



## Position statement      Professional Practice

---

**The purpose of this position statement is to outline the key considerations for Professional Practice in the New Zealand context.**

The objective of professional practice in all nursing care environments requires that each individual nurse provides care that promotes and supports expected health pathways to ensure that the best possible outcomes for the health consumer are achieved with no unnecessary exposure to risk or harm as a result of practice not meeting professional standards.

Professional practice is undertaken by nurses prepared through professional education programs to meet contemporary professional nursing standards both of which are endorsed and regulated by the Nursing Council of New Zealand.

Professional nursing practice is grounded in the art and science of nursing. The art and science of nursing is described as the use of nursing knowledge, skill, attitude, communication and nursing judgements which enable the individual nurse to assess health needs, provide care and comfort, to connect (empathy and compassion) to the individual and working in partnership, be able to provide advice and support so the individual is empowered to manage their health in a variety of settings.

Professional practice includes making safe clinical and professional judgements, demonstrating the level of skill and knowledge required for safe practice, behaving appropriately and acting in a way that does not impact adversely on patient safety within all domains of nursing practice.

### **Scope of Practice and Competency Requirements.**

Nurses practice in a range of settings, in partnership with individuals, families, whānau and communities, as well as collaborating with the wider healthcare team. Nurses may practice in a variety of clinical contexts depending on their educational preparation and scope of practice.

Professional practice demands competence. The Nursing Council of New Zealand sets out standards for continuing competence and it is the individual responsibility of all nurses to ensure they meet these professional standards.

Professional practice requires ongoing reflection on individual nursing practice. The Nursing Council of New Zealand, The College of Nurses Aotearoa and the New Zealand Nurses Organisation provide guidelines, including The Code of Conduct (2012), Professional Boundaries (2012), Social Media (2012), A Code of Ethics, the Treaty of Waitangi (2005) and competencies appropriate to the scope of practice. Nursing practice is also governed by the Privacy Act (1993).



Practising as a professional requires nurses to present evidence demonstrating and articulating their competence in a portfolio which meets the Nursing Council of New Zealand requirements, either in a Professional Development and Recognition programme (PDRP) or Nursing Council of New Zealand audit cycle. The compulsory requirements include work hours and professional development appropriate to the nurse's scope of practice and employment setting.

#### **Employer/ Nurse Leader Responsibilities**

Employers ensure that policies and procedures are in place to support the Health Practitioner Competence Assurance Act (2003). Employers share responsibility for promoting environments that support quality professional practice.

Performance issues are managed appropriately, using competence assessment and performance management. The Nursing Leader leads and/or, is always involved in the process of review of professional practice competence.

The Nursing Leader must notify the NCNZ when a nurse has resigned or been dismissed for reasons relating to competence. The Nursing Leader co-ordinates all reports to the Nursing Council of New Zealand.

#### **Key Documents**

*Health Practitioner Competence Assurance Act. (2003).*

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2007). *Competencies for the Registered Nurse Scope of Practice.* Nursing Council of New Zealand, Wellington.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2012). *Code of Conduct for Nurses.* Nursing Council of New Zealand, Wellington.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2012). *Complaints and Investigation Process.* Nursing Council of New Zealand, Wellington.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2008). *The Competence Review Process.* Nursing Council of New Zealand, Wellington.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2012). *Competencies for the Enrolled Nurse Scope of Practice.* Nursing Council of New Zealand, Wellington.

Nursing Council of New Zealand (2012). *Competencies for Nurse Practitioners.* Nursing Council of New Zealand, Wellington.

*Privacy Act. (1993).*