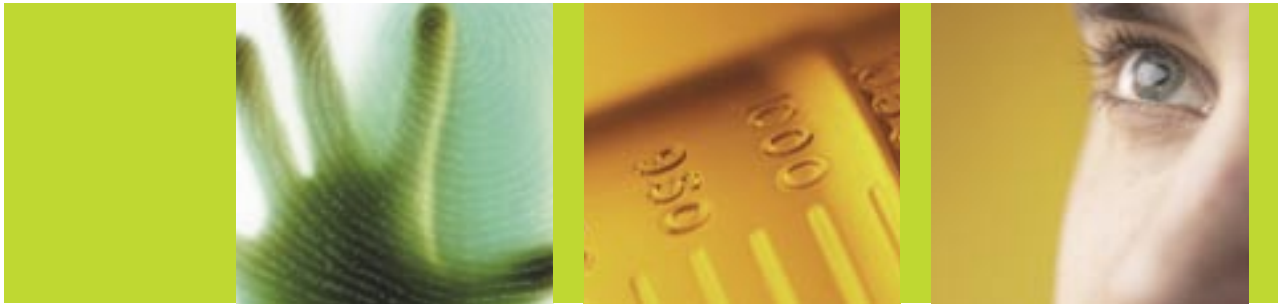


Competency Standards

for nurses in general practice



Role statement for the registered nurse in general practice

Competency standards for registered and enrolled nurses in general practice An Australian Nursing Federation project funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The competency standards for nurses in general practice were developed by a University of South Australia project team led by Terri Gibson and Marie Heartfield. First published August 2005.

Copyright 2005 Australian Nursing Federation All rights reserved. No material may be reproduced, translated for reproduction or otherwise utilised without permission from the publisher.

Role statement for the registered nurse in general practice¹

The registered nurse in general practice demonstrates competence in the provision of primary health care centred on individuals and groups, in accordance with their educational preparation, professional nursing standards, relevant legislation and general practice context in an environment characterised by unpredictability and individual diversity across the lifespan.

While the role of the registered nurse in general practice varies according to the population profile of the general practice, the general practice structure, and employment arrangements, the registered nurse provides a combination of direct clinical care and management of clinical care systems in an environment which is often isolated from other nurses. This requires that s/he works collaboratively with others, internal and external to the general practice, to promote health care centred on individuals and groups.

In some general practices, the registered nurse autonomously conducts clinics, health assessments and chronic disease management programs as well as collaborating with general practitioners and other members of the multidisciplinary health care team as determined by the needs of individuals and groups, and the registered nurse's scope of practice and the employment arrangement. The registered nurse may undertake their nursing role both within and external to the general practice, conducting assessments and health visits in the home and /or another community setting.

The relationships between nurses in general practice and the individuals/groups requiring nursing care usually extends beyond single episodes of care to meeting changing health care needs and priorities across the lifespan.

The registered nurse plays a pivotal role in health promotion, health maintenance and prevention of illness through provision of evidence based information and education to individuals, groups and communities. This requires a broad knowledge of resources available within the community and health care sectors to facilitate care to individuals/groups and the skills to communicate and educate.

The registered nurse in general practice also requires highly developed information literacy, management and coordination skills to enable the development and management of systems that ensure safety and quality. This includes recall, infection control and quality improvement systems.

All nurses have a responsibility to know and practice within their scope of practice relevant to their education and qualifications.

Registered nurses in general practice have a responsibility to seek out and engage in ongoing education and professional development to maintain the competencies that are specific to nursing in general practice settings.

¹ Prepared as part of the project by the University of South Australia project team.

Some registered nurses in general practice will be working at an advanced level and the advanced registered nurse might typically be described as:

- being prepared for evidence based practice through post registration qualifications/education;
- an active member of the nursing profession;
- accepting responsibility for complex situations which may encompass clinical, managerial, educational or research contexts;
- demonstrating leadership and initiating change;
- practising comprehensively as an interdependent team member;
- practising outside of single contexts or episodes of care;
- having particular breadth or depth of experience and knowledge;
- focused on outcomes for individuals and groups.