

Assistència Sanitària awards 25 bursaries to pursue master's studies in the field of health

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25 university students will benefit from the third edition of the Assistència Sanitària Bursaries Programme for doctors and nurses, with a budgetary allocation of 30,000 euros. The scheme focuses on third-cycle university programmes in the field of health at all Catalan university institutions, with the bulk of the student beneficiaries being qualified nurses and medical graduates. The number of applications submitted this time around represented a 52% increase, with more equal numbers of male and female students being selected.

Dr. Ignacio Orce, Chairman of Assistència Sanitària, was at Barcelona Hospital last Thursday to hand out the bursary diplomas to the candi-

dates selected for the 2010-11 year. The event brought together doctors and nurses awarded the bursaries and representatives of the institutions involved in the programme. The grants, which cover third-cycle studies performed in the field of health at any Catalan university, are recognised by the medical and academic community for the rigorous student selection process and the 30,000 euro award, which covers 50% of course fees.

The main fields chosen by the bursary-holders this year include in particular emergency and casualty, dentistry and a number of paediatric specialities. The typical student profile is of a nurse (45%) or doctor

(36%), while there has, in comparison with previous years, been a trend towards greater gender balance, with 65% of the selected students being women, and 35% men. A total of 124 applications were submitted this year, 52% more than last time around.

The Assistència Sanitària bursaries, now in their third year, are well established as one of the few programmes in the field of health anywhere in Spain to be funded in full by a private institution, and have involved a cumulative investment of close on 100,000 euros since they were created in 2008. The initiative, born out of a desire to promote scientific progress, research and the professional qualifications of doctors and nurses, has since the outset received the support of Catalan universities.

The medical insurer Assistència Sanitària is an exponent of health-care co-operativism, the self-management model devised by Dr. Josep Espriu some fifty years ago, based on both doctors and users having equal input in decision making and management. The organisation now has some 20,000 policyholders who can call on the services of a list of more than 4,000 doctors. It is also the official medical care provider of Barcelona Football Club.

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