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NURSING AND HEALTH INFORMATICS IN FINLAND 2015

The development of nursing informatics (NI) both in practice, industry and education has become gradually relevant as the role of information technology has developed since 1970's and 80's. The main supporting actors have been the Finnish Nurses Association (FNA) and the National Development Center for Welfare and Health as well as the International Medical Informatics Association Special Interest Group of Nursing Informatics (IMIA-SIGNI) with their various initiatives and conferences.

Since the 1990's, the FNA has organized NI sessions in the annual Nurses' Days Conferences and the special topic has been Standardized Nursing Language (SNL). Every year this event has interested hundreds of nurses. With this heightened interest, the association decided to survey on the situation regarding the expertise in NI. Based on the results, (N=165) nurse informaticians have a wide range of duties and responsibilities. However, 30% of the respondents did not have any informatics designation. Consequently, it seems that they are working parallel in the informatics field with their daily nursing duties. However, it is noteworthy that some 14 % of them also had a remarkable responsibility as "main user" of EHR. Also, over 30% used more than 75% of their working hours in NI activities. In 2014, the FNA established a group of nurse informaticians to compile a national eHealth strategy for nursing.



In 2012, the FNA also launched the standards for special competences of NI specialty certificate. The certification may be admitted to a registered nurse working in NI and demonstrate the required merits (worth 200 ECTS)¹ via the electronic portfolio. The requirements are consistent with the Clinical Practice Nursing Certification design for nurses working in a designated clinical area. By 2015, four registered nurses have received NI certification.

The development of NI education has progressed with the development of teaching information technology and has been based mostly on the enthusiasm of the teachers in the field. The nursing curricula does not include separate study units in nursing informatics. Instead, education¹ European Transfer Crediting System= 27 hours of work weekly. Information management and NI are directly integrated into the main contents of nursing degrees at the bachelor level.

In Finland, 22 universities of applied sciences currently offer master's program (60-90 ECTS) in social and health care; only two programs focus on nursing and health informatics and eHealth service planning. One training program in welfare technology offers combination of education in technology, social welfare and public health service. Those who have completed these training programs are equipped to work in expert positions of public health and social welfare service, both in the private and public sector as well as in the industry occupying and planning development positions in the field.

Since 2000, it has been possible to complete a master's degree program in Health and Human Services Informatics (HHSI) (120 ECTS) at the University of Eastern Finland. The master's degree program was accredited by the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) in 2012. The students that have graduated from this program have expertise and management positions in the field. Furthermore, seven candidates will have graduated from the doctoral program of HHSI (<http://epublications.uef.fi/sarjat/1798-5757/>) by the year 2015.

The Knowledge Management of the Future in the Social and Health Care Sector master's degree program offered by Laurea University of Applied Sciences (UAS) (90 ECTS) since 2013, is intended for those responsible for knowledge management and development in organizations, or those aspiring to such tasks. The education provides key competences in knowledge management, nursing and health informatics and foresight from the perspective of customer insight. (Fig 1.)

Knowledge of Management of the Future in the Social and Health Care Sector, Master's degree 90 credits

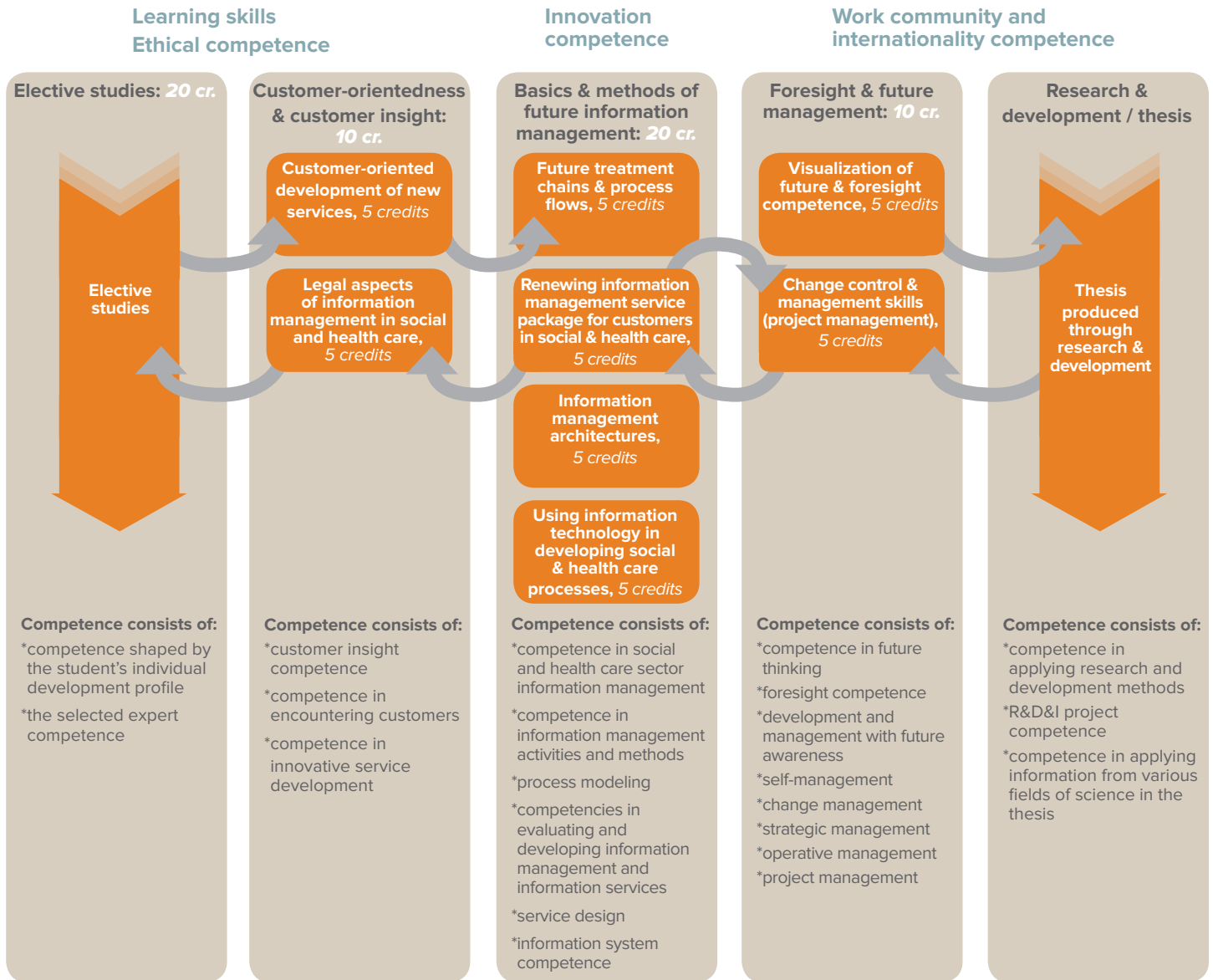


Figure 1. Structure of the Knowledge Management of the Future Master's program

Nursing has been actively involved in the development of national eHealth initiatives since 2000. The national EHR includes the nursing record and is part of the national electronic health archive service proving crucial information in transfer situations through the electronic nursing discharge summary.



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