

A snapshot of nursing careers, qualifications and experience

Nursing careers, qualifications and experience

| Nurse | Qualifications | Clinical Experience | Scope of Practice | Areas of Practice | Examples |
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| Nurse Practitioner (NP) | Bachelor of Nursing + postgraduate qualification in nursing + Masters or PhD level study in area of clinical expertise + accreditation by nurse registration board (Average 10 years study). | 10-12 years post registration. | Currently the most advanced clinical nursing role, NPs scope of practice is determined by the context in which each nurse practitioner is authorised to practice, and may involve referral of patients to other health care professionals, prescribing medicines and ordering diagnostic investigations. | Nurse practitioners work in all health settings, including acute care, aged care, perioperative, family and child health, community health, mental health, rural health and rehabilitation/disability. | NP role in a rural nursing centre includes case management, district nursing, practice nursing, provision of health programs and education, and accident and emergency, as well as ability to prescribe drugs, order tests and x-rays and refer to specialists. |
| Clinical Educator | Bachelor of Nursing + postgraduate study in nursing and education (average 6-8 years study). | 5-10 years post registration. | Manages education of nurses in the unit/hospital/facility or in higher education. | Acute care hospitals and health facilities, and the higher education sector including VET colleges and university. | Nurse Educator coordinating educational requirements of hospital nursing staff and nursing students. |
| Nurse Manager | Bachelor of Nursing + postgraduate study in nursing + postgraduate management education eg Masters in Business Administration (average 6-8 years study). | 5-10 years post registration. | Manages the human resources, business and clinical activities of the health unit or hospital. | All areas of health. | Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) of a major public hospital ICU managing up to 300 nursing staff, coordinating critically ill patients, ensuring all non-medical staff are sufficiently experienced and educated for practice, and maintaining financial and logistical coordination of the unit. |
| Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, eg Associate Nurse Unit Manager (ANUM) or Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) | Bachelor of Nursing + postgraduate qualification in nursing (average 5-6 years study). | 2-4 years post registration. | Wide variety of clinical activities in area of specialty practice from direct patient care, day to day bed management to clinical education of more junior staff. | All areas, but mostly acute care. | Clinical Nurse Specialist on an oncology ward assisting with chemotherapy, planning patient care and teaching staff about new medicines, care plans and procedures. |

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| Registered Nurse (RN) (Division 1 in Vic) | Bachelor of Nursing (3 years study). | New graduate commences career as a RN, usually in a graduate nurse program. After a period of clinical experience they may undertake postgraduate studies to further their career in an area of nursing practice. | Wide variety of clinical activities around direct patient care including patient assessment, care planning and medication administration. | All health settings, including acute care, aged care, perioperative, midwifery, family and child health, community health, mental health, rural health and rehabilitation/disability. | RN working on a surgical ward planning and delivering care for post operative patients. Patient allocation is to the RN's level of experience. |
| Enrolled Nurse (EN) (Division 2 in Vic) | VET study to Diploma or Cert IV level depending on state or territory (12-18 months study). | New graduate commences career as an EN. The EN may undertake a bachelor degree to become a RN. | Variety of clinical activities around direct patient care under the supervision of a registered nurse. | ENs most commonly work in acute care and aged care, but also in perioperative, midwifery, family and child health, community health, mental health, rural health and rehabilitation/disability. | Enrolled Nurse working with registered nurses and care workers in an aged care facility. Enrolled nurse working in an acute care setting. |
| Endorsed Enrolled Nurse (EEN) (Division 2 in Vic) | VET study to Diploma or Cert IV depending on state/territory, with further accredited study in pharmacology for medication endorsement (1-2 years study). | New graduate commences career as EN with medication endorsement. The EN may undertake a bachelor degree to become a RN. | Variety of clinical activities around direct patient care including the ability to administer some medicines under the supervision of a registered nurse. | As above. | Enrolled Nurse working in an aged care facility or acute care setting, administering types of medicines to residents/patients. |