



Introduction to general practice



Professional practice

Introduction to general practice
Module 2: June 2009

Learning objectives

On completion of this module participants will have:

- regulation of practice
- the national ANMC competency standards for nurses
- the competency standards for nurses in general practice
- the scope of practice issues including supervision and delegation
- how to use the ANMC National Decision making Framework
- the Code of Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics for nurses
- liability, professional indemnity, insurance and mandated reported.

What does a nurse actually do?

What is the difference between a registered nurse and an enrolled nurse, a nurse practitioner, a generalist or a specialist nurse, a beginning or an advanced nurse?

Can we articulate what we do and where we add value?

Professional practice

Relates to the professional, legal and ethical responsibilities which require demonstration of a satisfactory knowledge base, accountability for practice, functioning in accordance with legislation affecting nursing and health care, and the protection of individual and group rights.

(Ref: http://www.anmc.org.au/docs/Competency_standards_RN.pdf)

Regulation to practice

Licensure requires that you practice:

- safely and competently
- within your scope
- in accordance with your Code of Ethics
- in accordance with your Code of Professional Conduct
- within a legislative framework.

National registration and accreditation

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

- a single national registration scheme for health professionals
- a single national accreditation for education and training.

National core competency standards

- the national competency standards for the registered nurse are the core competency standards by which your performance is assessed to obtain and retain your license to practice as a registered nurse in Australia
- as a nurse, these core competency standards provide you with the framework for assessing your competence.

National core competency standards

These standards include:

- ANMC National Competency Standards for Registered Nurses (2005)
- ANMC National Competency Standards for Enrolled Nurses (2002)

Details of the competencies as well as principles for the assessment of national competency standards are available from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council at <http://www.anmc.org.au>

National core competencies

- provided to guide behaviour and assess competencies
- regulation and accountability for high quality care

Domains: Registered Nurse

- clinical practice
- management of care
- counselling
- health promotion
- client advocacy
- facilitation of change
- clinical teaching
- supervision
- mentoring
- research.

Domains: Enrolled Nurse

- professional and ethical practice
- critical thinking and analysis
- management of care
- Enabling.

National competency standards for registered nurses National competency standards for enrolled nurses

- used by the individual nurse to assess own performance, or the performance of peers
- used by regulatory authorities to assess performance to obtain or retain a license to practice
- used by regulatory authorities to assess professional misconduct matters
- used by education authorities as a framework for course development
- used by employers for position description and performance assessment purposes
- used by the profession to communicate to consumers standards which can be expected.

Competency standards for nurses in general practice

- developed in 2005 by the Australian Nursing Federation to be used in conjunction with the ANMC national core competency standards
- to access the competency standards for nurses working in general practice along with a toolkit visit.

Ref: <http://www.anf.org.au/>

Competencies tool kit

- self assessment tool
- sample professional development plan
- resources to help use of standards
- sample job descriptions
- aids to reviewing scope of practice.

Competencies tool kit

Competency Standards for nurses in general practice



Resources for registered nurses

> Tool-kit introduction	View PDF File
> Competency standards for nurses in general practice	View PDF File
> Competency standards for the registered nurse in general practice	View PDF File
> Role statement for the registered nurse in general practice	View PDF File
> Using the competency standards for professional development purposes	View PDF File View Web Page
> Self-assessment for the registered nurse in general practice	View Word File View PDF File
> Professional development plan (registered nurse)	View PDF File
> Template for a professional development plan	View Word File View PDF File

Other Services

- [Online help](#)
- > [Home page](#)
- > [About the project](#)
- > [Online evaluation](#)
- > [Acknowledgements](#)

Scope of practice

- the scope of practice for practice nurses ensures that they are educated, legally authorised and competent to perform a particular role or task
- scope of practice is influenced by the setting and environment, policy, education, standards and health needs of the population
- all nurses should work within their scope of practice, competency level, and the policies established by the individual general practice
- it is a nurse's legal responsibility to ensure that they do not practice outside their scope of practice.

Scope of practice

General practitioners and nurses should discuss and agree on, and then document, an acceptable role to ensure that all members of the team have a shared understanding.

Decision making framework

- in preparation for national registration in 2010 a national decision making framework has been developed
- it forms part of the nursing and midwifery regulatory authority's professional practice framework to ensure safe nursing and midwifery care is provided in the public interest
- the decision making framework can be found at:
<http://www.anmc.org.au>

Scope of practice: decision making framework

- delegation
- supervision
- particular responsibilities of registered nurses (RN) and enrolled nurses (EN)
- role relationships (inter and intra professional).

Supervision

- some of the nurse regulatory authorities have produced policy statements and guidelines for delegation to and supervision of enrolled nurses (Div 2) and these must be considered by employers of enrolled nurses (Div 2). The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council has guidelines on delegation and supervision (see <http://www.anmc.org.au>)
- there are also decision making frameworks being developed by the nurse regulatory authorities to assist registered nurses (Div 1) and enrolled nurses (Div 2) make decisions about the way that nursing work is delegated to enrolled nurses (Div 2).

What does supervision of enrolled nurses (Div2) mean?

Direct supervision

- the registered nurse (Div 1) is actually present, observes, works with and directs the person who is being supervised

Indirect supervision

- the registered nurse (Div 1) is easily contactable but does not directly observe the activities
- the employer must ensure that supervisory arrangements are in place.

Code of Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics

- two additional sets of standards are pertinent to all nurses including those who work in general practice
- the Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia (2008) is a set of expected national standards of nursing conduct for Australian nurses. A breach of the Code may constitute professional misconduct or unprofessional conduct
- the Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia (2008) outlines the ethical standards expected and required of nurses practicing in Australia.

Both Codes can be obtained from the ANMC: <http://www.anmc.org.au>

Professional liability

- if a patient is harmed, or is allegedly harmed, as a result of the negligent acts or omissions of a nurse working in general practice, the general practitioners legal responsibility in part depends on whether the practice nurse is an employee of the practice or an independent contractor
- employers are legally responsible for an employee's negligence, based on the principle of vicarious liability. Under this principle, an employer is legally liable for the negligent acts and omissions of its employees where those acts and omissions arise from or occur in the scope and course of the employment relationship... (but)... this does not absolve the nurse... from responsibility or legal exposure... (the employer, or very rarely, the patient may decide to sue the nurse or the nurse as well as the employer).

Vicarious liability

If a patient is harmed, or allegedly harmed, as a result of the negligent acts or omissions of a nurse working in general practice, the GPs legal responsibility in part depends on whether the practice nurse:

- is an employee of the practice
- is an independent contractor.

RCNA, Nursing in General Practice: A Guide for the General Practice Team

The nurse as an employee

Under the principle of vicarious liability, an employer is legally liable for the negligent acts and omissions of its employees where those acts and omissions arise from or occur in the scope and course of the employment relationship.

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Nurse as an independent contractor

Liability for any negligent act by a nurse lies with that nurse. A nurse who is an independent contractor should therefore obtain her or his own professional indemnity cover and the practice engaging the nurse should ensure that the nurse has appropriate and sufficient professional indemnity insurance.

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Professional indemnity insurance

- professional indemnity insurance provides cover for claims made against you for a breach (act, error or omission or conduct) of your professional duty as a nurse
- insurance packages are readily available from professional nursing organisations or via insurance brokers.

Mandatory reporting

- there is legislation that specifies who is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Mandatory reporting requirements vary across Australia.

More information can be found at the following address:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/pubs.html>

Summary

This module has highlighted:

- the role of regulation of nursing practice
- the standards and guidelines which provide the framework for the nurse working in general practice
- issues relating to employee status, professional liability and indemnity insurance
- mandatory reporting requirements.