



# Cervical Screening Education Prospectus 2021-2022



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála  
National Screening Service

CervicalCheck  
AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAGTHÁSTÁLA CEIRBHEACS  
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME

# Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Eligibility requirements for the cervical screening education programme	3
3. Organisation and delivery of the theoretical component of the education programme	3
4. Supporting learning in the clinical setting	4
5. Support and education for clinically responsible doctors and supervising sampletakers	4
6. Learning outcomes of the cervical screening education programme	5
7. Course information	6
8. Feedback from the cervical screening education programme	7

# 1. Introduction

CervicalCheck – The National Cervical Screening Programme is a quality assured, organised and population-based screening programme that is managed by the National Screening Service (NSS).

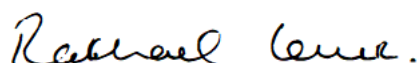
Cervical screening education has been identified as critical in the provision of a quality assured cervical screening programme to the women\* of Ireland. All sample takers engaged in cervical screening should be appropriately educated by completing an accredited evidence-based training programme. It is the duty of the doctor with clinical responsibility to ensure that all sample takers in their service are appropriately educated and competent.

CervicalCheck's Education and Training Unit has developed and delivers an accredited education programme for health professionals in line with the recommendations of the *Standards for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening Quality Assurance in Primary Care and Other Cervical Screening Settings* (CervicalCheck, 2020) and the *CervicalCheck HPV Primary Screening: Eligibility Framework/ Reference Guide for GPs and Clinics* (Cervical, 2020). There is both a theoretical and clinical component in this education programme. The theoretical component is provided in partnership with the Irish College of General Practitioners, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University College Cork and the National University of Ireland, Galway. The clinical component should take place in the clinical area where the trainee sample taker (hereafter known as trainee) is based. A CervicalCheck appointed Clinical Trainer is assigned to each trainee to support the clinical aspects of education.

The continuation of cervical screening and building trust in our CervicalCheck screening programme is of crucial importance. Recently, CervicalCheck changed from a primary cytology programme to a primary HPV programme. Sample taking is an extension in the scope of practice for nurses and midwives. Nurses and midwives must be theoretically and clinically competent to expand their scope of practice to provide cervical screening consultations. Healthcare professionals need to engage in continuing professional development in order to ensure women participating in the programme make an informed choice and are fully informed around the benefits and limitations of a cervical screening programme. Healthcare professionals need to give consistent information to women and normalise the conversation around HPV infection. The challenging but exciting prospect of turning cervical cancer into a rare disease in Ireland will require a strengthened focus and skilled leadership. We need to work together and make every contact count with women to promote screening.

Registered sample takers should participate in CervicalCheck clinical updates at least once every three years. Clinical updates will be delivered through face-to-face meetings or through the online National Screening Service Learning Portal and CervicalCheck website to maintain continuous professional development. All sample takers must maintain their professional registration for the period of time that they are registered with CervicalCheck.

We hope that you will find an education programme that suits your learning needs. Places on courses are limited, therefore early application is advisable.



Dr Rachael Comer

National Screening Service (NSS) Education and Training Manager CervicalCheck – The National Cervical Screening Programme

\* Please note where we refer to 'women', we mean women and anyone with a cervix

## 2. Eligibility requirements for the cervical screening education programme

- All sample takers undertaking cervical screening must be qualified and registered with the Irish Medical Council or the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI); this includes the General Nurse Division and Midwives Division on the NMBI Register
- The Clinically Responsible Doctor (CRD) who holds a contract with CervicalCheck must sign the [Registration Form for Health Professionals & Supervision Agreement for Training](#) as part of the college online application process. The applicant must work or have access to supervised experience in a clinical setting which offers cervical screening consultations. It is the responsibility of the CRD to be the supervisor or delegate this role to another suitably qualified sample taker (Please refer to Section 4 for further information)
- Nurses/midwives and Doctors must register with CervicalCheck prior to commencing on the education programme. CervicalCheck stores all sample takers' details on the CervicalCheck Sample Takers Register and each sample taker is provided with a registration number, the Sample taker I.D. This unique I.D. number is linked to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) PIN and the Medical Council Registration Number for doctors. Applicants must undertake an introductory online module called [CervicalCheck in Practice](#) which outlines the requirements and operation of the programme as part of their registration process
- Applicants must possess the competencies recognised at Level 8 on the National Qualification Authority of Ireland framework (NQA)
- Applicants must possess a competent level of information technology literacy

## 3. Organisation and delivery of the theoretical component of the education programme

CervicalCheck has developed an accredited stand-alone Cervical Screening Education programme in partnership with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), University College Cork, the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP). Please refer to Section 7, which details the closing date of applications and contact details. The Cervical Screening Education programme contains both a theoretical and clinical component in line with the recommendations of the *Quality Assurance in Primary Care and Other Cervical Screening Settings (2020)*, *Standards for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening (2020)* and the *CervicalCheck HPV Primary Screening: Eligibility Framework / Reference Guide for GPs and Clinics (2020)*. This ensures that the service is safe, effective and available to all eligible women in the Republic of Ireland.

Once a sample taker is registered with CervicalCheck, they should undertake an accredited education programme to become theoretically and clinically competent in the cervical screening consultation and the sample taking technique. Registered nurses, midwives and doctors should first complete the theoretical component with one of the affiliated education providers, followed by a period of supervised and unsupervised practical training.

All of the education providers that deliver the Cervical Screening Education Programme use a blended learning approach which consists of online learning technologies with face-to-face sessions in the clinical practice. Due to COVID-19 social restrictions, it is not known if face-to-face teaching in the classroom will be permitted.

## 4. Supporting learning in the clinical setting

### 4.1 Sample taking Supervisor

Practical training should take place in the clinical area where the trainee is based. The Sample Taker Supervisor (hereafter known as Supervisor) must be a nurse/midwife or doctor who is a competent experienced sample taker and has engaged in continuing professional development in order to keep up-to-date with changes in practice.

### 4.2 Organisation and delivery of the clinical component of the education programme

- All students are appointed a Clinical Trainer who facilitates and supports the trainee in clinical practice
- The trainee's first recorded cervical screening test should be taken under the supervision of the CRD or Supervisor or Clinical Trainer
- The Clinical Trainer will deem the trainee competent once the *Sample Taking Technique Competency Assessment* is completed as part of the clinical component of the cervical screening education programme
- A clinical workbook will be given to all trainees on commencement of the course. This workbook outlines the roles and responsibilities of the trainee, supervisor and the clinical trainer. The workbook also contains a supervision skills worksheet and a screening test audit template that needs to be completed and signed by your supervisor and clinical trainer

## 5. Support and education for clinically responsible doctors and supervising sampletakers

The aim of the programme is to equip and update healthcare professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to support best practice in relation to the practical elements of the cervical screening consultation. We appreciate that general practice is extremely busy and endeavour to deliver bite size pieces of education. CervicalCheck can suggest the following:

- Sample takers that need information on the HPV programme and how to consent effectively, can access an e-learning module with a number of video presentations which is available through the National Screening Service Learning Portal (<https://nssresources.ie/>) and CervicalCheck website to maintain continuous professional development
- CervicalCheck also circulates a monthly newsletter highlighting updates and changes to practice. Sample takers can register to receive this update by contacting [carol.dermody@screeningservice.ie](mailto:carol.dermody@screeningservice.ie)
- Sample takers can request one-to-one support from CervicalCheck to address quality issues

## 6. Learning outcomes of the cervical screening education programme

On successful completion of the education programme, the trainee sample taker will be able to:

- Critically discuss the principles of screening and demonstrate their knowledge of The National Cervical Screening Programme policy
- Demonstrate their knowledge of CervicalCheck and provide information on the benefits and limitations of cervical screening in order for women to make an informed choice about participating in the screening programme
- Describe accurately the anatomy and physiology of the female reproductive organs
- Describe the epidemiology and disease processes associated with cervical cancer
- Demonstrate competence in the consultation process and the taking of a cervical screening sample
- Demonstrate the ability to document the findings on history and examination
- Provide evidence of failsafe procedures and dispatch cervical screening samples appropriately
- Interpret laboratory cervical screening test results accurately and apply screening recommendations as appropriate to each situation
- Describe accurately the consultation process needed for women in the communication of cervical screening test results and be able to give advice on the next step of their management

## 7. Course information

### September 2021/January 2022 Cervical Screening Education Programme Screening Training Unit, CervicalCheck



#### National University of Ireland, Galway



**Course Title: Best Practice in Cervical Smear Taking**  
Level: 9 Credits: 10 Cost: €550

**Commencing Date: 8th September 2021**  
**Closing Date: 15th July 2021**

Contact Name: Catherine Meagher  
E-Mail: [Catherine.meagher@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Catherine.meagher@nuigalway.ie)  
Tel: 091 492829

Administrator: Mari Moran

E-Mail: [Mari.moran@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Mari.moran@nuigalway.ie)

Tel: 091 493740

How to apply: The application form needs to be submitted by email to [mari.moran@nuigalway.ie](mailto:mari.moran@nuigalway.ie). Information about the module can be found <https://www.nuigalway.ie/pca/bestpracticeincervicalsmeartaking/>

#### University College Cork



**Course Title: NU6158 Evidence Based Cervical Screening**  
Level: CPD Module Credits: 10  
Cost: €550 plus €35 Application Fee

**Commencing Date: 10th January 2022**  
**Closing Date: 30th October 2021**

Contact Name: Dr Serena Fitzgerald, Module Leader  
E-Mail: [serena.fitzgerald@ucc.ie](mailto:serena.fitzgerald@ucc.ie)  
Tel: 021 4901516

Contact Name: Ms Anna O'Leary, CPD Lead  
E-Mail: [anna.oleary@ucc.ie](mailto:anna.oleary@ucc.ie)  
Tel: 021 4901483

Apply on line: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/nu6158/>

#### Royal College of Surgeons Ireland



**Course Title: Clinical Nursing Cervical Sample Taking**  
Course Level: 9 Credits: 10 Cost: €550

**Commencing Date: 4th November 2021**  
**Closing Date: 4th October 2021**

Contact Name: Dr Sherly George  
E-Mail: [sherlygeorge@rcsi.ie](mailto:sherlygeorge@rcsi.ie)  
Tel: 01 4028643

Administrator: Anne-Marie Kirby  
E-Mail: [amkirby@rcsi.ie](mailto:amkirby@rcsi.ie)  
Tel: 01 4022206

Apply on line: To be confirmed

#### Irish College of General Practitioners



**Course Title: Cervical Screening Education course**

**Commencing Date: 11th October 2021**  
**Closing Date: 11th September 2021**

Contact Name: Dr Noirín O'Herlihy  
E-Mail: [womenshealth@icgp.ie](mailto:womenshealth@icgp.ie)  
Tel: 01 6763705

Administrator: TBC  
E-Mail: TBC

Apply on line: [www.icgp.ie/go/courses](http://www.icgp.ie/go/courses)

Please click on this link [Prospectus – Cervical Screening Training programmes 2021 – 2022 \(cervicalcheck.ie\)](https://www.cervicalcheck.ie/prospectus) to access the Cervical Screening Education Prospectus 2021-2022.

Should you require further assistance please use the following contact details

Senior Training Coordinator: Louise Mc Kee. E-Mail: [Nessa-Louise.McKee@screeningservice.ie](mailto:Nessa-Louise.McKee@screeningservice.ie)

Senior Training Coordinator: Debbie Ramsbottom. E-Mail: [Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie](mailto:Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie)



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## 8. Feedback from the cervical screening education programme

*“As a GP Principal I felt that the course brought me right up to date with all the aspects of the National Cervical Screening Programme, both in theory and in practice. It gave me full confidence when working with and supervising other smearer takers in our practice (GP Trainees, locums, nursing staff, doing difficult smears etc.). A super course, I can only highly recommend it.”*

Dr Finnuala Brophy, completed ICGP course

*“...the course and the training were excellent, extremely well presented and highly informative. The trainers facilitate in a way which allows the students to have one to one interactions while learning skills and knowledge which can be applied to their individual situations”*

Therese Healy, Practice Nurse, completed RCSI course

Should you require further assistance please use the following contact details:

The Screening Training Unit: **061 406 564 / 406 511** or [stu@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:stu@cervicalcheck.ie)

Address: **CervicalCheck, The National Cervical Screening Programme PO Box 161, Limerick**

**Senior Training Coordinator:** Louise Mc Kee  
**E-Mail:** [Nessa-Louise.McKee@screeningservice.ie](mailto:Nessa-Louise.McKee@screeningservice.ie)

**Senior Training Coordinator:** Debbie Ramsbottom  
**E-Mail:** [Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie](mailto:Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie)





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The National Screening Service is part of the Health Service Executive. It encompasses BreastCheck – The National Breast Screening Programme, CervicalCheck – The National Cervical Screening Programme, BowelScreen – The National Bowel Screening Programme and Diabetic RetinaScreen – The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme.