Competencies for nurse prescribers

The Council has adapted this framework for all nurse prescribers with permission from the National Prescribing Service in Australia\(^1\). The competency framework will be used to help registered nurses prepare to prescribe and maintain their competence in prescribing, and for the design and delivery of prescribing programmes. Please note that nurse prescribers are also required to meet the competencies for the registered nurse scope of practice.

Competency Area 1: Understands the client\(^2\) and their clinical needs.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element 1.1 Performs a comprehensive medicines assessment to obtain information to understand the client’s clinical needs and context.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Conducts an assessment that is appropriate to the registered nurse’s scope of practice, prescribing authority and the client’s clinical context.</td>
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<td>1.1.2 Reviews and interprets information in the client’s health records.</td>
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<td>1.1.3 Obtains relevant information from the client about their medicines, and their medical and clinical history, including their co-existing conditions, treatments, alcohol and substance use, allergies and social context.</td>
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<td>1.1.4 Assesses the client’s risk factors for poor adherence; for example: social isolation; physical impairment; cognitive impairment or disturbance; low English proficiency; low health literacy; and financial disadvantage.</td>
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<td>1.1.5 Ascertains that sufficient information has been obtained about the client’s co-existing conditions and current treatments to identify possible risks and contraindications for treatments.</td>
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<td>1.1.6 Performs clinical examinations that are within the registered nurse’s scope of practice and relevant to the client’s problem, and accurately interprets the findings of these examinations.</td>
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Element 1.2 Generates and explores possible diagnoses.

| 1.2.1 Synthesises information from the health record and comprehensive assessment to develop provisional and differential diagnoses consistent with scope of practice. |
| 1.2.2 Develops a diagnostic strategy and performs relevant investigations. |
| 1.2.3 Consults with an authorised prescriber if unsure of provisional or differential diagnosis. |


\(^2\) Client: an individual, family, group or community that is a consumer of nursing service.
1.2.4 Explains the clinical issues and their implications to the client.

Competency Area 2: Understands the treatment options and how they support the client’s clinical needs.

Element 2.1 Identifies and negotiates appropriate non-pharmacological and pharmacological options that can be incorporated into the client’s treatment plan.

2.1.1 Recognises when it is clinically appropriate not to intervene; for example, in cases where the signs and symptoms are likely to resolve without treatment.

2.1.2 Recognises when it is clinically appropriate to implement non-pharmacological treatments.

2.1.3 Integrates knowledge of pharmacology, other biomedical sciences, clinical medicine, and therapeutics, and identifies medicines suitable for treating the condition.

2.1.4 Obtains, interprets and applies current evidence and information about medicines to inform decisions about incorporating medicines into the client’s treatment plans.

2.1.5 Identifies medicines options that are likely to provide therapeutically effective and safe treatment, and tailors them for the client.

2.1.6 Considers the cost and affordability of the medicines to the client.

2.1.7 Considers the implications to the wider community of using a particular medicine to treat the client.

2.1.8 Discusses the treatment options and medicines with the client, whānau or carer considering: the priorities for treating their current condition and co-existing conditions (if required); their readiness to address the current condition; and their expectations of treatment.

2.1.9 Negotiates therapeutic goals that enhance the client’s self-management of their condition.

2.1.10 Supplements verbal information with written information about the condition and treatment options (where appropriate).

2.1.11 Allows the client time to make an informed decision about their treatment.

2.1.12 Ensures the client understands the treatment plan and how to use the medicine safely and effectively.

2.1.13 Refers the client for further assessment or treatment when the suitable treatment options are outside the nurse’s scope of practice.
2.1.14 Demonstrates a shared approach to decision making by assessing a patient’s needs for medicines, taking into account their wishes and values, and those of their carers when making prescribing decisions.

Competency Area 3: Communicates the treatment plan clearly to other health professionals.

Element 3.1 Develops and maintains effective relationships, and communicates effectively with patients, carers, other prescribers and members of the multidisciplinary health care team.

3.1.1 Provides clear instructions to other health professionals who dispense, supply or administer medicines prescribed for the client.

3.1.2 Prepares prescriptions or medication orders that comply with relevant legislation, guidelines or codes of practice, and organisational policies and procedures.

3.1.3 Collaborates and engages in open, interactive discussions with other health professionals caring for the client.

Element 3.2 Provides information about medicines and the treatment plan with the client’s consent to other health professionals who provide care to the client.

3.2.1 Provides information about the treatment plan to members of multidisciplinary health care teams involved with their care.

Competency Area 4: Monitors and reviews the client’s response to treatment.

Element 4.1 Obtains information to assess the client’s response to treatment.

4.1.1 Observes the client to ascertain their response to treatment (where relevant).

4.1.2 Discusses with the client and other health professionals, their:
   - experience with implementing the treatment plan;
   - adherence, including any issues arising and possible ways to improve adherence;
   - perception or observation of the medicines’ benefits and adverse effects; and
   - assessment of whether the therapeutic goals have been achieved.

4.1.3 Obtains additional information to assess whether the therapeutic goals have been achieved by examining the client, requesting investigations and interpreting the findings (where relevant).

4.1.4 Synthesises information provided by the client and other health professionals, and from clinical examinations and investigations to determine whether:
   - the therapeutic goals have been achieved;
   - treatment should be stopped, modified or continued; and
   - the client should be referred to another health professional.
Element 4.2 Works in partnership with the client and other health professionals to address issues arising from the review.

4.2.1 Discusses the findings of the review with the client.

4.2.2 Identifies if the client requires a comprehensive medicines review.

4.2.3 Works in partnership with the client and other health professionals to modify the treatment plan to optimise the safety and effectiveness of treatment (where relevant).

4.2.4 Reports issues arising from the review and documents in the clinical record. Communicates issues to other members of multidisciplinary health care teams involved with their care.

4.2.5 Organises the next review.

Competency Area 5: Practises professionally

Element 5.1 Practises within the applicable legislative and regulatory frameworks.

5.1.1 Demonstrates knowledge of, and complies with, legislation, regulations, and common law applicable to prescribing.

5.1.2 Maintains accurate and complete records of:
   - the consultation
   - clinical examinations and investigation results
   - risk factors for medicines misadventure
   - the client’s decision to decline treatment (where relevant)
   - changes to the client’s medicines management plan, including the rationale behind these changes
   - the review plan, recommendations, and date for next review; and outcomes of the treatment.

Element 5.2 Practises according to professional standards, codes of conduct, and within the nurse’s scope of practice.

5.2.1 Demonstrates knowledge of and complies with: professional standards; codes of conduct; and scope of practice statements or guidelines.

5.2.2 Practises within the limits of the registered nurse’s education, training, and scope of practice.

5.2.3 Demonstrates respect for the scope of practice of other health professionals and their contribution within a collaborative team, particularly that of the client’s main health care provider.

5.2.4 Accepts responsibility and is accountable for the care provided to the client.
5.2.5 Demonstrates understanding of the ethical and professional framework for accountability and responsibility in relation to prescribing.

5.2.6 Aware of own limitations and works within the limits of own professional competence. Knows when and how to refer/consult/seek guidance from another member of the multidisciplinary team.

Element 5.3 Practises within the applicable frameworks of the health care setting and system.

5.3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of and complies with national and facility policies and procedures in relation to prescribing.

5.3.2 Demonstrates appropriate professional judgment when interpreting and applying guidelines and protocols to the client’s situation.

5.3.3 Contributes to the improvement of policies and procedures for the judicious, appropriate, safe and effective use of medicines.

Element 5.4 Demonstrates a commitment to continual quality improvement of the nurse’s prescribing.

5.4.1 Applies quality use of medicines principles when prescribing medicines.

5.4.2 Identifies common causes of medicines errors and adverse events, and implements strategies to reduce the risks of these occurring.

5.4.3 Critically evaluates information about medicines and makes evidence-based decisions about medicines in the health professional’s own practice.

5.4.4 Engages in ongoing audit, case review and professional development to improve prescribing practices.

Element 5.5 Addresses the potential for bias in prescribing decisions.

5.5.1 Implements strategies to address influences that may bias prescribing decisions, including:
- marketing influences
- possible client, professional or financial gain
- conflicts of interest
- the registered nurse’s beliefs, values and experiences.

These strategies may include peer and case review, discussion with the collaborative team, policies and guidelines or professional standards.