



## SINGAPORE NURSING BOARD

### CORE COMPETENCIES OF ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE

Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) utilise evidence-based, expert nursing knowledge, complex decision-making skills, expanded clinical competencies 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 clinical leadership in the provision of advanced practice nursing. APNs practise in a clinical context based on their education preparation, experience and certification

#### Core Competencies

The Singapore Nursing Board's Core Competencies for APNs are a set of minimum standards of performance that define the requisite qualities, attributes and integrated knowledge, skills and abilities of an APN to practise in Singapore.

These Core Competencies supplement the Code for Nurses and Midwives and the Scope of Professional Practice of APNs to define the minimum level of performance of an APN and is set at the entry to practice level.

The Core Competencies are not setting specific.

The Core Competencies set the foundation for APNs 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 APN practice.
- (2) Direct APN education curriculum development and review.
- (3) Guide the competency development and assessment of APN Interns and newly certified APNs.
- (4) Assess the competencies of internationally qualified APNs seeking employment in Singapore.
- (5) Assess APNs seeking re-certification.
- (6) Evaluate APNs involved in professional disciplinary cases.

#### Related Definitions

**Core competencies:** a standard set of performance domains and their corresponding behavioural standards 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 Advanced Practice Nurses**

An Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) is a registered nurse (RN) who has completed the Master of Nursing Program in clinical nursing accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) or its equivalent and successfully completed a post-graduation one (1) year Internship program and maintains yearly certification with SNB.

The Core Competencies are organized into 4 domains. A domain is an organised cluster of competencies. Each domain has associated competency standards, with each standard representing a major function/functional area to be performed by a APN. Competency Indicators represent sub-functions of a competency standard.

### **Competence Domain 1: Professional, Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice**

### **Competence Domain 2: Management of Care**

### **Competence Domain 3: Leadership and Management**

### **Competence Domain 4: Professional Development**

<b>Domain</b>		<b>Competency Standard</b>	<b>Competency Indicators</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Professional, Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice</b>	Demonstrate understanding, knowledge, accountability and responsibility of the legal obligations for his/her practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Understand the legislative framework, the role of the SNB and its regulatory functions; the SNB Code for Nurses and Midwives.</li> <li>b) Practise in accordance with institutional/national legislation, policies and procedural guidelines.</li> <li>c) Maintain clear and legible documentation and records.</li> <li>d) Ensure own physical, cognitive, psychological &amp; emotional fitness to practice and deliver safe care.</li> <li>e) Recognise differences in accountability and responsibility of the APN, RN and EN in the provision of care.</li> <li>f) Demonstrate responsibility and accountability within the scope of practice and level of competence.</li> <li>g) Practise in accordance with the expected competencies of an APN.</li> <li>h) Support, collaborate and co-operate with team members and other healthcare professionals.</li> </ul>
		Demonstrate and maintain ethical nursing practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Apply key principles of SNB's Code for Nurses and Midwives for ethical decision making.</li> </ul>
		Provide culturally appropriate care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Respect the values, customs, spiritual beliefs and practices of individuals and groups.</li> <li>b) Recognise own beliefs and values and how these may influence care giving.</li> </ul>

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
2	Management of Care	Patient care: Clinical skills and reasoning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Conduct comprehensive advanced assessments of individual, families and communities.</li> <li>b) Analyse and synthesis assessment data for sound decision making.</li> <li>c) Diagnose and manage healthcare problems and conditions.</li> <li>d) Order for diagnostic investigations, appliances, treatments as required.</li> <li>e) Make appropriate clinical decisions based upon the results of diagnostic testing.</li> <li>f) Furnish medications and dispenses treatments according to the authorized scope of practice, guidelines, protocols and regulatory framework.</li> <li>g) Perform advanced procedures according to protocol.</li> <li>h) Plan and manage patients in collaboration and consultation with other healthcare professional where necessary.</li> <li>i) Use appropriate teaching/ learning strategies to provide diagnostic information and management plan to patients and their care-giver.</li> <li>j) Exercise clinical judgement to detect changes in patient's condition, anticipate and prevent complications.</li> <li>k) Recognize when to seek additional guidance.</li> <li>l) Initiate a consultation/ referral and or discharge where necessary.</li> <li>m) Coordinate transitional care services in and across care settings.</li> </ul>
		Clinical knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Demonstrate sufficient knowledge to treat medical conditions and provide preventive care in the respective specialty</li> <li>b) Demonstrate sufficient knowledge to interpret basic clinical tests</li> <li>c) Demonstrate sufficient knowledge of relevant pharmacology of medications</li> <li>d) Demonstrate knowledge of common 'red flags' and when to appropriately escalate to the medical team.</li> </ul>
		Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Listen, clarify and communicate clearly through verbal, non-verbal, written and electronic means as appropriate to ensure effective communication with patients, families and other healthcare professionals.</li> <li>b) Communicate about health assessment findings, care plan and/or diagnoses.</li> </ul>

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
2	Management of Care	Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Demonstrate compassion, integrity and respect to patients, families and other healthcare team.</li> <li>b) Uses best available evidence to continuously improve quality of clinical practice.</li> <li>c) Proactively implement interventions to ensure quality of care.</li> <li>d) Collaborate as a key member of an interdisciplinary team through the development of collaborative and innovative practices.</li> </ul>
3	Leadership & Management	Demonstrate effective clinical leadership in the provision of advanced practice nursing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Provide clinical leadership and consultancy of the specific clinical specialty in the delivery of care and nursing practices.</li> <li>b) Keep abreast of current trends in clinical practices and shares information with other staff members.</li> <li>c) Act as a role model and resource person: coaches, guides and develops staff to deliver a high standard of clinical care for patient excellence.</li> <li>d) Collaborate with other healthcare team members to plan, implement and evaluate pertinent change in practice and health care delivery.</li> </ul>
		Use principles of quality improvement and incorporates them into nursing practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Analyse trends and information to identify opportunities in collaboration with other healthcare personnel for service improvement and patient outcome.</li> <li>b) Demonstrate elements of efficient resources utilisation in patient care management.</li> <li>c) Understand and applies safety measures and guidelines/standards in one's practice.</li> <li>d) Participate in safety and quality improvements projects/ initiatives.</li> </ul>
		Strengthen the link between clinical nursing and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support research efforts to advance knowledge and to promote evidence based practices.</li> <li>b) Evaluate current research findings and determine applicability to unit practice.</li> <li>c) Promote, implement and evaluate standards of clinical practice in the relevant specialty through development of policies/ guidelines and standards of care.</li> </ul>

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
4	Professional Development	Demonstrate accountability for one's development and status as a professional APN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Promote and maintain the professional role of the nurse by upholding the Code for Nurses and Midwives.</li> <li>b) Reflect on current nursing practice and applies evidence-based and/or best practice knowledge and technical skills.</li> <li>c) Act as an advocate for patients in the health care system and in the development of health policies that promote and protect the individual patient, family and community.</li> <li>d) Contribute to the education and professional development of others.</li> <li>e) Take steps to remedy deficits in skills and/or personal knowledge.</li> <li>f) Participate in continuing professional development activities to maintain competency in area/s of practice.</li> <li>g) Evaluate practice to ensure professional, ethical, equitable and quality healthcare services.</li> </ul>
		Demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in research in different healthcare settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Participate in and contribute to research/evidence-based practice projects/committees.</li> <li>b) Appraise and utilise research findings appropriately to improve patient outcomes.</li> </ul>

## References

American Association of Nurse Practitioners Fellows (2015). Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners. USA: American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2014). Advanced Nursing Practice Framework: Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice in Health and Social Care Trusts. Retrieved from [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators (2017). Entry-Level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners in Canada. Canada: College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia.

International Council of Nurses (ICN) International Nurse Practitioner/ Advanced Practice Nursing Network (2005). Scope of Practice, Standards and Competencies of the Advanced Practice Nurse Final Revision January 2005. Geneva: International Nurse Practitioner/ Advanced Practice Nurse Network.

Nurses and Midwives Act, Cap 209 (2012 Revised edition). Singapore.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2017). Competencies for the Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice. New Zealand: Nursing Council of New Zealand.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2014). Nurse Practitioner Standards for Practice. Retrieved from [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au)

The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (2017). Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies Content: A Delineation of Suggested Content Specific to the Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies. National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties: Nurse Practitioner Educators.