

**Scottish Academic Heads of Nursing  
Council of Deans and Heads of UK University Faculties for Nursing and Health  
Professions**

**Response to the consultation paper on the merger of the Scottish Further Education  
Funding Council and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council**

This joint response from the Scottish Academic Heads of Nursing (SHAN) and the Council of Deans and Heads of UK University Faculties for Nursing and Health Professions (CoD) focuses on the issues surrounding the future funding mechanisms for nursing and midwifery education in Scotland, which are related to aspects of this consultation.

We would make the following observations and comments:

1. SHAN and CoD are concerned that Scottish Ministers make decisions shortly as to the future funding for the nursing and midwifery pre-registration education provision currently contracted by the Scottish Executive Health Department. The current contracts with seven HEIs expire in September 2006.
2. We note from paragraph 68 of the consultation document and from section 5 of the consultation draft Tertiary Education (Scotland) Bill that it is proposed to add a power in the new legislation which will allow Scottish Ministers to invest additional funds – beyond the grant funds available to the new body – to expand capacity in particular courses or areas of study to meet Executive priorities in specific areas such as teacher education or the healthcare professions.
3. We would welcome this being implemented to fund existing nursing and midwifery provision after the current contracts expire. We note the powers and conditions attached to such additional funding as laid out in clauses 5 (2), 5 (3) and 5 (5) of the draft Bill. We consider that these, taken together with the quality assurance arrangements for higher education in Scotland as a whole and the quality assurance undertaken by NHS Education for Scotland on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Council, will give considerable powers to Scottish Ministers to influence the nature and quality of such provision.
4. SHAN and CoD believe there a number of anomalies in the current funding for nursing and midwifery education in Scotland, many of which stem from the competitive tendering process carried out in the mid 1990s in a very different political environment. In addition no significant recognition has been made of the increased resource demand arising from the change towards degree rather than diploma outcomes. We have noted the work undertaken in England via the J.M Consulting benchmarking project commissioned by the Department of Health, which has recommended benchmark student prices for nursing and allied health profession education commissioned by the Workforce Directorates of the Strategic Health Authorities.

5. SHAN and CoD believe a similar approach should be adopted to determine the appropriate funding level for all nursing and midwifery education in Scotland to be funded via the mechanism of 'additional funding' to the merged Funding Council.

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