

**STANDARDS FOR
ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE
EDUCATION**

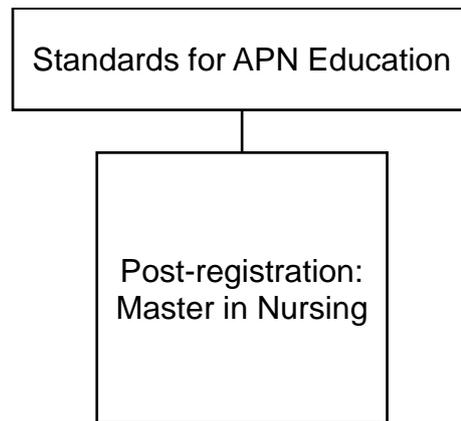


SINGAPORE NURSING BOARD

INTRODUCTION

The Nurses and Midwives Act Cap 209 (2012 Revised edition) empowers the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) to regulate standards for the education and training of Registered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses, Registered Midwives and Advanced Practice Nurses. SNB's role and function in nursing education regulation is to accredit and approve educational programmes in nursing and midwifery, and institutions providing these programmes. Professional programme accreditation is concerned with determining the quality and integrity of nursing programmes in the interest of public trust and safety. Accreditation assures the public that having completed an accredited nursing programme, the nurses have achieved agreed professional outcomes and competencies.

The educational preparation and the practice of nursing have undergone transformative changes in response to evolving healthcare needs and expectations. The Standards for Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Education provide guidance for the development of innovative, practice-oriented nursing education for the certification of Advanced Practice Nurse.



The guidelines and accreditation requirements outlined in SNB's revised Standards for APN Education are drawn from national and international best practices for accreditation in healthcare and other professional industries. Each standard has identified measurable quality indicators. The standards form the basis for accrediting, approving, monitoring, maintaining and evaluating the quality of the Master in Nursing programme leading to certification as APN.

*Registrar
Singapore Nursing Board
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STANDARD ONE: GOVERNANCE

The institution that provides education for nurses shall ensure policies and practices reflect professional nursing standards and meet the needs and expectations of the community of interest. Policies and practices are consistent with the Standards for Advanced Practice Nurse Education of the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB).

Quality Indicators

- 1.1 The institution seeking accreditation of the nursing programmes(s) shall be registered with the Ministry of Education (MOE) as a recognised education provider.
- 1.2 The institution's mission, philosophy and purpose support the professional development of the learners; reflect professional nursing standards and the needs of the community of interest.
- 1.3 The organisation chart delineates authority, responsibility, accountability and communication in the institution and the nursing Department/ School.
- 1.4 The Head of the Department/ School shall be responsible for maintaining organisational standards and regulatory requirements in all aspects of the programme as stipulated by SNB.
- 1.5 Authority for oversight of the programme is delegated to the Head/ Assistant Head of the department/ School.
- 1.6 The Lead for the Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) programme is a SNB-certified APN or equivalent with PhD/ Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) with academic and teaching qualifications and experience deemed equivalent, and is responsible for the overall leadership of the APN programme.
- 1.7 The lead APN faculty member for each specialised branch of nursing is SNB-certified in the same specialised branch of nursing and provides direct oversight for the educational component of the APN programme.
- 1.8 There is evidence that current written policies and procedures guide the programme administration, management and evaluation.
- 1.9 Expected faculty outcomes are identified by the Department, School or Institution. They are written and communicated to the faculty.
- 1.10 Nursing faculty are involved in the development, review and revision of programme policies and practices.

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- 1.11 The learners' record in the programme is maintained for verification and shall include:
- (i) academic results;
 - (ii) credit hours in the classroom, laboratory and clinical placement; and
 - (iii) the official transcript states the clinical specialty of the graduate's educational preparation.
- 1.12 There is evidence of a policy to guide the process when the institution collaborates with other educational institutions and where there is transfer of educational credits.
- 1.13 The institution shall submit the detailed curriculum of a new programme for accreditation and approval by SNB at least nine months before implementation of the programme.
- 1.14 The institution seeking re-accreditation of the programme shall submit the revised curriculum to SNB nine months prior to end of the accreditation period.

STANDARD TWO: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The curriculum design ensures outcomes of the programme are consistent with the mission and philosophy of the institution. The curriculum provides correlated theory and practice to prepare the graduate to be eligible for SNB APN certification for each specialised branch of nursing. The curriculum is congruent with SNB Scope of Professional Practice and Core Competencies of an APN.

Quality Indicators

- 2.1 The programme shall specify the:
 - (i) selection of learners with appropriate educational qualifications and relevant clinical experience for admission;
 - (ii) requirements for learners to be certified medically and physically fit to pursue the programme; and
 - (iii) eligibility of the learners to meet the requirements for registration by SNB (refer to SNB's Guidelines for Curriculum Accreditation/ Re-accreditation of Master of Nursing leading to Certification as an Advanced Practice Nurse)

- 2.2 The Curriculum Development Committee should have at least two members who have prior training and/ or experience in curriculum development in addition to APN faculty members and practising APNs.

- 2.3 The curriculum provides evidence of:
 - (i) a conceptual framework that underpins educational and nursing philosophies;
 - (ii) a focus on the nursing response to healthcare needs of the community in accordance with healthcare policies;
 - (iii) nursing as the primary focus of the programme;
 - (iv) integration of theory with practice;
 - (v) linkages between subject objectives, learning outcomes, assessments & expected competencies; and
 - (vi) teaching and learning strategies that enable the development of clinical reasoning, problem-solving and critical thinking to achieve the expected outcomes of the programme.

- 2.4 There is evidence of:
 - (i) an implementation plan for the programme;
 - (ii) a logical sequence of contents and clinical learning experiences;
 - (iii) learning outcomes and competencies for acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes;
 - (iv) clinical practice placements to facilitate interaction between learners and clients to achieve the stated learning outcomes; and
 - (v) appropriate methods of assessment to reflect achievement of expected outcomes specific to the programme.

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- 2.5 There is written evidence of commitment from the health care industry to accept learners for clinical practice placements*.
- 2.6 There is sufficient and relevant clinical experience for learners to achieve the stated learning outcomes.
- 2.7 The clinical practice placement allows for purposeful and focused learning where the learner is guided/ supervised in the application and integration of knowledge and skills, and acquisition of professional attitudes.
- 2.8 There is evidence of APN faculty members from the institution and APNs in practice to review/ revise the programme. There is input from current and past students.
- 2.9 The validity of the accreditation per course/programme is three to five years as tabled below:

Course or Programme Duration	Accredited Period	Accredited Period for New Course or Programme
Less than 2 years	3 years	2 years
2 years and above	5 years	3 years

[Note: SNB reserves the right to conduct more frequent reviews or determine the accreditation period on a case by case basis.]

- 2.10 There is systematic and continuous evaluation of all curriculum components to ensure an ongoing development, maintenance and enhancement of the curriculum.

**For quality indicators relating to clinical practice placements refer to the ‘Standards for APN Clinical Education’.*

STANDARD THREE: ASSESSMENT

The curriculum incorporates a variety of approaches to assessment. The assessment and evaluation of learning is a continuous process of providing feedback on the learners' progress and achievement of learning outcomes.

Quality Indicators

- 3.1 The assessment of learning:
 - (i) is based on a variety of strategies that are aligned with the subject area, stage of the educational programme and expected learning outcomes;
 - (ii) have measures the integration and application of knowledge, skills and attitude/ behaviours required for professional advanced nursing practice.
 - (iii) has evidence of formative and summative assessment; and
 - (iv) has explicit marking rubric for each assessment component.
 - (v) has a consistent approach to assessment across modules/ subjects that is periodically reviewed and updated.
 - (vi) have outcomes of assessments that are reviewed and monitored; feedback given to learners in a timely manner.
- 3.2 The institution shall establish an Examination Board/ Committee with clearly defined functions for academic programmes. Members should include APNs who have no conflict of interest.
- 3.3 The faculty responsible for assessment shall have formal preparation in assessment and evaluation.
- 3.4 The assessors shall have experience/ expertise in the subject area. APN assessors shall have at least three years' experience as an APN in the same setting/ specialty.
- 3.5 There shall be collaboration between the education institution and healthcare industry involved in clinical practice placement to select, implement and evaluate assessment methods.
- 3.6 Evaluation outcomes are used for development, improvement and planning future learning opportunities for learners.

STANDARD FOUR: TEACHING FACULTY

The institution has sufficient qualified and capable faculty to provide leadership, teach and guide learners to attain the goals and outcomes of the nursing programme.

Quality Indicators

- 4.1 Nursing faculty has academic and/ or professional nursing qualifications in the relevant discipline in advance (at least one higher level) than the programme of study taught or has the equivalent professional experience in the relevant discipline (refer to table on page 12 that includes work experience of nursing faculty).
- 4.2 Nursing faculty teaching in the APN programme:
 - (i) have a minimum of PhD/ DNP or Master in Nursing (Clinical Specialty) and working towards a Doctorate in Nursing; and/ or
 - (ii) have a valid SNB APN Practising Certificate and the relevant experience and expertise as a certified APN (minimum of three years full-time APN experience (excludes internship)), to teach advanced practice nursing specific contents.
- 4.3 All faculty, including full-time, part-time employed staff, shall show evidence of undertaking/ completion of a programme/ course in curriculum development or design, teaching and learning strategies, assessment and evaluation.
- 4.4 Adjunct/ Associate/ Sessional Lecturers/ Facilitators/ tutors shall show evidence of completion of a preparatory course in teaching, learning and assessment.
- 4.5 Faculty teaching non-nursing subjects shall possess appropriate professional qualifications and experience relevant to their expertise/ specialty and/ or subject areas.
- 4.6 There shall be evidence of continuing professional education for faculty and currency of nursing competencies for faculty involved in clinical supervision/ education*.
- 4.7 The performance of faculty is evaluated periodically to assure ongoing competence and development.
- 4.8 The clinical teachers/ supervisors providing clinical supervision shall be competent and current APNs with a minimum of three (3) years full-time experience (excludes internship) as certified APNs and possess valid APN Practising Certificate issued by SNB or qualified medical specialists in the area for which the APN is training.
- 4.9 The clinical teacher/ supervisor to learner ratio in the clinical settings does not exceed 1:2 to ensure quality of clinical learning.

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- 4.10 APN faculty teaching in clinical courses/ modules shall maintain currency in clinical practice and update course contents where relevant.
- 4.11 There is a sufficient mix of full-time and part-time faculty to adequately support the professional role development and clinical teaching for APN practice.

For quality indicators relating to clinical supervision/ education refer to the 'Standards for APN Clinical Education**'*

STANDARD FIVE: RESOURCES

The education institution has adequate/ appropriate facilities and resources to support the programme objectives and outcomes.

Quality Indicators

5.1 There is evidence of:

- (i) human resources to support the development and implementation of the programme;
- (ii) physical resources (e.g. classroom, laboratories, tools and materials, equipment, library, instructional technology facilities, audio-visual aids, offices and spaces) that are accessible to faculty and learners to enable the achievement of programme outcomes; and
- (iii) learning resources such as adequate and current collection of literature on nursing and related subjects, including e-resources.

STANDARD SIX

PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The education institution utilizes a systematic process to determine programme effectiveness with an emphasis on continually improving the quality of teaching and learning experience for students and the competence of its graduates.

Quality Indicators

- 6.1 There is an oversight by the academic board or equivalent, on the school's responsibility and control of the programme development, monitoring, review, evaluation and quality improvement.
- 6.2 There is regular evaluation of academic and clinical supervisor effectiveness through feedback from students and other sources and systems to monitor and improve staff performance.
- 6.3 Feedback obtained from the quality improvement processes are incorporated into the programme to improve both theoretical and practical learning for learners.
- 6.4 There are regular evaluation and revision of programme contents and learning methodologies to incorporate emerging issues surrounding nursing practice, healthcare trends and policy reforms.

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF NURSING PROGRAMMES

Type of Programme	Duration	Curriculum	Educational Setting	Minimum Qualification/ Work Experience of Nursing Faculty
Master in Nursing (leading to APN certification)	Full or part-time	Refer to SNB's Guidelines for Curriculum Accreditation/ Re-accreditation of Master of Nursing leading to Certification as Advanced Practice Nurse	Local, Singapore university	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PhD/ Doctorate in Nursing (Clinical Specialty) or Master in Nursing (Clinical Specialty). 2. Hold a valid SNB APN Practising Certificate. 3. At least Three years' full-time experience (excludes Internship) as a certified APN. 4. Have the relevant experience and expertise as a certified APN. 5. Teaching experience and qualification.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Assessors	Faculty conducting the assessment.
Accreditation	The process by which a statutory/ accrediting body scrutinises and evaluates an institution, programme or curriculum as meeting the required standards necessary for providing an education service as set by the regulatory/ accrediting body.
Assessment	An evaluation method, process and record.
Certification	A process by which the regulatory authority validates that Registered Nurses have successfully completed a recognised nursing education programme before they are allowed to practice as an APN in Singapore.
Clinical practice placement	Part of the education process which takes place in any practice setting in hospitals or the community.
Competency	The necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes a nurse/ midwife must possess in order to perform a set of defined activities to an expected standard
Curriculum	The totality of the education programme that is coherent in structure, processes and outcomes which link theory to practice in the professional educational preparation of a nurse, midwife or APN.
Evaluation	The process used to determine the standard and success of a programme or curriculum in order to make modifications to develop, maintain or enhance the programme/ curriculum.
Experience	Knowledge, skills and attitudes derived from participation in related professional practice.
Expertise	A high level of specialised knowledge, proficiency or skills.
Faculty	People who teach in the educational institution, or in a department of a college or university and are engaged in curriculum development and review, marking/ grading of assessments, module(s) and programme evaluation.
Institution	An institution refers to an organization providing nursing education programmes at the university, polytechnic, institutes of technical education or equivalent establishment.
Outcome	Result or effect of completion of the educational programme.
Professional development	The process of maintaining or expanding knowledge or skills specific to the nursing and midwifery practice.
Programme	A structured course of study leading to formal and recognised qualification.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
School	An organisational unit or department within an educational institution or a university.
Singapore Nursing Board (SNB)	A statutory authority established under the Nurses and Midwives Act, is charged with protecting the safety of the public through regulating the standards of training and education, scope of practice, and professional conduct and ethics of nurses, midwives and APNs in Singapore.
Specialized branch of nursing	Refers to area of practice that APNs are certified to practise.
Standard	Statement of a defined level of quality, which articulates the expectations of the learning outcomes of the programme.
Teaching experience	Teaching experience include formal teaching in a classroom setting, in-service teaching, facilitating workshops; clinical supervision and assessment.
The Nurses and Midwives Act (Cap 209) (2012 Revised edition)	A law passed by the Singapore Parliament that establishes the SNB for the purposes of registration and enrolment of nurses, registration of midwives and certification of APNs. The Act empowers SNB to regulate standards for the education and the practice of nurses and midwives; and related matters.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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