



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 programme in clinical nursing accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) or its equivalent. Has successfully completed a one (1) year post-graduation supervised practice programme and maintained yearly certification with SNB.

The Core Competencies are organized into 5 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 an APN. Competency Indicators represent sub-functions of a competency standard.

Competence Domain 1: Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice

Competence Domain 2: Professional Nursing Practice

Competence Domain 3: Collaborative Practice and Teamwork

Competence Domain 4: Leadership

Competence Domain 5: Continuing Professional Education and Development

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
1	Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice	1. Demonstrate understanding, knowledge, accountability and responsibility of the legal obligations for nursing practice.	1) Understand the legislative framework, the role of the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) and its regulatory functions (Nurses and Midwives Act) and SNB Code for Nurses and Midwives. 2) Practise in accordance with nursing regulation and national legislation, institutional policies and procedural guidelines. 3) Maintain clear, accurate and legible documentation and records. 4) Ensure own physical, cognitive, psychological, and emotional fitness to practise and deliver safe care. 5) Recognise differences in accountability and responsibility of the APN, RN and EN in the provision of care. 6) Demonstrate responsibility and accountability for care within scope of practice and level of competence.
		2. Demonstrate and maintain ethical nursing practice.	1) Apply key principles of SNB's Code for Nurses and Midwives for ethical decision making.
		3. Provide culturally appropriate care.	1) Respect the values, customs, spiritual beliefs and practices of individuals and groups. 2) Recognise own beliefs and values and how these may influence care giving.

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
2	Professional Nursing Practice	1. Client care: Clinical skills and reasoning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Conduct comprehensive advanced health assessments of individual, families and communities. 2) Analyse and synthesize assessment data for sound decision making. 3) Diagnose and manage healthcare problems and conditions. 4) Order diagnostic investigations, appliances, treatments as required. 5) Make appropriate clinical decisions based upon the results of diagnostic testing. 6) Furnish medications and dispense treatments according to the authorized scope of practice, guidelines, protocols and regulatory framework. 7) Perform advanced procedures according to protocol. 8) Plan and manage clients in collaboration and consultation with other healthcare professional where necessary. 9) Use appropriate teaching/ learning strategies to provide diagnostic information and management plan to clients and their caregiver. 10) Exercise clinical judgement to detect changes in client's condition, anticipate and prevent complications. 11) Recognise when to seek additional guidance. 12) Initiate a consultation / referral and or discharge where necessary. 13) Coordinate transitional care services in and across care settings.
		2. Clinical knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Demonstrate sufficient knowledge to treat medical conditions and provide preventive and supportive care in the respective specialty. 2) Demonstrate sufficient knowledge to interpret basic clinical tests. 3) Demonstrate sufficient knowledge of relevant pharmacology of medications. 4) Demonstrate knowledge of common 'red flags' and when to appropriately escalate to the medical team.

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
2	Professional Nursing Practice	3. Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Listen, clarify and communicate clearly through verbal, non-verbal, written and electronic means as appropriate to ensure effective communication with clients, families and other healthcare professionals. 2) Communicate about health assessment findings, care plan and/or diagnoses. 3) Understand differences in communication style preferences among clients and families, nurses, and other members of the healthcare team. 4) Communicate with team members, adapting own style of communicating to the needs of the team and situation. 5) Initiate actions to resolve conflict.
		4. Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Demonstrate compassion, integrity and respect to clients, families and other healthcare team. 2) Uses best available evidence to continuously improve quality of clinical practice. 3) Proactively implement interventions to ensure quality of care. 4) Collaborate as a key member of a transdisciplinary team through the development of collaborative and innovative practices.
3	Collaborative Practice and Teamwork	1. Collaborate with clients, care givers and various stakeholders in the provision of safe and quality care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Plan, manage and provide continuity of care in consultation with client, family, and other stakeholders. 2) Collaborate with various stakeholders and the community to support clients and families with appropriate resources.
		2. Promote teamwork within nursing and with all members of the healthcare team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Support and collaborate with team members and transdisciplinary team across settings. 2) Participate and actively contribute to client's care plan with team members and transdisciplinary team. 3) Review work processes regularly and propose new initiatives in nursing and healthcare.
4	Leadership	1. Demonstrate effective clinical leadership in the provision of advanced practice nursing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide clinical leadership and consultancy for the clinical specialty in the delivery of nursing care and practices. 2) Keep abreast of current evidence-based practices and shares information with other staff members. 3) Act as a role model and resource person: coach, guide and develop staff to deliver a high standard of clinical care for patient excellence. 4) Collaborate and provide recommendations to other healthcare team members to plan, implement and evaluate pertinent change in practice and health care delivery.

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
4	Leadership	2. Use evidence-based practice	1) Analyse trends and information to identify opportunities in collaboration with other healthcare personnel for service improvement and patient outcome. 2) Demonstrate elements of efficient resource utilisation in patient care management. 3) Set standards in safety measures and guidelines/standards in one's practice. Drive safety and quality improvements projects/initiatives.
		3. Strengthen the link between clinical nursing and research.	1) Support research efforts to advance knowledge and to promote evidence-based practices. 2) Evaluate current research findings and determine applicability to clinical practice.
5	Continuing Professional Education and Development	1. Demonstrate accountability for one's development and status as a professional APN	1) Promote and maintain the professional role of the nurse by upholding the Code for Nurses and Midwives. 2) Reflect on current nursing practice and apply evidence-based and/or best practice knowledge and technical skills. 3) Act as an advocate for clients in the health care system and in the development of health policies that promote and protect the individual patient, family and community. 4) Contribute to the educational and professional development of others. 5) Take measures to enhance skills and/or personal knowledge. 6) Participate in continuing professional development activities to maintain competency in area/s of practice. 7) Evaluate practice to ensure professional, ethical, equitable and quality healthcare services.
		2. Demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in research in different healthcare settings.	1) Participate in and contribute to research/evidence-based practice projects / committees. 2) Appraise and utilise research findings to improve patient outcomes.

References

Code for Nurses and Midwives (2018) Singapore Nursing Board: Singapore.

Nurses and Midwives Act 1999 Singapore.