



SINGAPORE NURSING BOARD

CORE COMPETENCIES OF REGISTERED NURSE

Registered nurses (RNs) utilise evidence-based nursing knowledge and professional nursing judgement to assess health needs, provide nursing care, educate clients and support individuals to manage their health holistically. They practise in collaboration with other healthcare professionals. They are accountable for their scope of practice including the supervision and delegation of nursing activities to the enrolled nurses and nursing assistants. RNs may practise in a variety of clinical contexts depending on their education preparation and practice experience.

Core Competencies

The Singapore Nursing Board's Core Competencies for Registered Nurse are a set of broad guidelines that define the requisite qualities, attributes and skills for a RN to practise in Singapore.

These Core Competencies supplement the Standards of Practice for Nurses and Midwives to define the minimum level of performance of a RN and is set at the entry to practice level.

The Core Competencies are not setting specific, they are applicable to any practice setting.

The Core Competencies set the foundation for RNs to maintain their competence and to acquire additional competencies or advanced clinical skills to deliver safe client care in response to changing healthcare needs and advancement in technology.

Purpose of Core Competencies

- (1) Inform nurses on the minimum competencies for RN practice.
- (2) Direct pre-registration nursing curriculum development and review.
- (3) Guide the competency development and assessment of students and newly graduated RNs.
- (4) Assess the competencies of internationally qualified nurses seeking employment in Singapore.
- (5) Assess nurses seeking re-registration.
- (6) Evaluate nurses involved in professional disciplinary cases.

Related Definitions

Core competencies: a standard set of performance domains and their corresponding behavioural elements which a nurse is required to demonstrate.

Competency: the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes a nurse must possess in order to perform a set of defined activities to an expected standard.

Competence: the ability of a nurse to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, judgment and attitudes required to perform activities within the defined scope of practice at an acceptable level of proficiency.

Competent: being able to demonstrate the necessary ability, knowledge, skills and attitudes across the domains of competencies at a standard that is determined to be appropriate for that level at which a nurse is being assessed.

Core Competencies of Registered Nurses

A Registered Nurse (RN) is a person who has completed a professional pre-registration nursing programme accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) or its equivalent, for the purpose of registration, or has been assessed to be competent to practice as a RN.

The Core Competencies are organised into 4 Domains. Each Domain has associated competency units, with each unit representing a major function/ functional area to be performed by a RN. Competency Elements represent sub-functions of a competency unit.

Competence Domain 1: Professional, Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice

Competence Domain 2: Management of Care

Competence Domain 3: Leadership and Nursing Management

Competence Domain 4: Professional Development

Domain		Competency Unit	Elements
1	Professional, Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice	Demonstrates understanding, knowledge, accountability and responsibility of the legal obligations for nursing practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Understands the legislative framework, the role of the SNB and its regulatory functions; the SNB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and Standards of Practice for Nurses and Midwives.b) Performs nursing interventions according to institutional and national standards/guidelines.c) Practises in accordance with institutional/national legislation, policies and procedural guidelines.d) Maintains clear and legible documentation and records.e) Ensures own physical, cognitive, psychological & emotional fitness to practice and deliver safe care.f) Recognises differences in accountability and responsibility of the RN and EN in the provision of care.g) Demonstrates responsibility and accountability for care within scope of practice and level of competence.h) Practises in accordance with the expected competencies of RN.i) Supports, collaborates and co-operates with team members and other healthcare professionals.
		Demonstrates and maintains ethical nursing practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Applies value statements in SNB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for ethical decision making.
		Provides culturally appropriate care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Respects the values, customs, spiritual beliefs and practices of individuals and groups.b) Recognises own beliefs and values and how these may influence care giving.

Domain		Competency Unit	Elements
2	Management of Care	Demonstrates effective communication.	a) Listens, clarifies and communicates clearly through verbal/non-verbal, written and electronic means as appropriate to ensure effective communication with clients, families and other healthcare professionals.
		Ensures consistent and continuous holistic quality of care.	a) Performs comprehensive and systematic client assessment. b) Formulates a plan of care in collaboration with the healthcare team, clients, and families. c) Implements and documents planned nursing care in a timely manner. d) Evaluates and modifies plan of care to meet expected outcomes. e) Demonstrates critical thinking, problem solving and clinical reasoning in decision making. f) Utilises well-conducted/evaluated research findings in practice as appropriate (practice based on evidence). g) Participates in decision-making concerning care of clients as well as coordinating their care with other healthcare professionals/providers. h) Collaborates with clients, families, nursing colleagues, other healthcare professionals /providers and the community to ensure continuity of quality care. i) Maintains and updates technical/clinical skills related to nursing practice.
		Maintains safe environment through the use of quality assurance and risk management strategies.	a) Provides a safe environment for clients and staff, including implementing infection control procedures. b) Participates in continuous quality improvement and quality assurance activities. c) Reflects on practice outcomes and makes changes to practice when appropriate. d) Delegates, monitors and supervises work performed by the EN and other ancillary care staff. e) Acknowledges limitations in knowledge and competence and seeks help on competency gaps.
		Applies strategies to promote health and prevent illnesses.	a) Conducts educational needs assessment. b) Applies principles of learning and teaching in health promotion and education for individuals, groups & communities. c) Teaches aspects of care to clients, families, carers and health professionals as appropriate. d) Acquires and provides appropriate written resources for clients and their carers when needed.

Domain		Competency Unit	Elements
3	Leadership & Nursing Management	Demonstrates effective managerial and leadership skills in the provision of quality nursing care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Demonstrates delegation and supervision skills. b) Demonstrates ability to make appropriate management decisions. c) Applies critical thinking skills within a problem-solving context. d) Initiates and engages in dialogue on new initiatives and change processes in nursing and healthcare.
		Uses principles of quality improvement and incorporates them into nursing practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Collects, analyses and utilises data about incidents and trends, and implements strategies to improve care delivery. b) Demonstrates elements of efficient resources utilisation and management, including manpower. c) Understands and applies safety measures and guidelines/standards in one's practice. d) Participates in safety and quality improvements projects/ initiatives.
		Provides a safe working environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Performs hazard and risk analyses. b) Demonstrates knowledge of occupational health and safety legislation, including infection control policies and procedures. c) Plans, organises, supervises, monitors and evaluates workplace health & safety practices. d) Manages workloads effectively by raising concerns and/or seeking consultation and help where applicable. e) Supports, collaborates and cooperates with team members and other healthcare professionals.
4	Professional Development	Demonstrates accountability for one's development and status as a professional Registered Nurse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promotes and maintains the professional role of the nurse by upholding the Nurses' Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and Standards of Practice for Nurses and Midwives. b) Reflects on current nursing practice and applies evidence-based and/or best practice knowledge and technical skills. c) Participates in and contributes to research/evidence-based practice projects/committees. d) Contributes to the education and professional development of others. e) Takes steps to remedy deficits in skills and/or personal knowledge. f) Participates in continuing professional development activities to maintain competency in area/s of practice.

Domain		Competency Unit	Elements
4	Professional Development	Demonstrates ability to apply knowledge and skills in research in different healthcare settings.	a) Demonstrates basic knowledge and participates in the research process. b) Appraises and utilises research findings.

References

Nursing Council of Hong Kong (2012). Core-Competencies for Registered Nurses (General). Nursing Council of Hong Kong.

Western Pacific and South East Asian Region (2006). Common Competencies for Registered Nurses. Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council.



SINGAPORE NURSING BOARD

GENERIC SKILLS OF REGISTERED NURSE

Generic Skills refer to a set of nursing skills that a registered nurse (RN) is expected to perform upon graduation and entry to practice across all settings in Singapore. Together with the Core Competencies for RN, the generic skills define the requirements for registration as an RN in Singapore. The generic skills are not setting specific and have been organized into categories and specific skills for ease of use when assessing the RN's performance.

These generic skills are required to be taught and form part of the pre-registration nursing curriculum prior to graduation and/or completion of the nursing course. Performance assessments of these skills incorporate cognitive, psychomotor and attitudinal domains.

Purpose of Generic Skills

- (1) Establish minimum requirements for teaching and assessment of nursing skills during the pre-registration nursing course.
- (2) Provide a list of expected nursing skills that an RN should perform at entry level across all settings.
- (3) Guide the development of a Test Plan for the RN Licensure Examination (for overseas nurses to be registered with SNB).
- (4) Assess RNs during their provisional licensure period.

S/N	Skills Category	Specific Skills
1	Client/Health Assessment and Re-assessment	
		a) Perform admission, transfer & discharge according to policies and procedures
		b) Perform physical/health assessment (head to toe) and re-assessment
		c) Monitor Vital Signs (done manually or with assistive devices): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temperature• Pulse• Respiration• Blood pressure• Apex beat• Pain score
		d) Perform the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental status examination• BMI calculation• Fall risk assessment• Skin integrity assessment• Nutritional assessment• Neurovascular assessment• Conscious level assessment
		e) Interpret basic ECG (basic rhythm)
		f) Monitor, document, evaluate & report
		g) Develop a nursing care plan
		h) Use clinical pathways and care paths

S/N	Skills Category	Specific Skills
2	Provision of/Assist in Client's Activities of Daily Living	
2.1	Client Safety & Comfort	a) Perform and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene • Grooming • Perineal care • Continence care • Bowel care
		b) Maintain skin integrity
		c) Maintain body temperature
		d) Apply, monitor and evaluate the use of physical restraints
		e) Apply, monitor and evaluate the use of pressure relieving devices
		f) Use of Pressure Ulcer Assessment Tool
2.2	Mobility & Ambulation	a) Apply and evaluate the various positions used in client care delivery
		b) Use and evaluate the use of assisted lifting & transfer techniques
		c) Use, monitor and evaluate the use of walking aids
		d) Care of clients on continuous passive movement
		e) Care of clients on functional mobility aids/devices
2.3	Nutrition, Fluids & Electrolyte Balance	a) Apply and evaluate the use of the various types of diet & feeds
		b) Perform accurate intake & output balance recording
		c) Insert & remove naso-gastric tube
		d) Perform enteral tube feeding – bolus, intermittent & continuous
		e) Use and care of feeding pumps
		f) Perform gastric aspiration (intermittent and continuous modes)
2.4	Elimination	a) Perform female adult urinary catheterization
		b) Assist in male adult catheterization
		c) Care of clients on continuous urinary catheterization
		d) Collect catheter urine specimen (midstream and from in-dwelling urinary catheter)
		e) Perform manual and continuous bladder washout
		f) Care of colostomy and ileostomy
3	Management of Care	
3.1	Respiratory Care	a) Perform insertion of oropharyngeal airway
		b) Perform oro-pharyngeal and naso-pharyngeal suctioning
		c) Implement and evaluate the use of oxygen therapy and pulse oximeter
		d) Perform tracheostomy care
		e) Implement and evaluate the use of incentive spirometry

S/N	Skills Category	Specific Skills
3	Management of Care	
3.1	Respiratory Care	a) Perform and evaluate coughing and deep breathing exercises b) Use of manual resuscitator c) Use of non invasive assisted respiratory devices (e.g. nasal cannula, venturi mask, non rebreather mask, spirometry)
3.2	Administration of Medication	a) Administer, monitor and evaluate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral Injectables Rectal/vaginal Respiratory Enteral – nasogastric (NG), nasojejunal (NJ) & percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) Intravenous (IV) Nebulizer Topical administration (e.g. instillation of eye, ear and nose drops, application of creams, dermal patches etc) b) Recognise and apply indications, contraindications, precautions, adverse effects & client education on effects of medications, including drug allergy c) Apply 5 Rights of medication d) Perform drug calculation e) Perform drug reconstitution f) Manage storage and administration of medications g) Manage storage and administration of controlled drugs
3.3	Pre and Post Operative Care	a) Care of clients pre and post operatively b) Send and receive clients from the Operating Theatre (OT) c) Perform post-operative monitoring & observations (include consciousness level & level of sedation) d) Care of clients with different modes of anaesthesia: general, regional, local etc
3.4	Intravenous Therapy	a) Storage and administration of intravenous fluids, blood & blood products b) Storage, use and care of infusion pumps/equipment
3.5	Wound Care	a) Perform and evaluate dressings, wound conditions b) Care of pressure sores/decubitus ulcers c) Perform removal of stitches, drains, catheters etc d) Apply, monitor and evaluate the use of wound products e) Educate clients/family – self-care in wound dressing f) Monitor and document using a Wound Chart
3.6	Diabetes Care	a) Perform peripheral blood glucose monitoring b) Perform insulin injection technique (types of insulin)
		c) Perform glucometer calibration

S/N	Skills Category	Specific Skills
3	Management of Care	
3.7	End of Life/Palliative Care	a) Provide spiritual care
		b) Perform death procedures
		c) Facilitate grieving process, support for the bereaved family
3.8	Medical Emergencies Management	a) Perform Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS)
		b) Perform Automated External Defibrillation (AED)/Assist in defibrillation
4	Infection Control	
		a) Perform hand hygiene/surgical hand wash
		b) Use of Standard, Contact, Airborne & Isolation Precautions
		c) Perform sterilisation and disinfection
		d) Manage needle stick & splash injury
		e) Manage waste (general & hazardous wastes)
		f) Prepare and use sterile equipment
5	Communication, Teamwork & Service Skills	
		a) Respect client's rights and preserve dignity; demonstrate sensitivity to cultural diversity
		b) Maintain good communication, negotiation, team-based communication and customer service skills
		c) Document and maintain good report writing in compliance with guidelines and medico-legal requirements, manually or electronically
		d) Empower client towards self-care
		e) Review plan of care with team members
		f) Prioritise care
		g) Implement and evaluate care
		h) Discharge planning
		i) Demonstrate coordination skills
6	Client/Health Education & Community Care	
		a) Identify learning needs and learning styles of clients/families
		b) Apply principles of learning and teaching in health promotion & education
		c) Provide resources for clients and carers in collaboration with nursing colleagues and others
		d) Plan, conduct & evaluate health education programmes
		e) Use health education resources

S/N	Skills Category	Specific Skills
7	Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving Skills	
		a) Recognise problem/s
		b) Make clinical decision/s in accordance to professional standards and scope of practice
		c) Reflect on practice
		d) Escalate when in doubt: recognise situations beyond own skills and competence and seek assistance