

# Growing a specialism through education: wound care education 5 years on

## KEY WORDS

- ▶ Curricula
- ▶ Higher education
- ▶ Pan-European initiatives
- ▶ Wound care

In a previous review of wound care education, the author explored the challenges of providing multidisciplinary teaching and learning (Holloway, 2014). The author concluded that there needs to be recognition of the strengths different professional groups can offer and improved collaboration between clinicians, industry, wound care organisation and Higher Education Institutions to facilitate better multidisciplinary team working. The notion of reactive versus proactive education was also explored and the supposition was that both approaches are needed (Holloway, 2014). This follow-up article will present a re-appraisal of the evidence as well as a discussion of pan-European initiatives in relation to developing wound care curricula.

In the last year, the National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) for England has been commissioned to improve care in three clinical areas (Pressure Ulcers, Lower Limb Ulcers and Surgical Wounds) (Academic Health Science Network [AHSN], 2019). This programme has already raised the profile of wound care in the UK, with education identified as a central need within the strategy (Journal of Wound Care, 2018). The NWCSP's Education and Workforce Enabler Workstream addresses this in two ways: seeking to identify competencies for individual professional roles within wound care as well as identifying the current provision of education in relation to wound assessment, prevention and management. The purpose is to identify what is already available but also if there are any gaps in the current provision. The Workstream's focus is on free-to-access, online, 'bite-sized' learning rather than formal programmes of study provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The author's previous review of wound care education in the UK identified 21 HEIs, which provided approximately 36 courses and covered a range of wound care topics; just over half of which were at Level 7 (Masters level) (Holloway, 2014). The author explored a number of areas and expressed the view that wound care should be seen as a multidisciplinary specialism, hence the need for multidisciplinary education, which indeed was

the case for many of the courses being provided. If the view is taken that a 'specialism', in its broadest sense is something which focuses primarily on a particular subject, then the existing wound care courses were certainly meeting that requirement. However, it should be borne in mind that the content of the courses ranges from focusing on one specific wound type to those that examine the breadth of wound healing and tissue repair. At a time when the NHS is faced with unprecedented financial and staffing demands (Triggle, 2018), there is a need for data to help underpin the importance of healthcare education. Particularly, if we wish to see the continuation of wound care programmes in terms of NHS staff being released and funded to continue their academic development. Published evidence on the impact of specialist programmes of study is emerging that could help to fortify the importance of postgraduate inter-professional education (Holloway et al, 2017). However, further evaluations are needed to demonstrate how education is helping to grow the specialism of wound care, with a particular emphasis on patient-focused clinical impact and the benefits to the healthcare service.

## WOUND CARE PROGRAMME PROVISION

To identify the existing wound care programmes

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of studies being provided in the UK, Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI), a Google search was undertaken using a combination of search terms including; 'wound care education, 'wound management education', 'wound healing courses' and 'tissue viability courses'. A separate search of specific HEIs known to provide wound care education was also undertaken, as the internet search did not identify all the programmes. From that initial search, the information was narrowed down to HEIs that provided programmes of study leading to an award, i.e. Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert), Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) and Masters, as well as Degree or Masters level modules provided on a stand-alone basis.

*Table 1* provides a summary of the results and shows that there are 25 HEIs, providing 39 wound care programmes. These figures are a slight increase compared with the previous review (Holloway, 2014). Whilst an in-depth review of the curricula for each programme was not undertaken, it appears from the title of the programme that the majority are designed to cover a wide syllabus, with fewer focusing on specific wound types. Several HEIs offered a professional practice route with the option of focusing on tissue viability to gain a specialist award. Many of the programmes were designed for all healthcare professionals rather than just nurses.

There is no doubt that there are a range of wound care programmes provided that meet the needs of all healthcare professionals. In terms of the level of education being provided, HEIs are still offering programme options at both Level 6 (Degree Level) and Level 7 (Masters Level). Based on the focus of the programmes, it could also be argued that these are certainly promoting and cultivating wound care/tissue viability as a specialism. The challenge for HEIs is knowing what the impact of these programmes are as this is difficult to measure. Whilst surveys, such as the 'Destination of Leavers from Higher Education' (DLHE), can collate data on what graduates are doing 6 months after graduating, this is confined to employment, further study, travel or 'something else' (HESA, 2018). This survey does not take into account other metrics such as publications, presentations, working as

part of a specialist organisation/association or other esteemed academic activities. This is a gap that HEIs could potentially fill in terms of ongoing communication with their alumni to establish the range of outcomes our students go on to achieve.

## PAN-EUROPEAN CURRICULA INITIATIVES

### Physicians curriculum

The previous review of wound care education discussed the development of a curriculum for physicians that the European Wound Management Association (EWMA) was leading on (Holloway, 2014). Since that time the curriculum has been finalised and has been approved by the Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS) in 2018 (European Union of Medical Specialities, 2017). This is now recognised as the official European Training Requirement (ETR) for specialisation in wound healing. Subsequently, this has led to the development of the European Association of Fellows in Wound Healing (EAFWH) which will offer educational programmes based on the UEMS approved curriculum (EAFWH, 2018).

### Post-registration nurses curricula

EWMA is also currently working on a series of European curriculum for post-registration qualification of nurses. The initiative aims to support more standardised content in the existing and future educational programmes for European Qualifications Framework [EQF] Level 5–7 programmes of study. The first two curricula (EQF Level 5 and 6) have been published (Pokorná et al, 2017; Probst et al, 2019). EQF Level 7 is currently in the process of being developed with the hope that it will be available in 2020. EWMA is collaborating closely with European organisations, such as the European Specialist Nurses Organisation (ESNO) as well as other educational institutions, to explore strategies to implement these curricula. Initial experiences of adopting the EQF Level 5 and 6 curricula have been reported at conferences such as EWMA, Gothenburg 2019 (Verheyen-Cronau, 2019; Bobbink and Probst, 2019). The impact of the implementation of these is yet to be evaluated.

**Table 1. University-based wound care courses in the UK, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland**

Higher education institution	Wound care education courses*	Level of study/award	Duration of study (where known)
Anglia Ruskin University	Wound Management Continuing Professional Development (short course) <a href="https://aru.ac.uk/study/professional-and-short-courses/wound-management">https://aru.ac.uk/study/professional-and-short-courses/wound-management</a>	Level 6 and 7 30 credits	
Birmingham City University	Tissue Viability (Professional Practice) <a href="https://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/cpd-tissue-viability">https://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/cpd-tissue-viability</a>  Debridement and Advanced Wound Care <a href="https://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/debridement">https://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/debridement</a>	Degree (Level 6) Grad Cert/BSc (Year 1) BSc Hons (Year 2) Postgraduate (Level 7)  PG Cert (Year 1) PG Dip (Year 2) MSc (Year 3)  Level 6 and 7 20 credits	1 year 2 years  1 year 2 years 3 years
Bucks New University	Wound Care Management <a href="https://bucks.ac.uk/courses/short-course/wound-care-management">https://bucks.ac.uk/courses/short-course/wound-care-management</a>	Level 6 and 7 Non-credit bearing option	15 weeks
Cardiff University	MSc in Wound Healing and Tissue Repair <a href="https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught/courses/course/wound-healing-and-tissue-repair-msc-part-time">https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught/courses/course/wound-healing-and-tissue-repair-msc-part-time</a>  Wound Healing Foundation Modules: • Foundation in Diabetic Foot Ulcer Management • Foundation in Leg Ulcer Management • Foundation in Pressure Ulcer Management <a href="https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught/courses/standalone-modules/wound-healing-foundation-modules-he-level-6-tissue-viability">https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught/courses/standalone-modules/wound-healing-foundation-modules-he-level-6-tissue-viability</a>	MSc (8 modules + Dissertation) PG Cert (5 modules – 2 Level 6, 3 level 7) PG Dip (8 modules)  Level 6 30 credits/module	3 years Year 1 Years 1 and 2  18 weeks / module
Glasgow Caledonian University	Leg Ulcer and Management <a href="https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/modules/201819/info/?Module=M3B723915">https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/modules/201819/info/?Module=M3B723915</a>	**SCQF Level 9 20 credits	
Kings College London	Tissue Viability Course <a href="https://www1.kcl.ac.uk/teares/nmvc/external/prospectus/course_info.php?code=7KNIM717">https://www1.kcl.ac.uk/teares/nmvc/external/prospectus/course_info.php?code=7KNIM717</a>	Level 6 and 7 15 credits	
Kingston University London	BSc (Hons) Professional Practice (Tissue Viability) <a href="https://www.uwl.ac.uk/course/undergraduate/bsc-professional-practice-top-up-london?redirect=1&amp;source=course/professional-practice-top/34632&amp;start=182&amp;option=34">https://www.uwl.ac.uk/course/undergraduate/bsc-professional-practice-top-up-london?redirect=1&amp;source=course/professional-practice-top/34632&amp;start=182&amp;option=34</a>	Level 6	Up to 4 years
Liverpool John Moores University	Advancing Tissue Viability <a href="https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/study/cpd/health-and-social-care/advancing-tissue-viability">https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/study/cpd/health-and-social-care/advancing-tissue-viability</a>	Level 6 20 credits	12 weeks
Queen's University Belfast	Specialist Practice – Tissue Viability Nursing <a href="https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/study/cpd/health-and-social-care/advancing-tissue-viability">https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/study/cpd/health-and-social-care/advancing-tissue-viability</a>  PgDip Specialist Practice - Tissue Viability Nursing <a href="https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ProgrammeSpecifications/2018/pgt/detail/?org=SNAM&amp;plan=SPR-PD-TV">https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ProgrammeSpecifications/2018/pgt/detail/?org=SNAM&amp;plan=SPR-PD-TV</a>  Stand Alone Modules • Pressure Ulcer Prevention and Management • Tissue Repair and Regeneration <a href="https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofNursingandMidwifery/Study/ContinuingProfessionalDevelopment/StandAloneModules/">https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofNursingandMidwifery/Study/ContinuingProfessionalDevelopment/StandAloneModules/</a>	Graduate Diploma in Specialist Practice in Nursing Level 6 120 credits  PG Diploma Level 7  Level 3 and Level 7 20 credits	2 years  2 Years  12 weeks
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland – Dublin	Wound Management and Tissue Viability <a href="https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/postgraduate/taught-courses/wound-management-and-tissue-viability-cert/why-rcsi-dublin">https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/postgraduate/taught-courses/wound-management-and-tissue-viability-cert/why-rcsi-dublin</a>  Wound Management and Tissue Viability <a href="https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/postgraduate/taught-courses/wound-management-and-tissue-viability-dip/course-details">https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/postgraduate/taught-courses/wound-management-and-tissue-viability-dip/course-details</a>	PG Cert 30 credits  PG Diploma 60 credits	6 months part-time  1 year
National University of Ireland – Galway	Master/Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences (Wound Healing and Tissue Repair)—full time and top up <a href="http://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/taught-postgraduate-courses/wound-healing-tissue-repair.html">http://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/taught-postgraduate-courses/wound-healing-tissue-repair.html</a>	PG Diploma Masters NFQ level 9 (90 **ECTS)	1 year full-time 2 years full-time
Robert Gordon University	Wound Care <a href="https://www.rgu.ac.uk/study/courses/721-wound-care-scaf-level-9-scaf-points-15-ect-points-7-5">https://www.rgu.ac.uk/study/courses/721-wound-care-scaf-level-9-scaf-points-15-ect-points-7-5</a>	**SCQF Level 9 15 credits	
Staffordshire University	Tissue Viability <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/course/SSTF-11351.jsp">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/course/SSTF-11351.jsp</a>	Level 6 15 credits	
University of Bangor	Leg Ulcers <a href="https://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/undergrad/modules/NHS-3135">https://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/undergrad/modules/NHS-3135</a>	Level 6 20 credits	

**Table 1. University-based wound care courses in the UK, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland (continued)**

Higher education institution	Wound care education courses	Level of study/award	Duration of study (where known)
University of Bradford	Professional Healthcare Practice (Tissue Viability) <a href="https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/php-tissue-viability/">https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/php-tissue-viability/</a>  Wound Debridement <a href="https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/cpd/wound-debridement/">https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/cpd/wound-debridement/</a>	PGCert	2 years
University of Central Lancashire	Introduction to Chronic oedema Management <a href="https://www.uclan.ac.uk/courses/advcert_introduction_chronic_oedema_management.php">https://www.uclan.ac.uk/courses/advcert_introduction_chronic_oedema_management.php</a>  The Principles and Practice of Tissue Viability <a href="https://www.uclan.ac.uk/courses/nu3193_the_principles_and_practice_of_tissue_viability.php">https://www.uclan.ac.uk/courses/nu3193_the_principles_and_practice_of_tissue_viability.php</a>	Advanced certificate (Undergraduate)  Level 6 20 credits	2 semesters (8 study days)  12 weeks
University of Glasgow	Specialist Lymphoedema Management – 2 routes: • Advanced Lymphoedema Management • Specialist Lymphoedema Management <a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/medicine/nursing/cpd/slm/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/medicine/nursing/cpd/slm/</a>	Postgraduate Certificate Graduate Certificate (60 credits) or Graduate Diploma (120 credits)	
University of Huddersfield	Leg Ulcer Management (Distance Learning) <a href="https://courses.hud.ac.uk/part-time/postgraduate/leg-ulcer-management-distance-learning-masters">https://courses.hud.ac.uk/part-time/postgraduate/leg-ulcer-management-distance-learning-masters</a>  Tissue Viability and Wound Management (Distance Learning) <a href="https://courses.hud.ac.uk/part-time/postgraduate/tissue-viability-and-wound-management-distance-learning-masters">https://courses.hud.ac.uk/part-time/postgraduate/tissue-viability-and-wound-management-distance-learning-masters</a>	Level 7 30 Credits  Level 7	
University of Hertfordshire	MSc Clinical Skin Integrity and Wound Management <a href="https://www.herts.ac.uk/courses/msc-clinical-skin-integrity-and-wound-management">https://www.herts.ac.uk/courses/msc-clinical-skin-integrity-and-wound-management</a>  MSc Clinical Skin Integrity & Wound Management, (180 credits) Postgraduate Diploma Clinical Skin Integrity & Wound Management (120 credits) Postgraduate Certificate Clinical Skin Integrity & Wound Management (60 credits) Postgraduate Certificate Chronic Oedema Management.(60 credits)  Wound Management <a href="https://www.herts.ac.uk/courses/wound-management-lvl-7">https://www.herts.ac.uk/courses/wound-management-lvl-7</a>	MSc 180 credits PG Diploma 120 credits  Level 7	1 year full-time  2 to 5 years part-time
University of Nottingham	Degree level • Acute Wound Management Theory and Practice • Chronic Wound Management Theory and Practice  Masters Level • Acute Wound Management Theory and Practice • Chronic Wound Management Theory and Practice <a href="https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/continuing-professional-development/modules.aspx">https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/continuing-professional-development/modules.aspx</a>	Degree and Masters level 20 credits	
University of Plymouth	Tissue viability: core knowledge for practice (degree level) <a href="https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/university-structure/faculties/health-human-sciences/tissue-viability-core-knowledge-for-practice-degree-level">https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/university-structure/faculties/health-human-sciences/tissue-viability-core-knowledge-for-practice-degree-level</a>	Level 6 20 credits	
University of South Wales	Principles of Wound Care Module <a href="https://www.southwales.ac.uk/study/subjects/nursing-health-sciences/short-courses/wound-management/">https://www.southwales.ac.uk/study/subjects/nursing-health-sciences/short-courses/wound-management/</a>	Level 6 40 credits	13 weeks
University of Stirling	Principles of Tissue Viability Module <a href="https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/faculties/health-sciences-sport/study-with-us/continuing-professional-development-in-health-sciences/cpd/bsc-professional-practice/principles-of-tissue-viability/">https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/faculties/health-sciences-sport/study-with-us/continuing-professional-development-in-health-sciences/cpd/bsc-professional-practice/principles-of-tissue-viability/</a>  Foundation in Dermatology <a href="https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/faculties/health-sciences-sport/study-with-us/continuing-professional-development-in-health-sciences/cpd/bsc-professional-practice/dermatology-for-health-professionals/">https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/faculties/health-sciences-sport/study-with-us/continuing-professional-development-in-health-sciences/cpd/bsc-professional-practice/dermatology-for-health-professionals/</a>	*SCQF Level 9 20 credits  *SCQF Level 9 40 credits	15 weeks  30 weeks
University of Wolverhampton	Tissue Viability <a href="https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/our-schools-and-institutes/faculty-of-education-health-and-wellbeing/institute-of-health/continuing-professional-development/stand-alone-modules/level-7-modules/tissue-viability-7hw067/">https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/our-schools-and-institutes/faculty-of-education-health-and-wellbeing/institute-of-health/continuing-professional-development/stand-alone-modules/level-7-modules/tissue-viability-7hw067/</a>	Level 7 20 credits	
Wrexham Glyndŵr University	Principles of Wound Care <a href="https://www.glyndwr.ac.uk/en/ShortCourses/PrinciplesofWoundCare/">https://www.glyndwr.ac.uk/en/ShortCourses/PrinciplesofWoundCare/</a>	Level 6 20 credits	

\*(based on an internet research 29.07.2019)

\*\*SCQF Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

\*\*\*ECTS European Credit Transfer System



## CONCLUSION

It is clear that the range of programmes of study for wound care education has been sustained, with a slight increase in the provision of the number of courses at Level 6 and 7 compared with the provision five years ago. There have also been some significant developments in wound curricula across Europe, where we are beginning to see some standardisation in terms of what healthcare professionals should know based on the level of education. In relation to wound care education for physicians, advancements can be seen in terms of being recognised as a specialist in wound healing; for nurses, there are professional practice programmes that allow individuals to specialise in tissue viability. So wound care education is growing in terms of developing individuals to be specialists. Moving forwards, we need to collect and present evidence of the impact those specialists have on patients with wounds to support the importance of education.

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