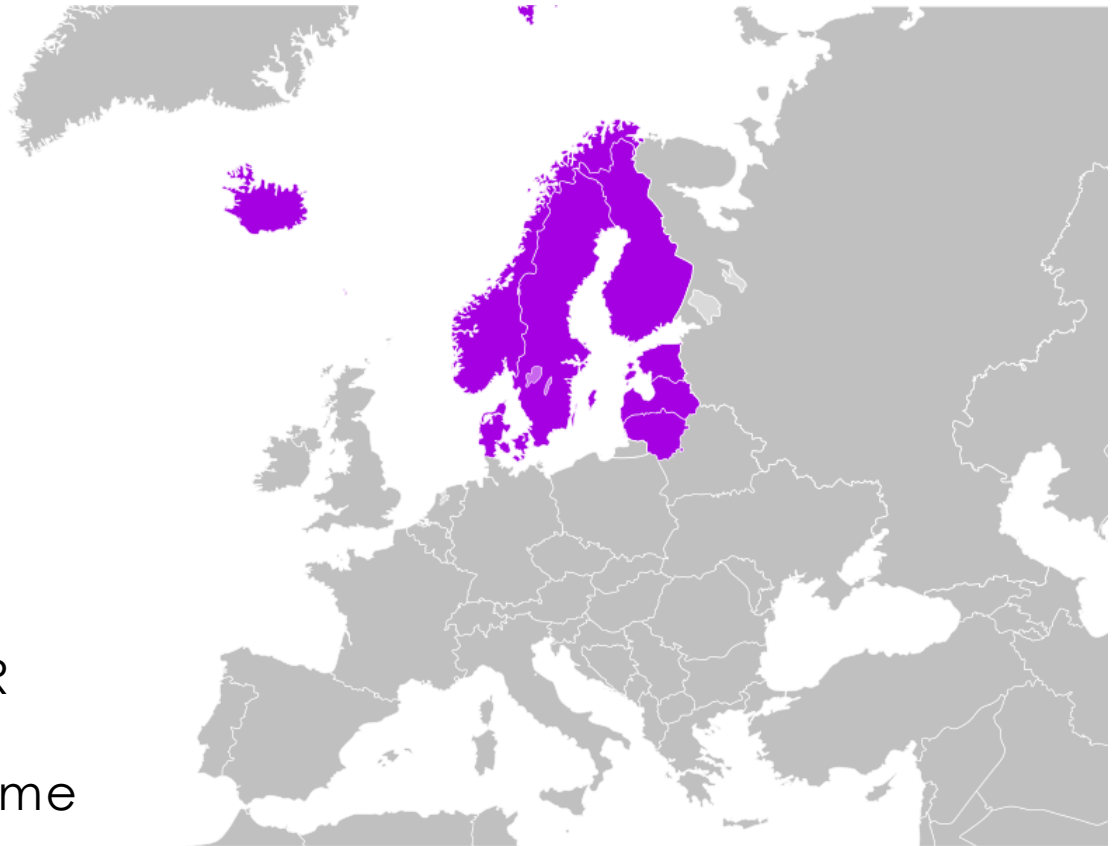
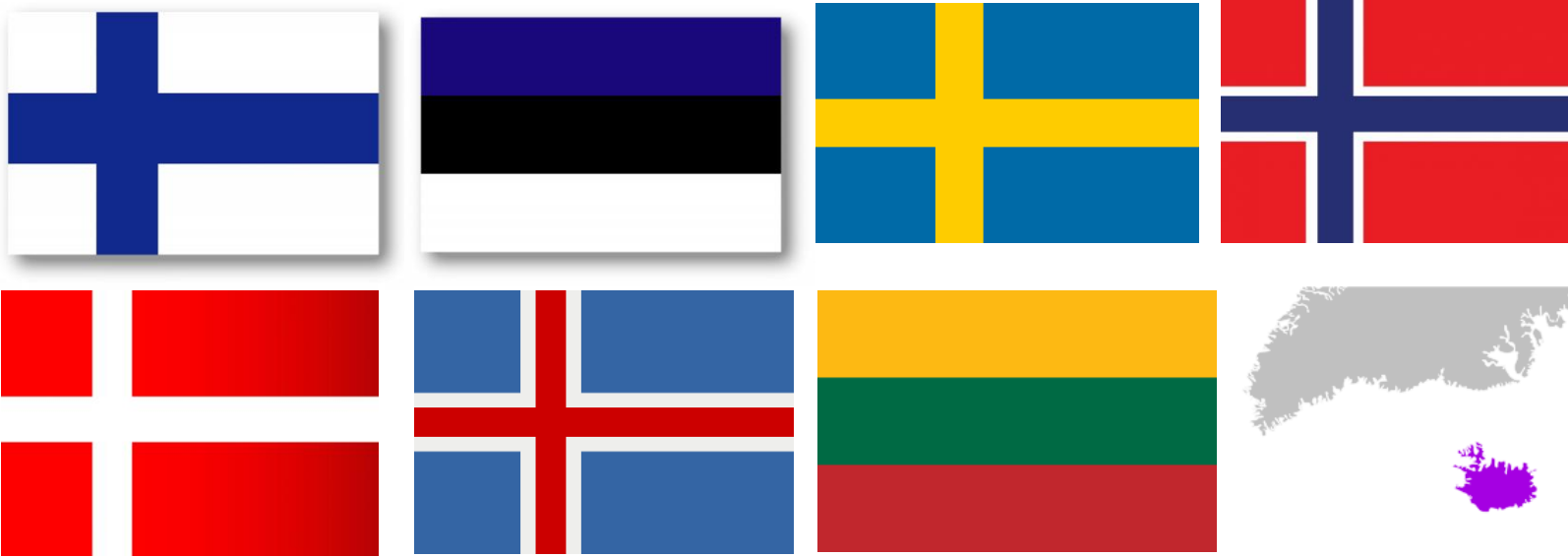
Certificates on participation

Nordic/Baltic Advanced Practice Nursing Educators NORDPLUS network

APN-EDU network was established just before pandemic in 2019 by universities of applied sciences (UAS) from Finland (incl. Åland) and Estonia. From 2020 the network was extended and now includes also UAS and universities from Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden.

- All members of the network are experienced educators, researchers and have passion on developing advanced practice nursing education





We have not been able to identify APN PROGRAMMES OR PROGRAMMES UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN LATVIA
Today we have participants from Latvia – please contact me

What are we aiming for?

- In a resource-constrained healthcare, it is critical to invest in developing the roles and education of advanced practice nurses (APNs).
- The APN-EDU network aims to share knowledge and best practices in relation to advanced practice nursing education to develop advanced practice nursing education in the Nordic and Baltic countries.
- Ultimately, we aim to enhance the development of APN education (**NP** / CNS) to be aligned and unify the education, however, still ensuring country specific requirements and needs.



Important definition

- *Advanced practice nursing (APN)* can be defined as a career pathway for registered nurses, committed to continuing professional development and clinical supervision to practice at a higher level of capability as independent, autonomous, and expert practitioners.
- *Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)* is an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) who is a generalist or specialized nurse. The APN has acquired, through post-graduate education (**minimum of a master's degree**), the expert knowledge base, complex decision-making skills, and clinical competencies needed for Advanced Nursing Practice. The role is shaped by the context in which the APN is credentialed to practice. (ICN, 2020.) Two most common roles are Clinical Nurse Specialist and Nurse Practitioner.



2.6.2024

Advanced practice education

- Advanced practice nurses (APNs) programs are career-development opportunities significant for nursing workforce retention as well as for the quality of patient care (Sulosaari et al., 2023)
- However, Inconsistency regarding policy, education, titles, scope of practice, skills and competencies have been identified as major challenges in developing advanced practice nursing in Europe

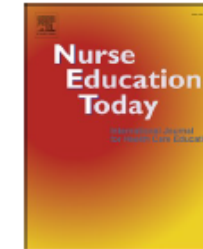




Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Nurse Education Today

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/nedt



Research article

A comparative review of advanced practice nurse programmes in the Nordic and Baltic countries

Virpi Sulosaari^{a,*}, Aurelija Blaževičienė^b, Helga Bragadóttir^c, Josefin Bäckström^{d,e},
Johanna Heikkilä^f, Ragnhild Hellesø^g, Hanna Hopia^f, Margit Lenk-Adusoo^h, Annelise Norlykⁱ,
Reet Urban^h

^a Health and Wellbeing, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Joukahaisenkatu 3, 20520 Turku, Finland

^b Department of Nursing, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania

^c Faculty of Nursing, School of Health Sciences, University of Iceland, Landspítali University Hospital, Iceland

^d Department of Medical Sciences, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

^e Department of Health, Education and Technology, Luleå University of Technology, Luleå, Sweden

^f School of Health and Social Studies, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland

^g Institute of Health and Society, University of Oslo, Norway

^h Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Tartu Health Care College, Estonia

ⁱ Department of Public Health, Health, Aarhus University, Denmark



Purpose and sample

To provide an overview on higher education on advanced practice nursing in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Comparative review of the existing APN programs in the APN-EDU network (N=6).

The data is from six countries:

**Denmark,
Estonia,
Finland,
Iceland,
Norway,
Lithuania**



Although, there is a university from Sweden in the network, an APN program at the master's level did not exist at this time in the Swedish network university. Thus, APN programs on master's level exist at only other two universities in Sweden.



Research questions

1. What are the admission requirements and the length of the APN programmes in the Nordic and Baltic APN Programs?
2. What does the clinical training in the APN programs in the Nordic and Baltic countries include?
3. To what extent do the APN programmes in the Nordic and Baltic countries include the general APN competencies described in the European Tuning project (Gobbi & Kaunonen, 2018) and the ICN guidelines on advanced practice (ICN, 2020)?

Informants: An international research team comprised of academics in the APN-EDU network, who all led the advanced nursing education in each of the network institutions



Methods

- A worksheet to collect the data was developed by the research team
- **The data collection template was divided into three sections:** 1) **the admittance requirements**, such as required pre-education and prior working experience, 2) **programme formal aspects** such as total ECTS of the programme, the final condition of completing the programme, opportunity for continuing education at the doctoral level and how much clinical training is included in the programme and 3) **a list of the APN competencies** based on the APN competencies described in the European Turning Project (Gobbi & Kaunonen, 2018) and ICN (2020) guidelines on advanced practice) which the informants identified to exist in their APN programme.



Results

- In general, the master level APN programmes reviewed had more in common than differences, especially on core competences addressed in the curriculums.
- It is difficult to categorize the APN programmes on preparing to the common two APN roles; nurse practitioner (NP) and clinical nurse specialist (CNS), most of the programmes had characteristics of both.



• • •

- In general, the master level APN programmes reviewed had more in common than differences, especially on core competences addressed in the curriculums.
- A prerequisite for admission to the APN programme is a bachelor's degree in nursing or midwifery.
- The length of the programmes varied from 90 (N=2) to 120 ECTS* (N=4)
- *European Credit Transfer System; 1 ECTS meaning approx.27 hours of student work



... Core Competences of the APN programmes curriculum

- Most competencies are universal, supporting the student to specialize in their own clinical nursing area through for example course assignments and master's thesis.
- Direct patient care competencies focused predominantly on comprehensive health assessment and evidence-based care. Primary focus of all programmes was to provide advanced clinical competences in direct patient care and strengthen nurses' critical thinking and decision-making skills in practice.
- Moreover, all programmes aim to enhance nurses' skills in leadership, how to apply research into practice, to promote the quality of services as well as to teach and mentor colleagues to develop nursing care.





Differences

- There was a difference on two competencies.
- First, the APNs are not allowed to make a medical diagnosis in other countries than Estonia (to a limited extent) and Lithuania. However, they can identify, assess and analyse changes in the patients' health condition and implement relevant measures/interventions. They also assess if the patients have tentative diagnosis/differential diagnosis.
- Second, medical prescribing was not included in all programmes or it was a separate course. Only in one institution, part of the nurse prescriber education is integrated in the APN programme.

Conclusions

- Although varying in length and clinical training implementation type, the programmes met the recommended competencies for APN nursing programs. However, attention should be focused on identifying clinical training in the programme to demonstrate the increased competencies in advanced, direct patient care.
- **Nurse educators who teach the future nurse practitioners (NPs) are the driving force behind the training of skilled and competent NPs and it is crucial that the educators' have the skills and knowledge to assess competencies needed in NP's work.**



As part of our activities, we have organized intensive course for APN Educators on *May/June* 2024





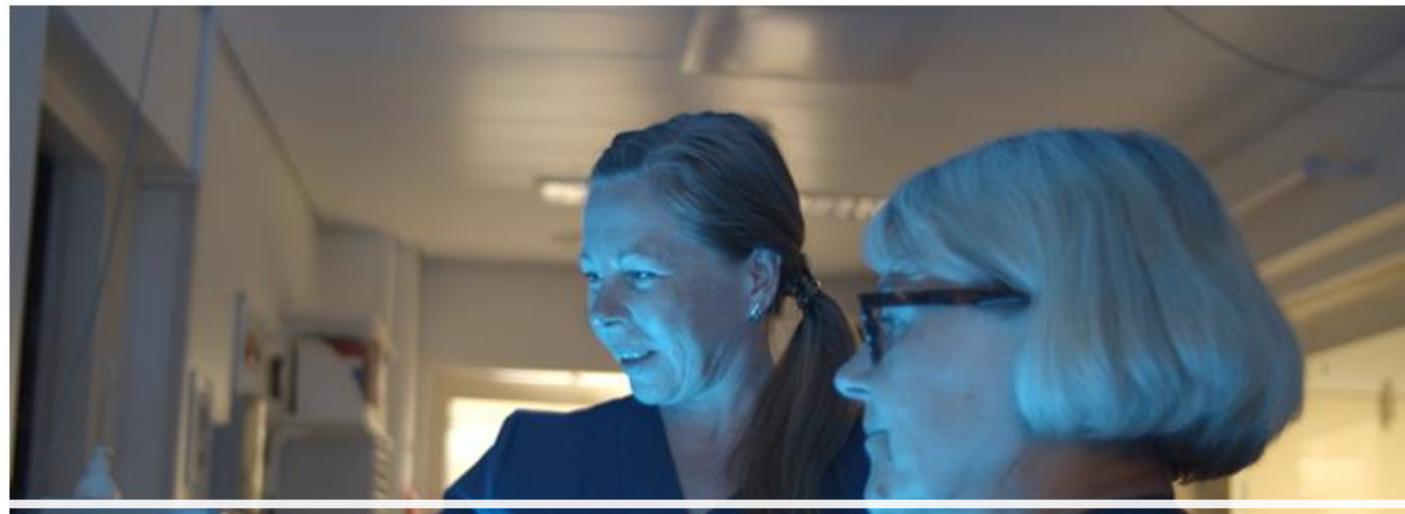
Nordic/Baltic
Advanced Practice Nursing
Educators network



Nordplus



[ABOUT](#) [NEWS](#) [PUBLICATIONS](#) [PARTNERS](#) [EVENTS](#) [TOOLKIT](#)



Today we launch a toolkit for APN educators



Toolkit is available on our website

<https://nordicapnedu.turkuamk.fi/>

- You can print it or read in on browser



1

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE: ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING EDUCATIONAL TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Foreword

As healthcare continues to evolve rapidly due to technological advancements, emerging health challenges and shifts in patient care models, the demand for highly skilled nursing professionals has never been greater. Specifically, there has been a surge in demand for Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) equipped to navigate these complexities. APNs are pivotal in delivering high-quality care, leading teams and innovating healthcare practices. This underscores the necessity for education that aligns with the current healthcare landscape and is also visionary, anticipating the needs and challenges of the future.

The healthcare sector is facing a severe and worsening staff shortage which threatens to undermine care delivery and patient outcomes. This crisis emphasises the urgent need for innovative solutions to attract and retain healthcare professionals. APNs represent a crucial part of this solution, offering a pathway for career advancement that enhances the attractiveness of the nursing profession. Their advanced skills and leadership capabilities position them to make substantial contributions to healthcare delivery, addressing both current challenges and future demands.



2.6.2024

Next?

Express exchange programme for
APN Students

Intensive course for APN students



I wish you a
great day with
us

I hope to meet you also in
the future



Nordic/Baltic
Advanced Practice Nursing
Educators network



Nordplus



Nordic/Baltic
Advanced Practice Nursing
Educators network



In co-operation with:



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
FACULTY OF NURSING



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET



HÖGSKOLAN ÅÅLAND
ÅLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



UNIVERSITY
OF OSLO



AARHUS
UNIVERSITET
HEALTH



LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY
OF HEALTH SCIENCES



2.6.2024