



Standards of competence for nurses 2025

November 2025

Why the changes?

The Nursing Council, under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act), is required to determine scopes of practice and standards of competence.

The Council regularly reviews these documents to ensure nurses are equipped to meet the challenges of today's complex healthcare environment.

The revised scopes and new standards reflect the complexity of today's and future healthcare challenges.



Standards of competence

The standards integrate:

Cultural – Māori health and cultural safety

Evidence informed knowledge and leadership - scientific and clinical

Relational – communication and compassion

Enrolled Nurse: 5 pou

Registered Nurse: 6 pou

Each pou have descriptors which provide depth and understanding of the requirements of the pou.



Pou one - Māori health (enrolled and registered nurse)

Reflecting a commitment to Māori health, enrolled and registered nurses must support, respect and protect Māori rights while advocating for equitable and positive health outcomes. Nurses are also required to demonstrate kawa whakaruruhau by addressing power imbalances and working collaboratively with Māori.



Pou one - Māori health (enrolled and registered nurse)

Pou one emphasises the nurse's role and commitment to upholding the rights of Māori while receiving health care.

It is expected that you will engage in ongoing professional development and understand the impact of social determinants on the health and wellbeing of Māori.

An example of practice could be describing how you have engaged in professional development to support your understanding of health equity for Māori. You can describe how this has influenced your practice. For example the use of te reo or understanding tikanga or supporting your Māori colleagues.



Pou two – Cultural safety (enrolled and registered nurse)

Cultural safety in nursing practice ensures enrolled and registered nurses provide culturally safe care that is inclusive, responsive and equitable. This requires nurses to reflect on their practice and understand their cultural identity and the power imbalances between the nurse and the recipient of care.



Pou two – Cultural safety (enrolled and registered nurse)

Pou two is focused on delivering care that is culturally safe, requiring nurses to understand their cultural identity and reflect on the power imbalances that exist between the nurse and the recipient of care.

It requires us to respect diversity, respect all cultures and protect cultural identity.

An example in practice could be listening and understanding a patient's affirmed gender identity and pronouns, communicating these clearly with the team, and advocating for privacy and dignity during care.



Pou three - Whanaungatanga and communication

A commitment to whanaungatanga and communication, requires registered nurses to establish relationships through the use of effective communication strategies which are culturally appropriate and reflect concepts such as whānau-centred care and cultural safety. An understanding of different forms of communication enables the nurse to engage with the interprofessional healthcare team, advocate for innovative change where appropriate and influence the direction of the profession.



Pou three - Whanaungatanga and communication

Pou three:

- highlights the importance of building relationships and communicating effectively with people, whanau and within healthcare teams.
- requires nurses to communicate professionally, build a shared understanding with people, assess and promote health literacy and comply with the ethical and legal documentation requirements.
- requires nurses to use appropriate digital and online communication.

An example of practice could be sharing your communication approach in a situation and how this supported building relationships with others, such as patient's or other team members.



Pou four – Pūkengatanga and evidence-informed nursing practice

Pūkengatanga and evidence-informed nursing practice requires registered nurses to use clinical skills, coupled with critical thinking informed by high quality and current evidence to provide quality, safe nursing care. Evidence-informed practice prepares the nurse to differentially diagnose, plan care, identify appropriate interventions, lead the implementation and evaluate care provision and outcomes.



Pou four – Pūkengatanga and evidence-informed nursing practice

Pou four:

- requires the application of critical thinking, clinical reasoning, building upon your scientific and clinical knowledge to provide evidence informed care.
- requires nurses to undertake comprehensive nursing assessment and develop differential diagnoses to inform the plan of care.
- requires being able to respond to emerging risks and challenging situations, and seeking guidance when required.

An example of practice could be describing a specific assessment framework you use in your area of practice, such as mental health assessment or paediatric assessment and then describing your plan of care to match the findings of the assessment or differential diagnosis. This would show your critical thinking and evidence informed practice.



Pou five - Manaakitanga and people-centred care

Manaakitanga and people-centred care requires nurses to demonstrate compassion, collaboration and partnership to build trust and shared understanding between the nurse and people, whānau or communities. Compassion, trust and partnership underpin effective decision-making in the provision of care to support the integration of beliefs and preferences of people and their whānau.



Pou five - Manaakitanga and people-centred care

- This pou requires nurses to demonstrate compassion and to build safe therapeutic relationships based on trust and understanding.
- Incorporating manaakitanga into practice requires respect, humility, kindness and honesty.

An example for of practice could be describing how you connect and work alongside patients, families or health professionals in a respectful way to support the decision making process. For example discharge planning or choice of health care.



Pou six - Rangatiratanga and leadership

Rangatiratanga and leadership in nursing practice is demonstrated when nurses proactively provide solutions and lead innovation to improve the provision of care. Leadership requires all nurses to act as change agents and lead change when appropriate. Fundamental to the integration of leadership is the need for nurses to intervene, speak out, and advocate to escalate concerns on behalf of, colleagues or recipients of care.



Pou six - Rangatiratanga and leadership

- All nurses irrespective of years of practice, lead in some way.
- This requires nurses to drive positive change, to intervene and speak out, to advocate and escalate concerns, on behalf of patients or colleagues.
- Rangatiratanga in nursing is fostering a healthcare system that upholds the dignity, rights and values of all. It also enhances the quality of care that contributes to a more equitable, responsive and respectful healthcare system for everyone.

An example of practice could be describing an area of practice that you have identified as needing change or improvement and how you spoke up about this and lead or supported others in leading change.



Pou three Whanaungatanga, partnership and communication (enrolled nurse)

A commitment to whanaungatanga, partnership and communication requires enrolled nurses to work in partnership, using a range of communication techniques, to work effectively with individuals, whānau, communities and the interprofessional healthcare team.



Pou three Whanaungatanga, partnership and communication (enrolled nurse)

- This pou refers to the strong relationships and partnership that is essential to work effectively with people and whanau

An example of practice could be to share how as an enrolled nurse you coordinated care and engaged with others in the health care team or with patient groups.



Pou four – Pūkengatanga and knowledge-informed practice

Pūkengatanga and knowledge-informed practice requires enrolled nurses to use clinical knowledge and expertise to undertake a nursing assessment, inform clinical decision-making and provide safe care to individuals, whānau and communities. Enrolled nurses integrate clinical and cultural expertise and acknowledge people's unique and diverse values and circumstances.



Pou four – Pūkengatanga and knowledge-informed practice

Pou four:

- relates to nursing knowledge, assessment and decision making which integrates clinical and cultural aspects .
- requires enrolled nurses to demonstrate safe medication administration.

An example of practice could be describing a specific assessment framework you use in your area of practice, such as a wound assessment and then describing how this informs clinical decision making and safe care.



Pou five – Mana hautū, professional accountability and responsibility

Mana hautū, professional accountability and responsibility in nursing practice, requires enrolled nurses to provide care within professional, ethical and legal boundaries to ensure safe quality nursing practice that upholds people's rights, confidentiality and dignity.



Pou five – Mana hautū, professional accountability and responsibility

- enrolled nurses are accountable for their actions and must operate within legal and ethical boundaries. This includes ensuring documentation is legal, relevant, accurate, professional and timely.
- An example of practice could be describing accurate clinical documentation and how concerns are escalated.



Recertification audit has changed

You must be able to link your professional development to the standards of competence.

For evidence of continuing competence, you are required to provide an example that evidences your practice for each pou.



Declarations

You will be asked to declare that you have not used AI to generate practice examples

You will be asked for a declaration by a senior nurse who can confirm that your evidence provided reflects your practice



Examples of practice for each pou

Evidence need to meet the pou.

Not required to provide evidence for each descriptors.

Key is to provide an actual example from practice and show how this evidence reflects the pou.



PDRP transition to the new standards

All currently approved programmes continue.

Nurses can continue under the current PDRP programmes.

PDRP will transition to new standards of competence by January 2026

Nurses are encourage to discuss specific PDRP changes with their programme coordinators.



Questions / Patai?

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