

# **RCN Domains and competencies for UK Advanced Nurse Practitioner practice**

[approved July 2007]

## **Background**

These domains and competencies for nurse practitioner practice were developed from those published by the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) in the USA in 2001. Their generic core competencies for nurse practitioners originally arose from the seminal work of Patricia Benner PhD and Karen Bryckzynski PhD, which were subsequently modified to form the basis of the competencies presented in the NONPF publication “Advanced Nursing Practice: Curriculum Guidelines and Program Standards for Nurse Practitioner Education” in 1995. In 2001 these were updated to reflect changes in current nurse practitioner behaviours in the US, resulting in seven domains :

1. Management of client health status
2. The nurse-client relationship
3. The teaching-coaching function
4. Professional role
5. Managing and negotiating the health care delivery system
6. Monitoring and ensuring the quality of health care practice
7. Cultural competencies.

These core domains and competencies are used as national guidelines in the US for curriculum development among nurse practitioner programmes, and remain the basis for evaluating NP practice, and comparing and evaluating educational programmes

## **UK application**

In 2002 the RCN used NONPF’s work as the basis for the “Domains and competencies for UK nurse practitioner practice” to provide the first detailed picture of the competencies that should define nurse practitioner practice in the UK. Since then, these have increasingly been utilised by nurses, other health professionals, employers, and workforce planners as the basis for determining the core generic competencies required for new and existing nurse practitioner roles to ensure delivery of safe and effective practice. They have also provided the standard for the curricula of RCN accredited programmes of preparation for nurse practitioners and informed the content of many other advanced nursing programmes across the UK.

Three key developments have led to this revision of the RCN NP standard :

- Implementation of the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) (DH, 2004)

- An escalating debate on the nature of advanced nursing practice, the commensurate academic level and NP's within this
- Nursing & Midwifery Council activity to develop a regulatory framework for Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) to enhance public protection (NMC, 2005)

A small group comprising of the RCN NP Adviser, the RCN lead for competency-related activities, and representatives from the RCN accredited NP practitioner programme providers met in the Summer of 2005, to revise the 2002 domains and competencies to better reflect the advanced nature of the role in the light of pertinent dimensions of the KSF and Masters level descriptors (QAA, 2007). The outcome of this work is presented here and has been approved by the RCN Accreditation Unit. This was shared with the NMC in 2005 to facilitate and support their important work on ANP regulation. NMC Council agreed in December 2006 that this should be used as the standard for Advanced Nurse Practitioner regulation in their proposals.

### **Proposed RCN Domains and competencies for Advanced Nurse Practitioners.**

The advanced nurse practitioner demonstrates competence in each of the following domains when s/he performs the specified behaviours in the table that follows :

<b>DOMAIN 1 : ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF PATIENT* HEALTH/ILLNESS STATUS</b>	<b>NHS KSF Dimension **</b>
<b>Health promotion/health protection and disease prevention</b>	
1. Assesses individuals health education/promotion related needs	HWB1 L4 HWB2 L4 HWB4 L4
2. Plans, develops and implements programmes to promote health and wellbeing and address individual needs	HWB1 L3 HWB2 L4 HWB3 L3 HWB4 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB6 L4
3. Provides health education through anticipatory guidance and counselling to promote health, reduce risk factors, and prevent disease and disability	HWB1 L3 HWB3 L3 HWB4 L4 HWB5 L4
4. Develops and uses a follow-up system within the practice workplace to ensure that patients receive appropriate services	HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4 IK1 L2
5. Recognises environmental health problems affecting patients and provides health protection interventions that promote healthy environments for individuals, families and communities	C3 L4 HWB3 L3
<b>Assessment and Management of patient illness</b>	
6. Obtains, analyses and interprets history, presenting symptoms, physical findings, and diagnostic information to develop the appropriate differential diagnoses	HWB6 L4 HWB7 L4

7. Diagnoses and manages acute and long term conditions while attending to the patients response to the illness experience	C3 L4 HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB6 L4 HWB7 L4
8. Prioritises health problems and intervenes appropriately, including initiation of effective emergency care	C3 L4 HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4
9. Employs appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic interventions and regimens with attention to safety, cost, invasiveness, simplicity, acceptability, adherence, and efficacy	C5 L3 IK3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4 HWB8 L3 HWB10 L3
10. Formulates an action-plan based on scientific rationale, evidence-based standards of care, and practice guidelines	HWB5 L4 HWB6 L4 HWB7 L4
11. Provides guidance, counselling, advice and support regarding management of the health/illness condition	CI L4 HWB1 L4 HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4
12. Initiates appropriate and timely consultation and/or referral when the problem exceeds the nurse's scope of practice and/or expertise	C1 L4 IK1 L3 HWB6 L4
13. Assesses and intervenes to assist the patient in complex, urgent or emergency situations:	
A. Rapidly assesses the patient's unstable and complex health care problems through synthesis and prioritisation of historical and immediately-derived data	HWB2 L4 HWB6 L4 HWB8 L4
B. Diagnoses unstable and complex health care problems using collaboration and consultation with the multi-professional health care team as indicated by setting, speciality, and individual knowledge and experience	C1 L4 IK1 L3 HWB8 L4
C. Plans and implements diagnostic strategies and therapeutic interventions to help patients with unstable and complex health care problems regain stability and restore health, in collaboration with the patient and multi-professional health care team	C1 L4 C3 L4 IK1 L3 HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4 HWB8 L4
D. Rapidly and continuously evaluates the patient's changing condition and response to therapeutic interventions and modifies the plan of care for optimal patient outcome	C3 L4 HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4 HWB8 L4 HWB10 L3
<b>For health promotion /health protection and disease prevention, and management of patient illness</b>	
14. Demonstrates critical thinking and diagnostic reasoning skills in clinical decision-making	HWB5 L4 HWB6 L4 HWB7 L4
15. Obtains a comprehensive problem focused health history from the patient or carer	C1 L4 HWB2 L4 HWB6 L4
16. Performs a comprehensive problem focused age appropriate physical examination	HWB2 L4 HWB6 L4
17. Analyses the data collected to determine health status of the patient	C1 L4 HWB2 L4

	HWB6 L4
18. Formulates a problem list and prioritised management plan	HWB2 L4 HWB6 L4
19. Assesses, diagnoses, monitors, co-ordinates, and manages the health/illness status of patients during acute and enduring episodes	HWB2 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB6 L4 HWB7 L4 HWB8 L3
20. Demonstrates knowledge of the patho-physiology of conditions commonly seen in practice	HWB6 L4
21. Communicates the patient's health status using appropriate terminology, format, and technology	C1 L4 IK1 L3 HWB2 L4 HWB3 L4
22. Applies principles of epidemiology and demography in clinical practice by recognising populations at risk, patterns of disease, and effectiveness of prevention and intervention	IK1 L3 HWB2 L4 HWB3 L3 HWB6 L4 HWB7 L4
23. Acquires and uses community/public health assessment information in evaluating patient needs, initiating referrals, co-ordinating care and programme planning	HWB2 L4 HWB6 L4
24. Applies principles of evidence-based practice pertinent to their area of practice.	C5 L4 IK2 L3 IK3 L4 HWB7 L4
25. Provides information and advice to patients and carers concerning drug regimens, side-effects and interaction, in an appropriate form	C1 L4 HWB1 L4 HWB5 L4
26. If legally authorised – prescribes medications based on efficacy, safety, and cost from the formulary	HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4 HWB10 L4
27. Evaluates the use of complementary/alternative therapies used by patients for safety and potential interaction	HWB5 L4 HWB10 L4
28. Integrates appropriate non-drug-based treatment methods into a plan of management	HWB1 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4
29. Orders, may perform, and interprets common screening and diagnostic tests	HWB2 L4 HWB6 L4 HWB8 L3
30. Evaluates results of interventions using accepted outcome criteria, revises the plan accordingly, and consults/refers when needed	C1 L4 IK1 L3 HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4 HWB8 L3
31. Works collaboratively with other health professional and agencies as appropriate	C1 L4 C4 L3 IK1 L3
32. Plans and conducts follow-up visits appropriately to monitor patients and evaluate health/illness care	HWB3 L4 HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4

<b>DOMAIN 2 : THE NURSE PATIENT RELATIONSHIP</b>	<b>NHS KSF Dimension</b>
1. Creates a climate of mutual trust and establishes partnerships with patients, carers and families.	C1 L4
2. Validates and checks findings with patients.	C1 L4
3. Creates a relationship with patients that acknowledges their strengths and knowledge and enabling them to address their needs	C1 L4 HWB4 L4
4. Communicates a sense of 'being there' for the patient, carers and families and provides comfort and emotional support	C1 L4
5. Evaluates the impact of life transitions on the health/illness status of patients, and the impact of health/illness on patients' lives (individuals, families, carers, and communities)	C1 L4
6. Applies principles of empowerment in promoting behaviour change	C1 L4
7. Develops and maintains the patient's control over decision-making, assesses the patient's commitment to the jointly determined plan of care, and fosters personal responsibility for health	C1 L4 HWB4 L4
8. Maintains confidentiality, while recording data, plans, and results in a manner that preserves the dignity and privacy of the patient	C1 L4 C3 L4 HWB2 L4
9. Monitors and reflects on own emotional response to interaction with patients, carers and families and uses this knowledge to further therapeutic interaction	C1 L4 C2 L4
10. Considers the patient's needs when bringing closure to the nurse-patient relationship and provides for a safe transition to another care provider or independence	C1 L4 HWB4 L4

<b>DOMAIN 3 : THE EDUCATION FUNCTION</b>	<b>NHS KSF Dimension</b>
<b>Timing</b>	
1. Assesses the on-going and changing needs of patients, carers and families for education based on the following:	
A. needs for anticipatory guidance associated with growth and the developmental stage	C2 L4 HWB4 L4 G1 L3
B. care management that requires specific information or skills	C2 L4 G1 L3
C. the patients understanding of their health condition	C2 L4 G1 L3
2. Assesses the patient's motivation for learning and maintenance of health-related activities using principles of change and stages of behaviour change	C2 L4 G1 L3
3. Creates an environment in which effective learning can take place	C2 L4 G1 L3
<b>Eliciting</b>	
4. Elicits information about the patient's interpretation of health conditions as a part of the routine health assessment	HWB2 L3 G1 L3
5. Elicits information about the patient's perceived barriers, supports, and modifiers to learning when preparing for patient's education	G1 L3
6. Elicits the patient's learning style to facilitate an appropriate teaching approach	G1 L3
7. Elicits information about cultural influences that may affect the patient's learning experience	G1 L3
<b>Enabling</b>	
8. Enables patients by displaying a sensitivity to the effort and emotions associated with learning about how to care for one's health condition	C2 L4 G1 L3
9. Enables patients in learning specific information or skills by designing a learning plan that is comprised of sequential, cumulative steps, and that acknowledges relapse and the need for practice, reinforcement, support, and re-teaching when necessary	C2 L4 G1 L3 HWB1 L3 HWB4 L4
10. Enables patients to use community resources when needed	C2 L4 HWB4 L4
<b>Providing</b>	
11. Communicates health advice and instruction appropriately, using an evidence based rationale	C1 L4 HWB1 L3 G1 L3
<b>Negotiating</b>	
12. Negotiates a jointly determined plan of care, based on continual assessment of the patient's readiness and motivation, re-setting goals, and optimal outcomes	C2 L4 HWB4 L3 G1 L3
13. Monitors the patient's behaviours and specific outcomes as a guide to evaluating the effectiveness and need to change or maintain educational strategies	C2 L4 HWB5 L4
<b>Coaching</b>	
14. Coaches the patient by reminding, supporting and encouraging, using empathy	C2 L4 G1 L3

<b>DOMAIN 4 : PROFESSIONAL ROLE</b>	<b>NHS KSF Dimension</b>
<b>Develops and implements the role</b>	
1. Acquires and uses evidence and research to implement the role of the advanced nurse practitioner	IK3 L4
2. Functions in a variety of role dimensions: advanced health care provider, co-ordinator, consultant, educator, coach, advocate, administrator, researcher, role model and leader	C2 L4 HWB2 L4 G7 L3
3. Interprets and markets the role to the public, legislators, policy-maker, and other health care professions	C4 L3 G8 L2
<b>Directs care</b>	
4. Prioritises, co-ordinates, and meets multiple needs for culturally diverse patients	HWB5 L4 HWB7 L4
5. Uses sound judgement in assessing conflicting priorities and needs	HWB2 L4 HWB6 L4 HWB7 L4
6. Builds and maintains a therapeutic team to provide optimum therapy	C1 L4 C4 L4 C5 L4 G7 L2
7. Obtains specialist and referral care for patients while remaining the primary care provider	C1 L4 C4 L3 HWB7 L4
8. Acts as an advocate for the patient to ensure health needs are met consistent with patients' wishes	C6 L3 HWB3 L2
9. Consults with other health care providers and public/independent agencies	C1 L4 C4 L3
10. Incorporates current technology appropriately in care delivery	HWB6 L3 HWB7 L3
11. Uses information systems to support decision-making and to improve care	C5 L4 IK3 L4
<b>Provides leadership</b>	
12. Is actively involved in a professional association	C2 L3
13. Evaluates implications of contemporary health policy on health care providers and consumers	C4 L3 HWB1 L4 G2 L2 G7 L2
14. Participates in legislative and policy-making activities that influence an advanced level of nursing practice and the health of communities	C4 L3 HWB1 L4 G2 L2
15. Advocates for access to quality, cost-effective health care	C4 L3 C6L3
16. Evaluates the relationship between community/public health issues and social problems as they impact on the health care of patients (poverty, literacy, violence, etc.)	C4 L3 HWB1 L3
17. Actively engages in continuous professional development and maintains a suitable record of this development	C2 L3

<b>DOMAIN 5 : MANAGING AND NEGOTIATING HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEMS</b>	<b>NHS KSF Dimension</b>
<b>Managing</b>	
1. Demonstrates knowledge about the role of the advanced nurse practitioner	C3 L3
2. Provides care for individuals, families, and communities within integrated health care services	C5 L3 HWB7 L4
3. Considers access, cost, efficacy, and quality when making care decisions	C5 L3
4. Maintains current knowledge of their employing organisation and the financing of the health care system as it affects delivery of care	C5 L3 G4 L2
5. Participates in organisational decision-making, interprets variations in outcomes, and uses data from information systems to improve practice	C5 L3 IK2 L2
6. Manages organisational functions and resources within the scope of responsibilities as defined in a job description	C5 L3 IK2 L2 G5 L3
7. Uses business and management strategies for the provision of quality care and efficient use of resources	C5 L3 G5 L3
8. Demonstrates knowledge of business principles that affect long term financial viability of an organisation, the efficient use of resources, and quality of care	C5 L3 G4 L2
9. Demonstrates knowledge of, and acts in accordance with, relevant regulations for this level of practice and the <i>NMC Code of Professional Conduct; standards for conduct, performance and ethics</i>	C3 L3 C5 L3
<b>Negotiating</b>	
10. Collaboratively assesses, plans, implements, and evaluates care with other health care professionals, using approaches that recognise each one's expertise to meet the comprehensive needs of patients	C1 L4 HWB5 L4
11. Undertakes risk assessments and manages risk effectively	C3 L4
12. Participates as a key member of a multi-professional team through the development of collaborative and innovative practices	G2 L3
13. Participates in planning, development, and implementation of public and community health programmes	HWB1 L3
14. Participates in legislative and policy-making activities that influence health services/practice	HWB1 L3
15. Advocates for policies that reduce environmental health risks	C3 L4 HWB1 L4
16. Advocates for policies that are culturally sensitive	C3 L3 C6 L3
17. Advocates for increasing access to health care for all	C3 L3 C6 L3

<b>DOMAIN 6 : MONITORING AND ENSURING THE QUALITY OF ADVANCED HEALTH CARE PRACTICE</b>	<b>NHS KSF Dimension</b>
<b>Ensuring quality</b>	
1. Incorporates professional/legal standards into advanced clinical practice	C5 L4
2. Acts ethically to meet the needs of the patient in all situations however complex	C5 L4 HWB5 L4
3. Assumes accountability for practice and strives to attain the highest standards of practice	C4 L3 C5 L3
4. Engages in clinical supervision and self-evaluation and uses this to improve care and practice	C2 L4 C5 L2
5. Collaborates and/or consults with members of the health care team about variations in health outcomes	C5 L3 HWB5 L4
6. Promotes and uses an evidence-based approach to patient management that critically evaluates and applies research findings pertinent to patient care management and outcomes	C5 L3 HWB7 L4 G2 L4
7. Evaluates the patients' response to the health care provided and the effectiveness of the care	HWB5 L4
8. Interprets and uses the outcomes of care to revise care delivery strategies and improve the quality of care	C4 L3 C5 L3 HWB7 L4
9. Accepts personal responsibility for professional development and the maintenance of professional competence and credential	C2 L4 C5 L2
<b>Monitoring quality</b>	
10. Monitors quality of own practice and participates in continuous quality improvement	C5 L4
11. Actively seeks and participates in peer review of own practice	C2 L4
12. Evaluates patient follow-up and outcomes, including consultation and referral	C5 L3 HWB7 L4
13. Monitors current evidence based literature in order to improve quality care	C5 L3 G2 L4

<b>DOMAIN 7 : RESPECTING CULTURE AND DIVERSITY</b>	<b>NHS KSF Dimension</b>
1. Demonstrates respect for the inherent dignity of every human being, whatever their age, gender, religion, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, and ethnic or cultural group	C6 L4 HWB4 L4
2. Accepts the rights of individuals to choose their care provider, participate in care, and refuse care	C6 L4 HWB4 L4
3. Acknowledges their own personal biases and actively seeks to address them whilst ensuring the delivery of quality care	C2 L4 C6 L3
4. Actively promotes diversity and equality	C6 L4
5. Incorporates cultural preferences, health beliefs and behaviours into management plans as appropriate	C6 L4
6. Provides patient-appropriate educational materials that address the language and cultural beliefs of the patient	IK3 L3
7. Accesses patient appropriate resources to deliver care	C5 L2 C6 L4
8. Supports patients from marginalized groups to access quality care	C6 L4
<b>Spiritual competencies</b>	
9. Respects the inherent worth and dignity of each person and the right to express spiritual beliefs	C6 L4 HWB5 L4
10. Assists patients and families to meet their spiritual needs in the context of health and illness experiences, including referral for pastoral services	C6 L4 HWB4 L4 HWB5 L4
11. Assesses the influence of patients' spirituality on their health care behaviours and practices	C6 L4 HWB4 L4 HWB5 L4
12. Incorporates patients' spiritual beliefs in the care plan	C6 L4 HWB4 L4 HWB5 L4

\* **'patient'** is used to mean patient or client, depending on health care setting.

\*\* **KSF Dimension abbreviations:** C = Core; HWB = Health and Well Being; IK = Information and Knowledge; G = General

## References

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