



## **Education programme standards for the registered nurse scope of practice**

**Approved by the Council: June 2005**

## **Introduction**

The Nursing Council of New Zealand (“the Council”) governs the practice of nurses, by setting and monitoring standards of registration to ensure safe and competent care for the public of New Zealand. As the responsible authority, the Council is committed to enhancing professional excellence in nursing.

Section 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, (“the Act”), requires the Council to prescribe, accredit and monitor the qualifications for every scope of practice prescribed under Section 11 of the Act.

Prior to the implementation of the Act in September 2004, the Council consulted on the scopes of practice for nursing and the education programme standards and competencies for the registered nurse scope of practice.

The *Education programme standards for the registered nurse scope of practice* (“the standards”) incorporate recommendations from the strategic review of undergraduate nursing education approved by the Council in 2001 and the legislative requirements of the Act.

The standards require that education and service providers work collaboratively to ensure that the practice experience learning needs of students are met. The standards require a memorandum of understanding between education and practice parties to demonstrate how best practice benchmarks, for measuring the quality of the practice learning environment for students, will be met within the New Zealand context.

The standards also require that the educational institutions evaluate the quality of the practice experience learning environment and programmes will be required to moderate their academic and practice assessment processes with another accredited programme.

The accreditation and audit process for undergraduate programmes provides a very sound process for monitoring education standards and for identifying any programme issues in relation to ongoing accreditation.

## **Scope description**

Registered nurses utilise nursing knowledge and complex nursing judgement to assess health needs and provide care, and to advise and support people to manage their health. They practise independently and in collaboration with other health professionals, perform general nursing functions and delegate to and direct enrolled nurses and nurse assistants. They provide comprehensive nursing assessments to develop, implement, and evaluate an integrated plan of health care, and provide nursing interventions that require substantial scientific and professional knowledge and skills. This occurs in a range of settings in partnership with individuals, families, whanau and communities. Registered nurses may practise in variety of clinical contexts depending on their education preparation and practice experience. Registered nurses may also use their expertise to manage, teach, evaluate and research nursing practice. There will be conditions placed on the scope of practice of some registered nurses according to their qualifications or experience limiting them to a specific area of practice.

## **Statement of values**

The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi will direct the activities of the Nursing Council of New Zealand which operates under the following principles:

- respect
- accountability
- fairness
- equity.

## **Statement of corporate intent**

The Council's Mission Statement is to ensure the public and the health sector will have confidence in the quality of nursing care.

The responsibilities of the Council lie in the areas of policy, planning and review in order to meet its statutory obligations.

The principal functions of the Council related to education and registration are set out in Sections 12, 16, 45 and 118 of the Act (see appendix).

The Council's role is to protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring that nurses are safe and competent to practise.

## **Nursing Council education programme standards**

This document details the requirements for accreditation of undergraduate programmes in the form of structure, process and outcome standards. Applicants for registration as a registered nurse must complete an approved programme as specified and meet the outcome standards incorporating the legislated requirements and expected competencies for safe nursing practice. The audit tools for accrediting the development and implementation of the curriculum are based on the education programme standards.

### **Education programme standards for the registered nurse scope of practice**

- 1 The programme complies with legislated requirements and Nursing Council policy and guidelines.
- 2 The programme has a structured curriculum.
- 3 The scope and content of the curriculum include theory and related practice experiences to enable students to achieve the expected outcomes of the programme.
- 4 The curriculum is implemented by lecturers who are qualified for their roles.

- 5 Facilities and resources are available to support the achievement of the expected outcomes of the programme.
- 6 The environment supports the teaching-learning process.
- 7 Student performance is assessed against learning outcomes relevant to nursing practice.
- 8 The applicant for registration complies with legislated requirements and the Council's policies and guidelines.

## Standard one

**The programme complies with legislated requirements and the Council's policies and guidelines.**

### *Criteria*

- 1.1 The educational institution must be accredited by the Council to provide a bachelor's degree programme in nursing in New Zealand as per Section 12(2) (a) of the Act. (See appendix).
- 1.2 The programme leads to a bachelor's degree and meets the requirements specified in the Act and the Council's policy, as contained in these standards.
- 1.3 The governing body of the institution offering the programme sends to the Council such information as the Council requires.
- 1.4 Students are not admitted to the programme unless there is a reasonable probability that, upon completion of the programme, they will be fit for registration in the registered nurse scope of practice under Section 16 of the Act.
- 1.5 Schools identify a process for 'exiting' students who are not achieving academic, clinical and professional outcomes and would not meet the requirements for registration.
- 1.6 The head of school must notify the Chief Executive (Registrar) of the Council in writing if he or she has reason to believe that a student who is completing a programme would be unable to perform the functions required for the scope of practice relevant to nursing because of some mental or physical condition as per Section 45 (4) and (5) of the Act. (See appendix).
- 1.7 All students are required to provide with their application to sit the Council's examination, consent for the Ministry of Justice to release a copy of information about them held by the Privacy Unit at the Ministry of Justice as evidence of whether they have any convictions to which the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004 does not apply. This information provided by the Ministry of Justice must be no older than 3 months.
- 1.8 Awarding of credit transfer and recognition of prior learning must conform to the Council's policy.

## Standard two

**The programme has a structured curriculum.**

### *Criteria*

- 2.1 The curriculum is written and reviewed in consultation with nurse lecturers, nurses in practice, tangata whenua, health agencies and other key consumer stakeholders within the community.
- 2.2 The curriculum has an identifiable and integrated nursing focus consistent with the statement of beliefs or underlying assumptions.

- 2.3 The curriculum identifies expected outcomes and demonstrates how these will be met.
- 2.4 The curriculum outlines the means by which students will achieve the competencies and standards for registration.
- 2.5 The curriculum outlines the inter relationship between professional nursing practice and theory, research, cultural safety and the process of evaluation.
- 2.6 The curriculum allows for appropriate practice experience/practice learning opportunities, which encourage students to integrate knowledge.

### **Standard three**

**The scope and content of the curriculum includes theory and related practice experiences to enable students to achieve the expected outcomes of the programme.**

#### ***Criteria***

3.1 The content includes:

- the articles of the Treaty of Waitangi
- cultural safety
- Maori health
- professional nursing practice
- bioscience, social and behavioural science
- health systems and policy
- nursing assessment and nursing practice decision making
- therapeutic communication skills
- pharmacology
- pathophysiology, genetics and disease states
- health promotion
- ethics and law
- research and evidence based practice
- organisational and supervisory skills and leadership
- information technology

Practice content must include:

- primary health care including:
  - maternal and infant health
  - child, adolescent and family health
  - adult health
  - elderly health
- medical and surgical nursing
- disability, mental health recovery and rehabilitation/continuing care
- mental health nursing.

3.2 The programme provides a minimum of 1100 practice hours for all students, with all students being entitled to 1500 practice hours in which to demonstrate competence.

- 3.3 The practice experiences have well-formulated learning outcomes which relate to the competencies for the registered nurse scope of practice.
- 3.4 The school maintains a plan for clinical placements that clearly relates to the programme outcomes and provides justification of duration for student placements. In each clinical paper at least one practice placement should be long enough to achieve consolidated learning.
- 3.5 Provision may be made within the programme for students who wish to focus on a specific area of practice.

## **Standard four**

**The curriculum is implemented by lecturers who are qualified for their roles.**

### ***Criteria***

- 4.1 Nurse lecturers must be registered nurses with masters' degrees, or have qualifications in advance of the qualification being offered by the course and professional development plans in place which demonstrates progression towards masters' degrees, and have experience relevant to the areas in which they are teaching.
- 4.2 The person responsible for coordinating the programme must be a registered nurse and have a relevant master's degree.
- 4.3 Nurse lecturers hold current practising certificates.
- 4.4 Nurse lecturers have had at least the equivalent of three years full time post registration nursing practice experience.
- 4.5 Lecturers have completed a programme in adult teaching and learning within two years of appointment.
- 4.6 Lecturers maintain and update knowledge and skills relevant to the area in which they are teaching.
- 4.7 The tertiary institution implements a plan for staff development and support for lecturers.

## **Standard five**

**Facilities and resources are available to support the achievement of the expected outcomes of the programme.**

### ***Criteria***

- 5.1 Teaching and learning resources are appropriate to achieve programme outcomes and purposes. The educational institution demonstrates how they will achieve this.
- 5.2 A variety of practice experience is available in all dimensions of health care.

5.3 *Memoranda of Understanding* exist between the education providers and health care agencies providing placements and must cover;

- Communication processes between parties.
- An agreement about the suitability and availability of the practice experience for achievement of the competencies for the registered nurse scope of practice.
- agreement about the roles and responsibilities of both parties in teaching/learning process in both practice and assessment in the clinical learning environment.
- A process for the academic and clinical staff to mediate the expected outcomes of the placement, the assessment processes and the practice skills to be assessed at the completion of each placement.
- An evaluation process for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the practice learning experience for students.
- An agreement in principle for grievance procedures for staff, students and clients.

**Note:** *Nursing programmes will need to provide evidence of how they meet this standard through the accreditation and audit processes.*

5.4 The contract between the education provider and the health care agency provides written evidence that students will have access to appropriate practice experiences.

5.5 The resources for the facilitation of student learning are appropriate for the level of preparation.

## **Standard six**

### **The environment supports the teaching-learning process.**

#### ***Criteria***

6.1 Various learning styles are acknowledged by the provision of opportunities to meet individual learning needs.

6.2 The education provider has a recognition of prior learning policy which meets the Council's policies and standards.

6.3 Provision is made for students to participate in planning their learning experiences.

6.4 There is a mechanism for ongoing discussion about progress between lecturer/preceptor and student.

6.5 Students are provided with information that links their learning outcomes with educational opportunities in the area of practice.

- 6.6 The institution demonstrates the way in which the programme is responsive to student feedback.
- 6.7 The clinical provider demonstrates the way in which they are responsive to feedback related to the quality of the clinical learning environment.

## **Standard seven**

**Student performance is assessed against learning outcomes relevant to nursing practice.**

### ***Criteria***

- 7.1 There is a process for ensuring reliability and validity of student assessment.
- 7.2 Students undertake a variety of assessments to test application of registered nurse knowledge and practice experience judgement.
- 7.3 Appeal mechanisms are made explicit to students.
- 7.4 There is a process of moderation in place for academic and practice assessment.
- 7.5 There is a process to ensure that preceptors/registered nurses undertake the summative clinical assessments in conjunction with the lecturer.
- 7.6 Assessment against the Council's competencies will be undertaken by appropriately prepared assessors.

## **Standard eight**

**The applicant for registration complies with legislated requirements and Nursing Council policy and guidelines.**

### ***Criteria***

The applicant:

- 8.1 Has achieved the expected outcomes of the programme and completed the requirements of the approved curriculum.
- 8.2 Is currently competent and safe to practise as a registered nurse at beginning practitioner level in any New Zealand setting.
- 8.3 Is deemed fit for registration as a registered nurse by the head of school.
- 8.4 Demonstrates the competencies for the registered nurse scope of practice.
- 8.5 Has passed the examination for registered nurses.

Refer to the Council's competencies for the registered nurse scope of practice.

**Appendix: Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 Sections 12, 16, 45 (4) (5) & 118.**

**12 Qualifications must be prescribed**

- (1) *Each authority must, by notice published in the Gazette, prescribe the qualification or qualifications for every scope of practice that the authority describes under section 11.*
- (2) *In prescribing qualifications under subsection (1), an authority may designate 1 or more of the following as qualifications for any scope of practice that the authority describes under section 11:*
  - (a) *a degree or diploma of a stated kind from an educational institution accredited by the authority, whether in New Zealand or abroad, or an educational institution of a stated class whether in New Zealand or abroad:*
  - (b) *the successful completion of a degree, course of studies, or programme accredited by the authority:*
  - (c) *a pass in a specified examination or any other assessment set by the authority or by another organisation approved by the authority:*
  - (d) *registration with an overseas organisation that performs functions that correspond wholly or partly to those performed by the authority:*
  - (e) *experience in the provision of health services of a particular kind, including, without limitation, the provision of such services at a nominated institution or class of institution, or under the supervision or oversight of a nominated health practitioner or class of health practitioner.*
- (3) *A notice under subsection (1) may state that 1 or more qualifications or experience of 1 or more kinds, or both, is required for each scope of practice that the authority describes under section 11.*
- (4) *An authority must monitor every New Zealand educational institution that it accredits for the purpose of subsection (2) (a), and may monitor any overseas institution that it accredits for that purpose.*

**16 Fitness for registration**

*No applicant for registration may be registered as a health practitioner of a health profession if-*

- (a) *he or she does not satisfy the responsible authority that he or she is able to communicate effectively for the purposes of practising within the scope of practice in respect of which the applicant seeks to be, or agrees to be, registered; or*
- (b) *he or she does not satisfy the responsible authority that his or her ability to communicate in and or comprehend English is sufficient to protect the health and safety of the public; or*
- (c) *he or she has been convicted by any court in New Zealand or else where of any offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of 3 months or longer and he or she does not satisfy the responsible authority that, having regard to all the circumstances, including the time that has elapsed since the conviction, the offence does not reflect adversely on his or her fitness to practise as a health practitioner of that profession; or*

- (d) *the responsible authority is satisfied that the applicant is unable to perform the functions for the practice of that profession because of some mental or physical condition;*
- (e) *he or she is the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings in New Zealand or in another country, and the responsible authority believes on reasonable grounds that those proceedings reflect adversely on his or her fitness to practise as a health practitioner of that profession; or*
- (f) *he or she is under investigation, in New Zealand or in another country, in respect of any matter that may be the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings, and the responsible authority believes on reasonable grounds that that investigation reflects adversely on his or her fitness to practise as a health practitioner of that profession; or*
- (g) *he or she-*
  - (i) *is subject to an order of a professional disciplinary tribunal (whether in New Zealand or another country) or to an order of an educational institution accredited under section 12 (2) (a) or to an order of an authority or a similar body in another country; and*
  - (ii) *does not satisfy the responsible authority that that order does not reflect adversely on his or her fitness to practise as a health practitioner of that profession; or*
- (h) *the responsible authority has reason to believe that the applicant may endanger the health or safety of members of the public.*

**45 Notification of inability to perform required functions due to mental or physical condition.**

- (4) *Subsection (5) applies to a person in charge of an educational programme in New Zealand that includes or consists of a programme of study or training (a **course**) that is a prescribed qualification for a scope of practice of a health profession.*
- (5) *If a person to whom this subsection applies has reason to believe that a student who is completing a course would be unable to perform the functions required for the practice of the relevant profession because of some mental or physical condition, the person must promptly give the Registrar of the authority written notice of the circumstances.*

**118 Functions of authorities**

*The functions of each authority in respect of the health profession are as follows:*

- a) *to prescribe the qualifications required for the scopes of practice within the professional, and for that purpose, to accredit and monitor educational institutions and degrees, courses of studies, or programmes:*
- b) *to authorise the registration of health practitioners under this Act, and to maintain registers:*
- c) *to consider applications for annual practising certificates:*
- d) *to review and promote the competence of health practitioners:*
- e) *to recognise, accredit, and set programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of health practitioners:*
- f) *to receive and act on information from health practitioners*

*employers and the Health and Disability Commissioner about the competence of health practitioners:*

- g) to notify employers the Accident Compensation Corporation the Director-General of Health, and the Health and Disability Commissioner that the practice of a health practitioner may pose a risk of harm to the public:*
- h) to consider the cases of health practitioner who may be unable to perform the functions required for the practice of the profession:*
- i) to set standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct to be observed by health practitioners of the profession:*
- j) to liaise with other authorities appointed under this Act about matters of common interest:*
- k) to promote education and training in the profession:*
- l) to promote public awareness of the responsibilities of the authority:*
- m) to exercise and perform any other functions powers and duties that are conferred or imposed on it by or under this Act or any other enactment.*