

Scope of Professional Practice Nursing Council of Hong Kong

Aim

The Scope of Professional Practice aims to communicate to nurses and those concerned about nursing roles, responsibilities and activities which nurses are educated and authorized to perform. Understanding of the scope of professional nursing practice ensures that nurses' skills are fully utilized and the right of patients to receive care from a nurse is protected.

Scope of professional nursing practice

2. The scope of professional nursing practice is defined as the range of roles, responsibilities, and activities, which fall to the qualified nurses relating to their experience, education and skill.
3. It encompasses the care of individuals, families and groups throughout the life span from birth to death. Nursing is practised in hospitals, extended care facilities, health centers, hospices, nursing homes, schools, the workplace, dwelling place and community.
4. The scope evolves in response to changes in the nursing profession itself and in the needs of patients for nursing service. Nurses must adapt themselves to technological advancement and new methods of care delivery. Nurses must also be sensitive and proactive in assessing a patient's condition, in giving care and evaluating the care given. Each patient is a unique individual with his/her own physical, psychological, spiritual and social needs. A patient's condition should be constantly monitored so as to revise the plan of care accordingly.
5. The extent that nurses engage in depends on their education, experience, roles, and the nature of the patient population they serve. In the delivery of care, assistants to nurses may be called upon to carry out some of the simpler tasks within or relevant to the practice of nursing.
6. The practice and conduct of each qualified nurse is subject to the principles laid down in the Council's Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Hong Kong. Each nurse is accountable for his or her practice and conduct. The two Codes provide a statement of the values of the profession and establish the framework within which the scope of professional practice should adhere.

Roles and responsibilities of nurse

7. The roles of the qualified nurses are derived from the consideration of the legislation of Hong Kong, the health care policies, the social policies, the education of the nurses and the current professional health care practices in Hong Kong. They have enabling as well as constraining influences on the practice of nursing.

8. Nurses execute their roles and responsibilities either independently or collaboratively with other professionals. The practice of nursing is allied to other health professions through its collaborating, referring, and coordinating activities in the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of healthcare.

9. The fundamental responsibilities of a nurse are fourfold, namely: the promotion of health, the prevention of illnesses, the alleviation of sufferings and the restoration of health. The uniqueness of nursing practice lies in the ability of the nurse to integrate the professional roles and responsibilities in a way which is responsive to the needs of individuals, families and groups, and therefore different for each situation.

10. The roles and responsibilities of the nurses are summarized as follows: -

- 10.1 Assess, plan, monitor, coordinate, and manage the health care delivery to individuals, families, groups and community.
- 10.2 Implement health care interventions and evaluate their responses.
- 10.3 Coach individuals, families, groups and community in health.
- 10.4 Establish therapeutic climate for caring, healing, and the promotion of comfort and health.
- 10.5 Monitor and ensure the quality of health care practices to assure safe and effective interventions.
- 10.6 Manage and supervise the practice of nursing.
- 10.7 Delegate care activities appropriately to support personnel and be accountable for its outcomes.
- 10.8 Maintain own professional competencies and help other nurses and health care staff in achieving relevant competencies
- 10.9 Support and participate in nursing and health care research activities.
- 10.10 Educate and develop nurses

11. Nurses in management positions manage the nursing and health care services at various levels. They are expected to participate in health policy formation and implementation to improve the health status of the population.

12. Nurses engaged in advanced practice specialize their practice or expand their practice overlapping traditional boundaries of other health care practice.

13. Nurses responsible for nursing education and development are engaged either in pre-registration education, or post-registration development through continuous learning to equip nurses with the necessary professional skills, knowledge and expertise to meet changing health care needs.

Education for professional nursing practice

14. Pre-registration education prepares nurses for safe and effective practice at the entry of the nursing profession. As a result of the advances in health care theories and technology or alternations in the provision of health care services, the practice takes place in a context of continuing change and development.

15. Life-long learning is advocated to maintain competency and to ensure quality of practice. Nursing practice is built on knowledge, experience, ability to reflect on practice and research.

Adjusting the scope of practice

16. The scope of professional practice will continue to be modeled in response to current developments in care and treatment, and by other events that influence or alter health care practice. The scope of practice will therefore be constantly and periodically reviewed based on current legislation, social and health care policies, education and professional decision-making. The qualified nurse must honestly acknowledge any limits of personal knowledge, skill, and competency, and takes steps to remedy any relevant deficits in order to meet the evolving demands of the scope of professional practice.

Professional Development Committee
The Nursing Council of Hong Kong

June 2001

List of Reference Papers

American Nurses Association (1995). “Nursing’s social policy statement”.

Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland (1995). “Scope of practice for nurses and midwives in Ireland.” Email : Ncc@nursingboard.ie

Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, Board of Nursing (1999). “Most frequently asked scope of practice Q&A’s”. Email : nursing@dora.state.co.us

International Council of Nursing – Position Statement (1998). “Scope of nursing practice”. Email : icn@uni2a.unige.ch

Maryland Nurses Association (1997). “The changing scope of nursing practice”.

New York State Nurses Association (2000). “Position statement on guidelines for interpretation of the scope of professional nursing practice”.

United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (1992). “The scope of professional practice”.

United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (2000). “The scope of professional practice – a study of its implementation”.

World Health Organization, Geneva (1996). “Nursing Practice”. Report of a WHO Expert Committee.

Working Group Members

	Position Held	Hospital/Institution
Ms. Josephine LI (Convenor)	Executive Manager (Nursing)	Hospital Authority
Dr. Sophia CHAN	Assistant Professor	The University of Hong Kong
Ms. Susanna CHAN	General Manager (Nursing)	Cheshire Home (Shatin)
Ms. Lucy CHUNG	Consultant of nursing studies	
Ms. Hermia HO	General Manager (Nursing)	Prince of Wales Hospital
Mr. Kanny KWONG	Senior Nursing Officer	Castle Peak Hospital
Mr. Peter LI	Lecturer	IANS/Hospital Authority
Ms. Eva LIU	Senior Nursing Officer (Education)	Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Dr. Frances WONG	Associate Professor	Hong Kong Polytechnic University