



Te Kaunihera Tapuhi o Aotearoa
Nursing Council of New Zealand

Competencies for the nurse practitioner scope of practice

Approved by Council September 2008



Nurse practitioner scope of practice

Nurse practitioners are expert nurses who work within a specific area of practice incorporating advanced knowledge and skills. They practise both independently and in collaboration with other health care professionals to promote health, prevent disease and to diagnose, assess and manage people's health needs. They provide a wide range of assessment and treatment interventions including differential diagnoses, ordering, conducting and interpreting diagnostic and laboratory tests and administering therapies for the management of potential or actual health needs. They work in partnership with individuals, families, whanau and communities across a range of settings. Nurse Practitioners may choose to prescribe medicines within their specific area of practice. Nurse Practitioners also demonstrate leadership as consultants, educators, managers and researchers and actively participate in professional activities and local and national policy development.

The Nursing Council's *Competencies for the nurse practitioner scope of practice* describe the skills, knowledge and activities of nurse practitioners.

Qualifications

- (a) Registration with the Nursing Council of New Zealand in the Registered Nurse Scope of practice; and
- (b) A minimum of four years of experience in a specific area of practice; and
- (c) Successful completion of a clinically focused Master's Degree programme approved by the Nursing Council of New Zealand, or equivalent qualification; and
- (d) A pass in a Nursing Council assessment of Nurse Practitioner competencies and criteria.

Nurse Practitioners seeking registration with prescribing rights are required to have an additional qualification:

- (e) Successful completion of an approved prescribing component of the clinically-focused Master's programme relevant to their specific area of practice¹.

¹ The requirements for Nurse Practitioner prescribing have been published in the New Zealand Gazette 10/11/05, No. 88, p4750.

Domains of competence for the nurse practitioner scope of practice

There are four domains of competence for the nurse practitioner scope of practice. Evidence of safety to practise as a nurse practitioner is demonstrated when the applicant meets the competencies within the following domains:

Domain one: Professional responsibility and leadership

This domain contains competencies that relate to professional understanding of the role of the nurse practitioner and the associated responsibilities and leadership. This includes competencies reflecting the ability to provide clinical leadership to population/client groups and within the profession of nursing.

Domain two: Management of nursing care

This domain contains competencies related to independent and collaborative practice in delivering and managing client care within a specialty area of practice. The practice of a nurse practitioner is at an advanced level and extends across a range of situations and contexts. Competencies include the ability to think critically and to advance nursing practice and health care outcomes.

Domain three: Interpersonal and interprofessional care and quality improvement

The nurse practitioner operates within a nursing framework and ensures the centrality of the client in all aspects of practice. Health outcomes are evaluated and advanced through quality improvement and scholarship activities.

Domain four: Prescribing practice

Nurse Practitioners are able to prescribe under the Medicines Act 1981 and the Medicines Regulations 2005. This domain describes the competencies to be achieved by those applicants seeking prescribing rights.

Competencies and indicators

The *Competencies for the nurse practitioner scope of practice* give examples of the indicators that will be used by the expert panel who will be assessing the applicant's competence.

The Council recognises that nurse practitioners work in a variety of clinical contexts, thus the indicators, which are neither exhaustive nor comprehensive, are to provide transparency to applicants to assist them to prepare appropriate evidence for their clinical contexts.

Domain one: Professional responsibility and leadership

Competencies for registration as a nurse practitioner

Competency 1.1 Practices within a nursing model to apply advanced nursing practice in the provision of health care services to client/population groups.

Indicator: Describes the nursing model/framework identifying the values and beliefs that underpin and guide practice.

Indicator: Defines area of nursing practice in relation to client/population group including activities of health promotion, maintenance and restoration of health, preventative care, rehabilitation and/or palliative care.

Indicator: Articulates a coherent and clearly defined nurse practitioner area of practice that is characterised by advanced practice, evidence based nursing knowledge and skills.

Indicator: Demonstrates autonomous, interdependent and collaborative practice in relation to client care and within the health care team.

Indicator: Engages in activities at a local systems level that promote the positive contribution of nursing to health care delivery and health outcomes for population groups.

Indicator: Describes clinical decision making processes involved in response to actual and potential health needs and characteristics of the population group.

Indicator: Articulates an advanced level of knowledge and describes the evidence that underpins decision making.

Indicator: Demonstrates an advanced level of critical thinking in practice.

Indicator: Demonstrates ability to use advanced knowledge to effect equity of health outcomes for all clients.

Competency 1.2 Demonstrates accountability for practice in relation to the population/client group and the parameters of practice within health care settings.

Indicator: Demonstrates advanced practice competencies within a specific area of practice that is autonomous and collaborative.

Indicator: Demonstrates timely referral and consultation when an issue is outside scope of practice or level of expertise/experience.

Indicator: Collaborates, initiates and leads to ensure practice is informed by ethical decision making.

Indicator: Demonstrates consideration of access and quality when making client care decisions.

Indicator: Initiates and leads professional development processes based on professional practice standards and legal and ethical guidelines.

Indicator: Collaborates, initiates and/or leads professional development processes based on peer supervision and review of currency of practice.

Competency 1.3 Demonstrates nursing leadership that positively influences the health outcomes of client/population group and the profession of nursing.

Indicator: Takes leadership roles in complex situations across settings and disciplines.

Indicator: Considers the impact of the wider determinants of health including emerging health policy and fundings and modifies practice accordingly.

Indicator: Promotes opportunities to achieve equity of health outcomes across the population group.

Indicator: Takes leadership roles in community and professional groups to achieve positive outcomes for client or population group.

Indicator: Shows leadership in professional activities such as research, scholarship and policy development.

Indicator: Demonstrates skilled mentoring, coaching and teaching of health care colleagues.

Indicator: Contributes to, and participates in, national and local health and socioeconomic policy development.

Domain two: Management of nursing care

Competency 2.1 Demonstrates advanced comprehensive client health assessment skills and diagnostic decision making relevant to specific area of practice.

Indicator: Demonstrates advanced clinical decision making processes to;

- assess the client's health status; and
- make differential, probable and definitive diagnoses; and
- implement appropriate interventions based on a systematic decision making process; and
- evaluate client response to care.

Indicator: Orders and interprets diagnostic tests and makes decisions/interventions based on diagnostic information, current evidence and local practice information.

Indicator: Prioritises data collection and assessment processes in complex situations according to the client's immediate and/or ongoing needs.

Indicator: Consults and refers to other health professionals appropriately.

Competency 2.2 Demonstrates advanced practice in direct client care within a range of contexts and situations.

Indicator: Anticipates situations and acts appropriately to manage risk in complex client care situations.

Indicator: Demonstrates a creative, innovative approach to client care and nursing practice.

Indicator: Decision making is justified by extensive knowledge base and contextual data.

Indicator: Uses critical thinking to plan practice according to contextual factors.

Indicator: Identifies a clear process for consultation and collaboration with client and other health professionals.

Competency 2.3 Consistently involves client in decision making processes and uses client information to determine management strategies.

Indicator: Actively explores the client's cultural preferences, health behaviours and attitudes regarding care and incorporates information into management plan.

Indicator: Actively explores client's ability to participate in care and incorporates information into management plan.

Indicator: Ensures client has access to, and understands, relevant information and resources on which to make informed decisions regarding care.

Indicator: Documents client involvement in decision making

Competency 2.4 Demonstrates confident and independent practice that is based on the synthesis of theory and practice knowledge from nursing and other disciplines.

Indicator: Decision making is based on an advanced level of clinical judgement, scientific evidence, critical reasoning and client determined outcomes.

Indicator: Demonstrates an extensive knowledge base in specific area of practice and applies knowledge of biological, pharmacological and human sciences.

Indicator: Demonstrates advanced level skills and performance of interventions relevant to specific area of practice.

Indicator: Provides clinical leadership in the effective use of information technologies to support practice decisions.

Competency 2.5 Uses a formal approach to monitor and evaluate client responses to interventions.

Indicator: Provides clinical leadership in evaluating client responses to interventions and directs the modification of the care plan accordingly.

Indicator: Systematically documents and communicates evaluation process and changes to management plan.

Indicator: Demonstrates evaluation processes that measure the efficacy of practice to client outcomes, population based outcomes and the health care environment.

Domain three: Interpersonal and interprofessional care and quality improvement

Competency 3.1 Establishes therapeutic relationships with client that recognise the client in context and respects cultural identity and lifestyle choices

Indicator: Actively assesses client's preferences and abilities and ensures clients have access to appropriate information on which to base decisions.

Indicator: Is proactive in meeting the cultural, social and developmental needs of clients.

Indicator: Demonstrates respect for differences in cultural, social and developmental responses to health and illness and incorporates health beliefs of the individual/community into assessments and plans of care.

Indicator: Promotes client's participation in health care decision making and self management of health needs.

Indicator: Advocates for client within the health care team and with relevant agencies in a timely and respectful manner.

Competency 3.2 Contributes to clinical collaboration that optimises health outcomes for the client.

Indicator: Leads and collaborates with other health agencies/professionals to ensure timely access and smooth transition to quality services for client.

Indicator: leads case reviews and debriefing activities.

Indicator: Initiates change and responds proactively to changing systems.

Indicator: Is an effective resource and consultant for interdisciplinary clinical staff and disseminates research findings.

Indicator: Acts as an agent to foster collaboration between members of all disciplines in the health care team to work towards seamless client care.

Competency 3.3 Actively involved in quality assurance activities that monitor and improve the quality of health care and the effectiveness of own practice.

Indicator: Demonstrates responsibility for quality of health care, risk management and effective resource utilisation.

Indicator: Critiques and develops clinical standards.

Indicator: Influences purchasing and allocation of resources through use of evidence based findings.

Indicator: Participates in regular formal professional supervision.

Domain four: Prescribing practice

Note: Third party evidence must be from a registered prescriber in an appropriate scope of practice.

Competency Understands the regulatory and legislative frameworks, contractual environment, subsidies, professional ethics and roles of key government agencies associated with prescribing.

Competency Prescribes and administers medications within legislation, codes, scope and specific area of practice and according to established prescribing processes and New Zealand guidelines.

Competency Demonstrates accountability and responsibility in prescribing practices using evidence to make risk benefit assessments.

Competency Collaborates, consults with and provides accurate information to the client and other health professionals about prescribing relevant interventions, appliances, treatments or medications.

Competency Demonstrates an understanding in the use, implications, contraindications and interactions of prescription medications and with any other medications.

Competency Applies knowledge of the age-related pharmacokinetic differences and the implications for prescriptive practice on clients within the specific area of practice.

Competency Demonstrates an ability to limit and manage adverse reactions/emergencies/crises.

Competency Recognises situations of drug misuse, underuse and overuse and acts appropriately.

Competency Monitors the effectiveness of the client's response to prescribing and is actively involved in pharmacovigilance and drug monitoring.

Glossary of Terms

Appropriate Matching the circumstances of a situation or meeting the needs of the individual or group.

Assessment A systematic procedure for collecting qualitative and quantitative data to describe progress and ascertain deviations from expected outcomes and achievements.

Benchmark Essential standard.

Client An individual, family/whanau, significant other, group, community or population that is a consumer of nursing service.

Competence The combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that underpin effective performance as a nurse.

Competent: The person has competence across all domains of competencies applicable to the registered nurse, at a standard that is judged to appropriate for the level of nurse being assessed.

Competency A defined area of skilled performance.

Context The setting/environment where competence can be demonstrated or applied.

Domain An organised cluster of competencies in nursing practice.

Effective Having the intended outcome.

Indicator Key generic examples of competent performance. They are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. They assist the assessor when using their professional judgement in assessing nursing practice. They further assist curriculum development.

Legislated Those requirements laid down by New Zealand Acts and Regulations.

Nurse A registered nurse, nurse practitioner, enrolled nurse or nurse assistant.

Nurse Practitioner A nurse registered under the *registered nurse* scope of practice.

Nursing Council of New Zealand The responsible authority for nurses in New Zealand with legislated functions under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. The Nursing Council of New Zealand governs the practice of nurses by setting and monitoring standards of registration which ensures safe and competent care for the public of New Zealand. As the statutory authority, the Council is committed to enhancing professional excellence in nursing.

Performance criteria Descriptive statements which can be assessed and which reflect the intent of a competency in terms of performance, behaviour and circumstance.

Registered nurse A nurse registered under the *registered nurse* scope of practice.

Reliability The extent to which a tool will function consistently in the same way with repeated use.

Treaty of Waitangi The founding document for Aotearoa/New Zealand signed in 1840 by the Maori people and the British Crown.

Validity The extent to which a measurement tool measures that which it purports to measure.

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