



# Cervical Screening Education Prospectus 2022 - 2023



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála  
National Screening Service

CervicalCheck  
AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAGTHÁSTÁLA CEIRBHEACS  
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME

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# 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).

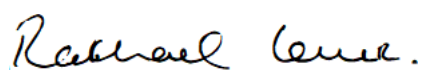
Cervical screening education has been identified as critical in the provision of a quality assured cervical screening programme to the women\* of Ireland. All sampletakers engaged in cervical screening should be appropriately educated by completing an accredited evidence-based training programme. It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

CervicalCheck's Screening 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* (CervicalCheck, 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 sampletaker (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. In March 2020, CervicalCheck changed from a primary cytology programme to a primary HPV programme. Sampletaking 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 and to take a quality screening test. 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.

There are 3 standalone modules on [National Screening Service online eLearning portal](#) that should be completed every three years to maintain continuous professional development; CervicalCheck in Practice, HPV Cervical Screening, and the Cervix Visual Assessment Guide and Recognising the Suspicious Cervix course. There is also a number of supporting documents and educational presentations on the [CervicalCheck/Health-professionals/training website](#).

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 sampletakers undertaking cervical screening must be qualified and registered with the Irish Medical Council or the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
- The Clinically Responsible Doctor (CRD) who holds a contract with CervicalCheck must sign the [Registration Form](#) 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 sampletaker (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 sampletakers' details on the CervicalCheck Sampletakers Register and each sampletaker is provided with a registration number, the Sampletaker 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 (NQAI)
- 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 (UCC), 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 sampletaker is registered with CervicalCheck, they should undertake an accredited education programme to become theoretically and clinically competent in the cervical screening consultation and the sampletaking 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 and face-to-face sessions.

## 4. Supporting learning in the clinical setting

### 4.1 Sampletaking Supervisor

Practical training should take place in the clinical area where the trainee is based. The Sampletaker Supervisor (hereafter known as Supervisor) must be a nurse/midwife or doctor who is a competent experienced sampletaker 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 trainees 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 *Clinical Screening Competency Standard* 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 self-audit.

## 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:

- Sampletakers 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)
- Sampletakers can request one-to-one support from CervicalCheck to address quality issues by emailing [stu@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:stu@cervicalcheck.ie) or phoning the Screening Training Unit on: 061 406 511 / 061 406508

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





On successful completion of the education programme, the trainee sampletaker 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 2022/January 2023 Cervical Screening Education Programme Screening Training Unit, CervicalCheck

All applications are to be made directly to the chosen academic provider below

<p><b>National University of Ireland, Galway</b></p>  <p>Course Code: NU581            Course Title: Best Practice in Cervical Smear Taking            Level: 9, Credits: 10            Cost: €550 plus €35 Application Fee            Date Open for Applications: 19/04/2022            Commencing Date: 21/09/2022            Closing Date: 15/07/2022 (or when at full capacity)            Contact: Mari Moran            E-Mail: mari.moran@nuigalway.ie            Telephone: 091 493740 (Wed-Fri 9-14)</p> <p>Apply online via:  <a href="https://www.nuigalway.ie/pca/bestpracticeincervicalsmeartaking/">https://www.nuigalway.ie/pca/bestpracticeincervicalsmeartaking/</a></p>	<p><b>University College Cork</b></p>  <p>Course Code: NU6158            Course Title: Evidence Based Cervical Screening            Level: 9, Credits: 10            Cost: €550 plus: €35 Application Fee            Date Open for Applications: 19/04/2022            Commencing Date: 30/01/2023            Closing Date: 30/10/2022 (or when at full capacity)            Contact: Dr Serena Fitzgerald (Module Coordinator)            E-Mail: serena.fitzgerald@ucc.ie            Telephone: 021 4901516</p> <p>Apply online via: <a href="#">UCC APPLY</a> page and create an account.</p> <p>UCC applicants must also complete an additional CervicalCheck application form and forward directly to <a href="mailto:stu@cervicalcheck.ie">stu@cervicalcheck.ie</a>: <a href="#">Click Here</a></p>
<p><b>Royal College of Surgeons Ireland</b></p>  <p>Course Code: C8888            Course Title: Cervical Screening            NFQ Level: 9, ECTS Credits: 10            Cost: €550            Date open for applications: 25/04/2022            Commencing Date: 6/10/22 (Athlone) and 2/11/22 (Dublin)            Closing Date: When at full capacity            Contact: Anne Marie Kirby            E-mail: amclyons@rcsi.ie            Telephone: (01) 4022206</p> <p>Apply online via:  <a href="https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/professional-cpd/nursing-and-midwifery">https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/professional-cpd/nursing-and-midwifery</a></p>	<p><b>Irish College of General Practitioners</b></p>  <p>Course Code: TBC            Course Title: TBC            Date open for applications: TBC            Commencing Date: TBC            Closing Date: TBC            Administrator:            E-mail            Telephone:            Apply online via:</p> <p>When details are finalised for the ICGP course a further update will be circulated</p>
<p><u>Should you require further assistance please contact the following in the screening training unit in CervicalCheck</u></p> <p>Screening Training Unit: <a href="mailto:stu@cervicalcheck.ie">stu@cervicalcheck.ie</a>            Louise McKee: <a href="mailto:Nessa-Louise.Mckee@screeningservice.ie">Nessa-Louise.Mckee@screeningservice.ie</a>            Debbie Ramsbottom: <a href="mailto:Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie">Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie</a>            Telephone: (061) 406511/406508</p>	

## 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 smartakers in our practice (GP Trainees, locums, nursing staff, doing difficult smears etc.). A super course, I can only highly recommend it.”*

Dr Fionnuala 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

### Anonymous feedback from 2021/2022

‘I found the course very informative and relayed in a manner that was easy to listen to and take on board. A lot of information was delivered in a short period of time’ UCC 2022

‘Really enjoyed the day, meeting the trainers and the other people on the course. Very beneficial, well done to the trainers’ NUIG 2021

‘Thank you so much for a very informative & enjoyable course. I am a novice sampletaker & found the day hugely beneficial and feel very supported going forward’ RCSI 2021

‘Course was very informative and delivered well by a very experienced team’ ICGP 2021.



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