



**Framework for the approval of
professional development and recognition programmes
to meet the continuing competence requirements for nurses**

Revised June 2008

Introduction

The Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act 2003 ('the Act') requires the Nursing Council of New Zealand ('the Council') to ensure the ongoing competence of practitioners. The Council approves professional development and recognition programmes as recertification programmes under section 41 of the Act for the purpose of ensuring nurses are competent to practise. Continuing competence requirements for all nurses were introduced as part of the practising certificate renewal process in September 2004.

The *Framework and standards for approval of professional recognition programmes* (2003) were developed to establish standards for programmes to meet the Council's requirements for competence-based practising certificates. The document was updated in March 2005 to reflect the continuing competence requirements introduced in September 2004. The Council acknowledges that many nurses demonstrate competence through professional development and recognition programmes developed by employers or professional organisations.

The framework can be applied to:

- professional development and recognition programmes
- accreditation programmes developed by professional organisations
- any other competence-based programme that meets these standards.

This framework will enable assessment, approval and monitoring of these programmes so that nurses who meet the programme requirements will also be considered to have met the continuing competence requirements for renewal of practising certificates.

Principles of the framework

- The Act requires the Council to ensure the ongoing competence of practitioners.
- Following the introduction of the Act, continuing competence requirements were introduced for all nurses in September 2004. These requirements include 60 days or 450 hours of practice in the last three years, 60 hours of professional development in the last three years and two assessments against the Council's competencies.
- The Council introduced new competencies for scopes of practice in 2005 (see Appendix 1). Professional development and recognition programmes are now approved using these competencies.
- The approval of professional development and recognition programmes will be optional. Nurses who are not part of an approved programme will have to individually meet the continuing competence requirements.

- The Council has set standards for approval of programmes but does not seek uniformity or to limit local requirements e.g. additional organisational competencies. This framework facilitates the portability of the recognition of knowledge and skills.
- Many professional development and recognition programmes have been designed to recognise nurses who have developed their practice beyond the competent level. These programmes will need to demonstrate the mechanisms they use to ensure competence is maintained whether that is through formal performance appraisal or progression/reassessment through the levels of practice programme.

The framework recognises:

- the work that has already been completed by employers and professional organisations on developing professional development and recognition programmes
- every programme is different but there are also commonalities in competencies and criteria, portfolio requirements and methods of assessment
- most programmes in New Zealand have been influenced by the work of Patricia Benner and the levels of practice she describes in *From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice (1984)*
- most programmes have 4 to 5 levels, with level 2 usually designated as “competent”, or the level that would align with the continuing competence requirements.

Standards for professional development and recognition programmes

1. The programme complies with legislated requirements and Nursing Council of New Zealand policies, guidelines and codes.

- 1.1. All nurses on the programme have a current annual practising certificate.
- 1.2. Portfolio requirements encompass the requirements for continuing competence (see Appendix 1). All nurses on the programme are therefore currently assessed as competent to practise.
- 1.3. Competence is assessed at least three-yearly. This could be part of the performance appraisal/review process depending on the programme assessment procedures.
- 1.4. The programme's competencies and processes incorporate the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- 1.5. The programme's competencies and processes incorporate the principles of cultural safety.
- 1.6. Programme records (names, registration numbers and assessment dates) must be kept and supplied to the Council on request.

2. The programme supports the nurse to develop her/his practice.

- 2.1. The programme has a structure and competencies that promote and support ongoing professional development to continue learning and maintain competence and to meet the continuing competence requirements.
- 2.2. For each level of the programme, assessment of the nurse's practice against the Nursing Council competencies can be demonstrated at least three yearly.
- 2.3. The programme is written and reviewed in consultation with nurses in practice.
- 2.4. The programme requires practice to be evidence-based.

3. The programme will have clearly defined assessment processes.

- 3.1. The assessment process is valid and reliable.
- 3.2. Confidentiality requirements for clients, family and employees are met.
- 3.3. The assessment is undertaken by nurses who are prepared in assessment.
- 3.4. Criteria used for assessment are made available to applicants.

- 3.5. Applicants have opportunity for self-assessment.
- 3.6. Applicants receive individual feedback.
- 3.7. Decisions about assessment are based on evidence and documented.
- 3.8. Appeal mechanisms are explicit and appeals are resolved.
- 3.9. Assessment timeframes are identified, appropriate and able to be met.
- 3.10. Processes are in place for recognising transferability of skills and knowledge.

4. Appropriate resources are available to support the programme.

- 4.1. Nurses have access to relevant and current literary resources (e.g. journals/texts/internet).
- 4.2. The coordinator of the programme is a nurse with a current practising certificate.¹
- 4.3. Information/education about the programme and assessment processes is made available to all nurses.
- 4.4. Nurses have opportunities for ongoing professional development activities.

5. Quality improvement processes are integral to the programme.

- 5.1. There is a statement of programme goals and outcomes.
- 5.2. The programme is evaluated at least five-yearly. This includes feedback from nurses and participation by nurses in the programme.
- 5.3. The programme has assessor selection criteria and processes, appraisal and development.
- 5.4. Assessment is moderated (internal or external as appropriate).
- 5.5. Issues and appeals are resolved.

¹ The extent of the coordinator role will be determined by the size and complexity of the programme

Process for approval, audit and monitoring of professional development and recognition programmes

The approval process is designed to ensure that any programme presented for approval meets the standards and the requirements for continuing competence. Following the approval of the programme for up to five years, a decision regarding the audit/monitoring of the programme will occur. The approval process involves a desk review of documentation and resources and may also involve an on-site visit. The approval and monitoring processes require programme providers to demonstrate that the processes and systems they have in place meet the Council's standards. The Council may require a programme to be monitored in one or more areas that do not fully meet the standards, enabling ongoing development and progress to be followed.

Process

1. The programme provider will apply to the Council for approval. The Council will send the appropriate approval tool.
2. The programme provider will send to the Council the programme documentation. This will include:
 - the programme handbook (or other documentation) and/or information book for applicants. The programme documentation clearly states the areas of nursing practice within the organisation that are included in (or excluded from) the programme
 - the completed Council assessment tool for professional recognition programmes including an assessment of how the programme meets the Council's competencies;
 - assessment criteria and processes including appeals procedures
 - programme evaluation
 - individual portfolios
 - assessor selection criteria, development and appraisal.
3. An onsite visit will be arranged when the approval panel will meet the programme co-ordinator, the assessors and the participants.

Appendix 1

Competencies for the registered nurse scope of practice

Domain one: Professional responsibility
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- Competency 1.1 Accepts responsibility for ensuring that his/her nursing practice and conduct meet the standards of the professional, ethical and relevant legislated requirements.
- Competency 1.2 Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi to nursing practice.
- Competency 1.3 Demonstrates accountability for directing, monitoring and evaluating nursing care that is provided by nurse assistants, enrolled nurses and others.
- Competency 1.4 Promotes an environment that enables client safety, independence, quality of life, and health.
- Competency 1.5 Practises nursing in a manner that the client determines as being culturally safe.

Domain two: Management of nursing care

- Competency 2.1 Provides planned nursing care to achieve identified outcomes.
- Competency 2.2 Undertakes a comprehensive and accurate nursing assessment of clients in a variety of settings.
- Competency 2.3 Ensures documentation is accurate and maintains confidentiality of information.
- Competency 2.4 Ensures the client has adequate explanation of the effects, consequences and alternatives of proposed treatment options.
- Competency 2.5 Acts appropriately to protect oneself and others when faced with unexpected client responses, confrontation, personal threat or other crisis situations.
- Competency 2.6 Evaluates client's progress toward expected outcomes in partnership with clients.
- Competency 2.7 Provides health education appropriate to the needs of the client within a nursing framework.
- Competency 2.8 Reflects upon, and evaluates with peers and experienced nurses, the effectiveness of nursing care.
- Competency 2.9 Maintains professional development.

Domain three: Interpersonal relationships
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- Competency 3.1 Establishes, maintains and concludes therapeutic interpersonal relationships with client.
- Competency 3.2 Practises nursing in a negotiated partnership with the client where and when possible.
- Competency 3.3 Communicates effectively with clients and members of the health care team.

Domain four: Interprofessional health care & quality improvement

- Competency 4.1 Collaborates and participates with colleagues and members of the health care team to facilitate and coordinate care.
- Competency 4.2 Recognises and values the roles and skills of all members of the health care team in the delivery of care.
- Competency 4.3 Participates in quality improvement activities to monitor and improve standards of nursing.

Competencies for nurse assistant and enrolled nurse scopes of practice

Domain one: Professional responsibility

- Competency 1.1 Accepts responsibility for ensuring that his/her nursing practice and conduct meet the standards of the professional, ethical and relevant legislated requirements.
- Competency 1.2 Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi to nursing practice.
- Competency 1.3 Recognises own scope of practice and the registered nurse responsibility and accountability for delegation of nursing care.
- Competency 1.4 Demonstrates accountability and responsibility within the health care team when assisting or working under the direction of the registered nurse.
- Competency 1.5 Promotes an environment that enables client safety, independence, quality of life, and health.
- Competency 1.6 Participates in ongoing professional and educational development.
- Competency 1.7 Practises nursing in a manner that the client determines as being culturally safe.
- Competency 1.8 Practises in a way that respects each client's dignity and right to hold personal beliefs, values and goals.

Domain two: Management of nursing care

- Competency 2.1 Provides planned nursing care under the direction of a registered nurse.
- Competency 2.2 Is accountable for ensuring that nursing care provided to clients is within scope of practice and own level of competence.
- Competency 2.3 Demonstrates practice that supports best health outcomes for clients.
- Competency 2.4 Ensures documentation is accurate and maintains confidentiality of information.

Domain three: Interpersonal relationships

- Competency 3.1 Establishes, maintains and concludes therapeutic interpersonal relationships.

Domain four: Interprofessional health care & quality improvement

- Competency 4.1 Collaborates and participates with colleagues and members of the health care team to deliver care.
- Competency 4.2 Contributes to the evaluation of client care.

References

Benner, P. (1984) *From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing*. Menlo-Park: Addison-Wesley.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2003) *Framework and standards for approval of professional recognition programmes.*

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2005) *Competencies for registered nurse scope of practice.*

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2005) *Competencies for the nurse assistant and the enrolled nurse scopes of practice.*