



anf policy

australian nursing federation

nursing specialisation

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. Specialist nursing practice follows from a base of comprehensive professional preparation.
2. The focus of specialist nursing practice is a specific area of nursing, directed toward a defined population or area of activity and based on a greater depth of knowledge and skill. It may occur at any point on a continuum from beginning to advanced¹.
3. Specialisation requires a level of knowledge and skill in a particular aspect of nursing which is greater than that acquired during basic nursing education.
4. The ANF endorses the criteria identified by the coalition of Australian specialist nursing organisations, the National Nursing Organisations, who have agreed on ten criteria as defining a specialty in nursing in Australia:²
 - The specialty defines itself as nursing and subscribes to the overall purposes, functions and ethical standards of nursing.
 - The specialty is a defined area of nursing practice which requires application of specified knowledge and skills.
 - There is both a need and a demand for the specialty area.
 - The focus of the specialty is a defined population or a defined area of activity which provides a major support service within the discipline and practice of nursing.
 - The specialty is based on a core body of nursing knowledge which is being continually expanded and refined by research. Mechanisms exist for supporting, reviewing and disseminating research.
 - The specialty subscribes to, or has established, practice standards commensurate with those of the nursing profession.
 - The specialty adheres to the Australian requirements for nurse registration.
 - Specialty expertise is gained through various combinations of formal education programs, experience in the practice area and continuing education. Educational program should be framed by the practice standards of the specialty and the preparation and administration of the program must include appropriate nursing representation.

- Where a specialty has or is developing a credentialling process it is consistent with the Australian credentialling framework for nurses with human and financial resources available to support the process.
- Specialty nurses are organised and represented within a specialty association.

endorsed august 2007

- 1 Queensland Nursing Council (2005) Framework information sheet no.10: specialist competency standards. Queensland Nursing Council, Brisbane. http://www.qnc.qld.gov.au/upload/pdfs/practice_standards/Framework_information_sheet_10_Specialist_competency_standards.pdf, viewed 15 January 2007.
- 2 National Nursing Organisations (2004) Criteria for specialties in nursing and principles of credentialling for nurses. Australian Nursing Federation, Melbourne. http://www.anf.org.au/nno/pdf/NNO_Glossary_of_Terms.pdf, viewed 15 January 2007.