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SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS  
SUID-AFRIKAANSE INSTITUUT VIR RASSEVERHOUDINGS

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COLOURED GIRLS AND THE NURSING PROFESSION

Increased attention is being given by Government and Hospital authorities to the need for a larger supply of Coloured nurses, and for further facilities for their training.

Special emphasis has been given to these matters by the reports of certain Government Committees from which the following references are taken:-

Hospital Survey Committee (1927):-

Paragraphs 69-81 recommend a system of graded Non-European nursing and health assistants with central, fully-equipped hospitals to spread modern medical and health measures.

Paragraphs 84-87 recommend that proper provision be made for all the full training of Non-European Nurses and Midwives.

The following resolution of the South African Trained Nurses' Association (1927) shows how rapidly and how far informed opinion has travelled:-

"This meeting of the Central Board of the S.A. Trained Nurses' Association strongly urges all Hospital Boards in South Africa, where material for training Non-European nurses exists, to apply without delay to their respective Medical Councils for registration as Training Schools, and that proper facilities be provided for carrying out the Council's regulations in order that Non-European nurses may be allowed to sit for examination."

and a meeting of the same Association in Cape Town, June 1934, passed the following further resolution:-

"that the Minister for Public Health be requested to arrange, in consultation with the Provincial Administration or otherwise, that it shall be compulsory on selected Hospital Boards to make provision, within a period of two years, for the full training of Non-European nurses, save where the Boards can satisfy the Minister that circumstances make such provision impossible."

At a meeting of the Continuation Committee of the Conference on Rural Nursing convened by Their Excellencies at Government House, Pretoria on 27th September, 1934, the following resolutions were passed:-

- "That this Conference is impressed with the necessity of providing as soon as possible an adequate nursing service in rural areas, and considers that with the introduction of such a service provision should be made for the training of additional nurses and midwives, both European and Non-European."
- "That this Conference considers that such a service should be organised on a National basis."
- "That this Conference recommends that, with the establishment of a nursing service in rural areas, a Committee or committees should be established to assist the authorities in co-ordinating this service with the work undertaken by charitable bodies so as to prevent overlapping."
- "That this Conference believing that the existing facilities for the training of Non-European nurses are inadequate, recommends that further provision be made for the full training of Bantu, Coloured, and Indian nurses, as well as for the training of nurse aids."
- "That it be recommended that the scheme for medical services in Native Reserves and Locations, for which medical aids are about to be trained, should also include provision for Native nurses and nurse aids."
- "This Conference welcomes the Government's announcement that it intends to develop medical services in the Native Reserves and Locations, and suggests that the Government can take initial steps by using existing medical Missions and by assisting the Missions to employ nurses and nurse aids for the purpose."
- "That this meeting expresses its appreciation of the policy advocated by the Department of Public Health that the Government establish a Rural District Nursing Service, but would respectfully urge that until such be established the Government should extend financial assistance to existing organisations for the extension of their rural services, and a sum be included for that purpose in the Estimates for 1935."

A number of municipalities are employing Non-European nurses for urban location work.. Also many of the General hospitals are employing Non-European trained nurses in their Non-European wards. Child Welfare Societies and Nursing Associations are also looking for Coloured Nurses to carry health services to their own people.

It seems therefore that nursing - both general and midwifery - is likely in future to offer greater prospects of a career for Coloured young women. Heads of Coloured Institutions, and those concerned with the education of Coloured girls, are urged to turn the attention of suitable pupils to this promising field of service.

Many Coloured girls in the upper classes of Coloured schools, and some who fail their teacher-training examinations, express a wish "to be a nurse". Ignorance as to the training required, and of the various nursing certificates, so often result in disappointed hopes, that it may be helpful to publish the following statement for general information.

### NURSING QUALIFICATIONS

#### A. Registrable by the Medical Council

There are four distinct sections of the nursing profession:-

- (a) Medical and Surgical
- (b) Mental
- (c) Nursing of Mental Defectives
- (d) Midwifery.

The qualifications for the four sections are quite separate and distinct, but all are subject to control by the South African Medical Council.

(It should be noted that this Council came into existence on January 1st, 1929, under the Medical, Dental and Pharmacy Act of 1928, and took over the powers and functions of the four provincial Medical Councils, which no longer exist.)

Certain nurses who have obtained certificates as Children's nurses overseas have had these registered by the South African Medical Council.

#### 1. MEDICAL AND SURGICAL

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in the Medical and Surgical wards of recognised training schools, and who have passed a recognised examination.

Pupil Nurses: No person shall be admitted for training in a training school recognised by the Council unless -

- (a) (i) she produces a certificate of having satisfactorily completed the seventh standard; or
- (ii) a certificate of a higher standard;
- (Should she possess neither of the above, she shall be required to pass an examination in general knowledge conducted by the hospital authorities equal to that prescribed for the seventh standard at a primary school.)
- (b) she produces proof that she has reached the age of at least 18 years;
- (c) she produces a certificate of good health;
- (d) she submits a certificate of good character signed by two responsible persons to the satisfaction of the training school concerned.

Training: If the training school has a minimum daily average of 40 occupied beds, the period of training required is 9,040 working hours but not more than 10 hours in any one day.

If the training school has a minimum daily average of 15 occupied beds, the period of training required is 11,296 working hours but not more than 10 hours in any one day.

Exemption from Training: A pupil nurse being a registered mental nurse shall be exempted from 50 per cent of the training required by these rules, provided the matron or assistant matron under whom she trained to qualify as a mental nurse was registered as a medical and surgical nurse. Otherwise, she shall be exempted from 25 per cent of her training.

A pupil nurse being the holder of a certificate as a children's nurse recognised by the Council shall similarly be exempted from 50 per cent of the training required by these rules.

## 2. MENTAL

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in the mental wards of a recognised training school and who have passed a recognised examination.

Pupil Nurses: No person shall be admitted for training in a training school recognised by the Council without submitting:-

- (a) (i) A certificate of having satisfactorily completed the seventh standard of a primary school; or
- (ii) a certificate of higher standard.  
(If unable to submit either of the above, an applicant for admission shall be required to pass an examination in general knowledge conducted by the hospital authorities equal to that prescribed for the seventh standard of a primary school).
- (b) Proof of having reached the age of at least eighteen years.
- (c) A certificate of good health and fitness for the work of a nurse.
- (d) A certificate of good character signed by two responsible persons to the satisfaction of the training school concerned.

### Training:

The period of training for candidates for the certificate of competence in mental nursing shall be 9,040 working hours.

### Exemption from Training:

A pupil nurse registered as a medical and surgical nurse or as a children's nurse, shall be exempted from 50 per cent of the training required by these rules, and shall only be required to pass the final examination in mental nursing.

A nurse who holds the certificate in the nursing of mental defectives shall be eligible to sit for the final examination in mental nursing provided he has completed one whole year of training and attendance at lectures in an approved institution for the treatment of mental disorder.

## 3. MENTAL DEFECTIVES:

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in the mental defectives' wards of recognised training schools and who have passed a recognised examination.

Pupil Nurses: Rules for admission to training schools similar to those required for Mental Nurses.

Training: The period of training for the certificate of competence in the nursing of mental defectives shall be 9,040 working hours.

Exemption from Training

A pupil nurse registered as a medical and surgical nurse or as a children's nurse shall be exempted from 50 per cent of the training required by these rules, and shall only be required to pass the final examination in the nursing of mental defectives.

A nurse who holds the certificate in mental nursing shall be eligible to sit as a candidate for the final examination in the nursing of mental defectives provided that he has completed one whole year of training and attendance at lectures in any approved institution for the care and treatment of the mentally defective.

4. MIDWIFERY:

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in midwifery at recognised training schools, and who have passed the necessary examination.

Pupil Midwives: No person shall be admitted for training in a training school recognised by the Council unless -

- (a) (i) she produces a certificate of having satisfactorily completed the sixth standard of a primary school; or
- (ii) she produces a certificate of higher standard; (Should she possess neither of the above, she shall be required to pass an examination in general knowledge conducted by the hospital authorities equal to that prescribed for the sixth standard of a primary school).
- (b) she produces proof that she has reached the age of 21;
- (c) she produces a certificate of good health;
- (d) she submits a certificate of good character signed by two responsible persons to the satisfaction of the training school concerned.

Training: The period of training of candidates for the certificate of competence shall be -

- (a) six months for a candidate already registered as a medical and surgical nurse;
- (b) twelve months for all other candidates

It should be clearly understood that all the foregoing conditions are minima, and that hospitals differ as to further educational requirements, the character of the further training given and the length of the period of training.

There are in South African several hospitals which prepare Non-European candidates for certificates of the Medical Council in General Nursing and others which prepare for the certificate in Midwifery. Particulars of those will be found on the accompanying schedule.

No hospitals in South Africa today prepare Non-European candidates for the certificates for Mental Nurses, and Nurses of Mental Defectives. No hospitals in South Africa prepare nurses of any race for the special "Children's Nurse" Certificate, though such certificates obtained overseas may be registered here.

There are facilities in South Africa for European nurses to have special training in mothercraft. These facilities are not at present open to Non-European nurses.

It is hoped that such facilities may be arranged.

Registered Midwives may, if they obtain the proper training, sit for the "Health Visitor" examination of the Royal Sanitary Institute. The first experiment in the training of a Non-European nurse for this qualification, which will greatly add to her value as a District nurse, is at present nearing completion and we may hope for an extension of such facilities in the near future.

#### B. Hospital Certificates

Many hospitals issue Hospital Certificates to Non-European nurses trained by them. Those who have gained these certificates are usually called nurse-aids to distinguish them from the fully qualified nurses. In most cases nurse-aids learn a great deal about nursing and health work and the course is to be recommended to those girls who

- (a) Have not the standard of education required as a preliminary to the full training, or
- (b) Cannot obtain a vacancy in the full-training hospitals, or
- (c) Do not wish to take the full course.

Girls and their guardians should however understand that nurse-aids are not likely to receive as good salaries as fully trained nurses; and also that in general the fully trained and registered nurse gets preference when an appointment is being made.

Girls intending to take up nursing training are urged to consider very carefully their intention as to later employment before deciding on the hospital to which they make application. If they intend afterwards to seek employment in or live in a rural area, they will be well advised to try to obtain admission to a hospital working in an area where the local conditions and language are similar to those they will have round them afterwards.

The qualifications of health and character should be seriously considered before a girl enters on nursing training.

Good general health is essential which means that suitable diet, sleeping conditions, and exercise must have been arranged for the years before entering upon nursing training. Many otherwise suitable girls have to give up nursing training because their health, not having been built up in this way, is not sound enough; others because their feet, not having been regularly exercised, cannot stand the strain of long standing.

Nursing training also requires much patience, self-sacrifice and readiness to do disagreeable tasks with good-will. If girls have not the determination to persevere through the training in spite of difficulties, they should look elsewhere for a profession. There is no profession in which a woman can do more for those around her than that of a nurse; but like all other lives of helpfulness to others the best can only come from a spirit of desire to serve and help.

Wherever possible it is well to take Standard VIII in an educational institution before commencing nursing training. The value of a good preliminary education will be felt by a probationer right through her training; the institutional life is a useful introduction to hospital life; and it is only with this qualification that it is possible to take the Medical Council certificates. A girl who has passed a 2nd Year Teacher's Course is considered to have passed Standard VIII. Those proposing nursing training should be encouraged to take the General Certificate before entering on a midwifery course.

Though at present no certificate in General Health Training is available in South Africa the teaching of healthy ways of living is a real part of the usefulness of every nurse and those who have a good teacher's certificate are therefore well fitted to take up nursing training.

Examinations of the Red Cross Society and of the St. John's Ambulance Society in simple Home Nursing and First Aid are open to all who get the required training. These certificates do not qualify the holder to take up nursing as a profession but they are a useful addition to ordinary qualifications.

This memorandum has been especially prepared to help parents, missionaries and teachers who are considering nursing training as a possibility for their girls. The accompanying schedule attempts to give as complete a list as possible of the hospitals in the Union of South Africa which are training Non-European girls for this profession. It is possible that there are inaccuracies or omissions in the list and this Institute will be glad to have corrections where necessary. The list will be revised from time to time.

At present few hospitals make special arrangements for the training of Coloured Probationers. St. Francis' Hospital, Aliwal North does so and the Training Department, St. Monica's Nursing Home, Cape Town was established especially for the training of Coloured girls in Midwifery.

Most Mission Hospitals which take Non-European probationers for training will consider applications from suitable Coloured girls.

It is to be hoped that in the immediate future definite provision will be made for Coloured probationers in some of the hospitals of the Cape Province.

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#### SCHEDULE OF HOSPITALS PROVIDING TRAINING FACILITIES FOR COLOURED PROBATIONERS.

Care has been exercised to make this schedule as accurate as possible but in all cases those wishing definite and full information should apply to the Matron of the hospital concerned.

In most hospitals giving general training a small honorarium is paid monthly to the probationer while in training. In Midwifery hospitals an entrance fee is charged. Board and residence and in most cases uniform is provided. Books usually have to be bought by the probationer and where a Medical Council examination is taken there is an entrance fee for this. It is important that application should be made to the hospital to which entry is desired at an early date - at least six months before the probationer wishes to enter. Most hospitals have long waiting lists and valuable time is lost if there is a period of waiting after the preliminary education standard has been reached.

Parents and others are urged to send their girls to some suitable Institution during any such waiting time, as every further stage in preliminary training bears good results in the later work. Often a period of aimlessness and disorganisation during waiting has been found to be the reason for lack of success in the hospital training.

The Honorary Organiser, Women's Section, of this Institute will be glad to give any further advice and assistance to girls wishing to enter on nursing as a profession.

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HOSPITALS WITHIN THE UNION OF S. AFRICA

HOSPITALS WHICH PREPARE FOR THE MEDICAL COUNCIL  
CERTIFICATE IN GENERAL NURSING

Cape Province

Victoria Hospital, Lovedale.  
Holy Cross Mission Hospital, P.O. Flagstaff.  
Umlamli Hospital, Herschel.

Natal

American Board Hospital, Durban.  
St. Mary's Hospital, Mariannhill.

O.F.S.

None.

Transvaal

Jane Furse Memorial Hospital, P.O. Middelburg.

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HOSPITALS WHICH PREPARE FOR THE MIDWIFERY EXAMINATION  
OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL

Cape Province

St. Monica's Nursing Home, Cape Town.

Natal

American Board Hospital, Durban  
Kwa Magwaza Hospital, Melmoth.

O.F.S.

None

Transvaal.

Bridgman Memorial Hospital, Johannesburg

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HOSPITALS WHICH PREPARE FOR AN "HOSPITAL" GENERAL CERTIFICATE  
NOT REGISTERED BY THE MEDICAL COUNCIL

Cape Province

St. Michael's Hospital, Bathlaros.  
Nessie Knight Mem. Hospital. Sulenkama, P.O. Qumbu  
Wesleyan Mission Hospital, Shawbury  
St. Francis' Hospital, Aliwal North  
The Hospital, St. Cuthbert's, Tsolo,  
The Hospital, St. Matthews, Keiskama Hoek  
Holy Cross Mission Hospital, P.O. Flagstaff.  
Mission Hospital, Mt. Coke.

Natal

Kwa Magwaza Hospital, Melmoth

St. Mary's Hospital, Mariannhill  
Enhlonhlweni Hospital, P.O. Ladysmith.

O.F.S.

None

Transvaal.

Jane Furse Memorial Hospital, Middelburg. Tvl.  
Holyrood Hospital, P.O. Burntop, via Piet Retief.  
Princess Alice Nursing Home, Johannesburg.  
(Children's work)



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