Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important consultation. We have set out below our response to the questions included in your on-line survey.

This submission is made on behalf of the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network. We agree to this submission being published on-line and for our organisation name to be listed in the published summary of submissions.

**Student assessment**

**Option 1: Standards for consistent student assessment**

6. Do you support the assessment of competence of nurse practitioner candidates within specified education programmes as outlined in the Draft education programme standards?

Yes. These standards allow for consistency across education providers and triangulation of assessment. This provides the public with a sound and robust system to 'produce' well educated and informed health practitioners to provide the New Zealand public with a high standard of care based on a well-structured nursing education system.

7. Do you think any of the following requirements will address potential conflict of interest and ensure assessments of nurse practitioner candidates are completed to a consistent standard?

a. Involving suitably qualified members of the multidisciplinary team and practice representatives and/or

Yes. This allows for greater diversity of assessment by using the team members and allows for a range of views and approaches that is broad and maintains the clinical perspective, which is extremely important.

b. External moderation of assessments by other education providers and/or

Yes. Prevents risk of bias and perceived conflict of interest by using outside, but appropriately skilled assessors.

c. Setting standards for assessment and closer moderation by the Council

Yes. As the regulating body, this allows for consistency and external input again preventing bias by any one education facility, and aligns with the current system of sign off of registered nurses.

**Option 2: The candidate also submits a portfolio of learning to the Council**

8. Do you support the candidate also submitting a portfolio of learning to the Council?
Yes. Just as the RN is signed off by the regulator so should the NP be. This is a significantly autonomous role and the regulator has ultimate responsibility for patient safety and some form of final assessment should be at the discretion of the New Zealand Nursing Council. This is the least time consuming assessment tool available to Council. Other assessment methods would rely heavily on significant financial and human resource input that is unsustainable with the increase in NP candidates.

In summary, we don’t believe there is any other assessment process that would be as appropriate as the portfolio of practice, without causing undue work and cost to the nurse and the Council.

Student assessment standards

9. Do you support the assessment methods outlined in 8.4 and 8.10 of the draft education programme standards?
   a. a portfolio of learning and clinical log of practice experience Yes
   b. simulated scenario based assessment Yes
   c. viva voce clinical assessment Yes
   d. observation in clinical practice settings Yes

A range of assessments allows triangulation of examples of practice and experience. The different methods allow for the assessment of the competencies through various means.

The level of expertise expected of the NP role requires a stringent assessment process in order for the newly trained NP to be rigorously assessed in preparation for practice. The level of autonomy required of the role cannot be underestimated and public safety needs to be assured through a robust system of assessment.

Nurse practitioners as clinical teaching staff

10. Do you support nurse practitioners as the clinical teaching staff for each student’s clinical experience?
   Yes. Page 25 - 9. 9.3 'The student will have clinical supervision from a registered Nurse Practitioner or vocationally registered doctor'. In order for this supervision to be provided by a vocationally registered doctor, we believe it is paramount for the doctor to have a clear understanding of the NP role. This would need to be addressed by the NP on staff as referred to in section 9.16 (first point). We see a potential mismatch if this is not made clear at the outset.

   We also note the challenge presented in identifying sufficient numbers of supervisors. Some rural areas of New Zealand rely heavily on overseas trained GPs who are not always registered in a vocational scope of practice.

11. Do you support the standards for the nurse practitioner practicum outlined in section 10 of the draft education programme standards?
   Yes. Taking into account the above mentioned concern, there will be a requirement for remuneration for the NP supervisor as this requires a significant amount of time that has a negative impact on work load and practice routine. If there is to be an increase in the number of NP candidates and there are very few registered NPs to supervise then there will be a significant pressure on a few NPs in clinical roles to provide ongoing supervision.

   Employers of NPs acknowledge the time and effort that goes into training but they are also aware of the impact on clinical time in practice and that compensation will need to be factored
into this. We cannot expect already busy NPs to do a considerable amount of extra work without recompense. (It is our understanding that GPs usually receive payment for this level of supervision.)

12. Do you support the draft education programme standards?
Yes. They appear to be robust, however this is best assessed by those offering the education as they will know the requirements and usual standards used for nursing education overall. As representatives of clinicians in practice this is not an area of expertise we have.

13. Any other comments related to the draft education programme standards?

14. Do you agree that the draft competencies for nurse practitioners describe the knowledge and skills required of new nurse practitioners? Yes
To be further assessed.

15. Do you agree that the draft competencies provide enough detail to guide education requirements and student assessment? Unable to comment on this as requires input from an educator.

Proposal for new nurse practitioners to be supervised for one year

16. Do you support newly registered nurse practitioners practicing under supervision for one year?
Yes. This is crucial in order to support NPs in what is a significantly different role to that of the advanced RN role, in terms of autonomy and ultimately responsibility. Where the NETP program is seen as the best practice start so the 1 year supervision should be seen in the same light for new NPs. By providing this level of support we hope that more nurses will be encouraged to consider this role as it is often the "jump and hope you swim" impression at the end of training that puts nurses off. With better initial support NPs can consolidate their practice in a supported environment resulting in a more confident practitioner.

17. Any other comments related to the proposed draft competencies for nurse practitioners or the proposal for new nurse practitioners to be supervised for one year

This submission is based on views of the NZRGPN Executive Board but may not reflect the full or particular views of all of its members.