



SINGAPORE NURSING BOARD

CORE COMPETENCIES OF REGISTERED NURSE

Registered Nurses (RNs) utilise evidence-based nursing knowledge and professional nursing judgement to assess health needs, provide nursing care, educate clients and support individuals to manage their health holistically. They practise in collaboration with other healthcare professionals. They are accountable for their scope of practice including the supervision and delegation of nursing activities to the enrolled nurses and ancillary care staff. RNs may practise in a variety of clinical contexts depending on their education preparation and practice experience.

Core Competencies

The Singapore Nursing Board's Core Competencies for the Registered Nurse (RN) are a set of minimum standards of performance that define the requisite qualities, attributes and skills for a RN to practise in Singapore.

These Core Competencies supplement the Code for Nurses and Midwives to define the minimum level of performance of a RN and is set at the entry to practice level.

The Core Competencies are not setting specific; they are applicable to any practice setting.

The Core Competencies set the foundation for RNs to maintain their competence and acquire additional competencies to deliver safe client care in response to changing healthcare needs and advancement in technology.

Purpose of Core Competencies

- (1) Inform nurses on the minimum competencies required for RN practice.
- (2) Direct pre-registration and post-registration nursing curriculum development and review.
- (3) Guide the competency development and assessment of nursing students and newly graduated RNs.
- (4) Assess the competencies of internationally qualified nurses seeking employment in Singapore.
- (5) Assess nurses seeking re-registration.
- (6) Evaluate nurses involved in professional disciplinary cases.

Related Definitions

Core competencies: a standard set of performance domains and their corresponding behavioural standards which a nurse is required to demonstrate.

Competency: the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes a nurse must possess in order to perform a set of defined activities to an expected standard.

Competence: the ability of a nurse to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, judgement and attitudes required to perform activities within the defined scope of practice at an acceptable level of proficiency.

Competent: being able to demonstrate the necessary ability, knowledge, skills and attitudes across the domains of competencies at a standard that is determined to be appropriate for that level at which a nurse is being assessed.

Core Competencies of Registered Nurse

A Registered Nurse (RN) is a healthcare provider who has completed a professional pre-registration nursing programme accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) or its equivalent, for the purpose of registration, or has been assessed to be competent to practise as a RN.

The Core Competencies are organised into 4 domains. A domain is an organised cluster of competencies. Each domain has associated competency standards, with each standard representing a major function/functional area to be performed by a RN. Competency indicators represent sub-functions of a competency standard.

Competence Domain 1: Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice

Competence Domain 2: Professional Nursing Practice

Competence Domain 3: Collaborative Practice and Teamwork

Competence Domain 4: Continuing Professional Education and Development

Domain	Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
1	Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice	
	1. Demonstrate understanding, knowledge, accountability and responsibility of the legal obligations for nursing practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Understand the legislative framework, the role of the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) and its regulatory functions (Nurses and Midwives Act) and SNB Code for Nurses and Midwives.2) Practise in accordance with nursing regulation and national legislation, institutional policies and procedural guidelines.3) Maintain clear, accurate and legible documentation and records.4) Ensure own physical, cognitive, psychological and emotional fitness to practise and deliver safe care.5) Demonstrate responsibility and accountability for care within scope of practice and level of competence.
	2. Demonstrate and maintain ethical nursing practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Practise and comply with SNB Code for Nurses and Midwives.2) Maintain confidentiality and respect client's right to dignity, autonomy and access to information.3) Escalate and discuss ethical issues and concerns with nursing and the healthcare team.
	3. Provide culturally appropriate care.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Respect the values, customs, spiritual beliefs and practices of individuals and groups.2) Recognise own beliefs and values and how these may influence care giving.

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
2	Professional Nursing Practice	1. Demonstrate effective communication.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Listen, clarify and communicate clearly through verbal/non-verbal, written and electronic means as appropriate to ensure effective communication with clients, families, nurses and other healthcare professionals. 2) Understand differences in communication style preferences among clients and families, nurses and other members of the healthcare team. 3) Communicate with team members, adapting own style of communicating to the needs of the team and situation. 4) Initiate actions to resolve conflict.
		2. Ensure consistent and continuous holistic care.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perform comprehensive and systematic client assessment. 2) Formulate a plan of care in collaboration with the healthcare team, clients and families. 3) Refer to relevant healthcare members for their expertise. 4) Implement and document planned nursing care in a timely manner. 5) Evaluate and modify plan of care to meet expected outcomes. 6) Utilise well-conducted/evaluated research findings as appropriate for client care and outcomes.
		3. Use principles of quality improvement and incorporate them into nursing practice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Collect, analyse and utilise data of incidents and trends. Implement strategies to improve the safety and quality of care delivery. 2) Demonstrate effective utilisation and management of resources, including manpower. 3) Understand and apply safety measures and guidelines/standards in one's practice. 4) Participate in safety and quality improvement initiatives and/or projects.
		4. Maintain safe environment through the use of quality assurance and risk management strategies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide a safe environment for clients, families and the healthcare team through knowledge and application of occupational and environmental health, safety practices and infection control policies. 2) Participate in continuous quality improvement and quality assurance activities. 3) Reflect on practice outcomes and make changes to practice when appropriate. 4) Delegate, monitor and supervise work performed by the EN and other ancillary care staff. 5) Manage workloads effectively by raising concerns and/or seeking consultation and assistance where applicable.

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
2	Professional Nursing Practice	5. Apply strategies to promote health and prevent illnesses.	1) Identify factors affecting client's health problem(s) and conduct educational needs assessment. 2) Apply principles of teaching and learning and counselling techniques for the maintenance and promotion of health of individuals, groups and communities. 3) Teach aspects of care to clients, families, carers, healthcare professionals and communities as appropriate. 4) Select and provide appropriate resources for clients and their carers when needed.
		6. Demonstrate clinical reasoning/ judgement in the provision of safe and quality nursing care.	1) Identify, prioritise client problems and implement care according to assessed needs and priorities. 2) Initiate diagnostic investigations, treatment and referral according to institutions' policy and governance 3) Evaluate the effectiveness and outcome of care in collaboration with the client and the healthcare team. 4) Apply critical thinking skills within a problem-solving context.
3	Collaborative Practice and Teamwork	1. Collaborate with clients, care givers and various stakeholders in the provision of safe and quality care.	1) Plan, manage and provide continuity of care in consultation with clients, families and other stakeholders. 2) Collaborate with various stakeholders and the community to support clients and families with appropriate resources.
		2. Promote teamwork within nursing and with all members of the healthcare team.	1) Support and co-operate with team members and transdisciplinary team. 2) Participate and actively contribute to client's care plan with team members and transdisciplinary team. 3) Review work processes constantly and propose new initiatives in nursing and healthcare.
		3. Practise effective leadership skills.	1) Foster open communication and maintain respectful relationships with team members. 2) Develop and promote positive professional working relationships with transdisciplinary team. 3) Demonstrate delegation and supervision skills to EN and ancillary care staff.

Domain		Competency Standard	Competency Indicators
4	Continuing Professional Education and Development	1. Demonstrate accountability for one's development and maintenance of competence as a professional Registered Nurse.	1) Reflect on current nursing practice and apply evidence-based and/or best practice knowledge and skills. 2) Take steps to remedy deficits in skills and/or professional knowledge. 3) Engage in continuing professional development activities to maintain competency in areas of practice.
		2. Contribute to the professional education of the nursing and healthcare team.	1) Promote and maintain the professional role of the nurse by upholding the SNB Code for Nurses and Midwives. 2) Participate in the teaching and learning roles of peers, nursing students and junior nurses.
		3. Apply knowledge and skills in research in different healthcare settings.	1) Demonstrate basic knowledge and participate in the research process. 2) Participate and evaluate nursing practice through research activities. 3) Apply evidence-based practice to improve nursing care.

References

Code for Nurses and Midwives (2018) Singapore Nursing Board: Singapore.

Nurses and Midwives Act 1999 Singapore.



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GENERIC SKILLS OF REGISTERED NURSE

Generic Skills refer to a set of nursing skills that a registered nurse (RN) is expected to perform upon graduation and entry to practice across all settings in Singapore. Together with the Core Competencies for RN, the generic skills define the requirements for registration as an RN in Singapore. The generic skills are not setting specific and have been organized into categories and specific skills for ease of use when assessing the RN's performance.

These generic skills are required to be taught and form part of the pre-registration nursing curriculum prior to graduation and/or completion of the nursing course. An entry level RNs ability and competency to perform the various categories of skills will require continuing guidance/supervision.

Additional skills required by practice settings to meet clients' needs can be extended with institutional training, assessment and clinical governance. This includes any of the skills listed below for existing RNs that were not taught and assessed at pre-registration nursing education.

Purpose of Generic Skills

- (1) Establish minimum requirements for teaching, practice and assessment of nursing skills during the pre-registration nursing course. Assessments are done through a variety of modes and settings (classroom, skills/simulation laboratory and clinical areas), incorporating cognitive, psychomotor and attitudinal domains.
- (2) Guide the development of a Test Plan for the RN Licensure Examination (for overseas nurses to be registered with SNB as RN).
- (3) Assess RNs requiring competency assessment.

S/N	Skills Category	Core Knowledge and Skills
1	Client/Health Assessment and Re-assessment	
		1) Perform admission, transfer and discharge according to policies and procedures
		2) Perform health assessment and re-assessment where appropriate
		3) Monitor vital signs (manual or with devices): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature • Pulse • Respiration • Blood pressure • Apex beat • Pain score
		4) Perform the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental status examination • Neurovascular assessment • Neurological assessment (Conscious Level Chart and Glasgow Coma Scale) • Fall risk assessment • Skin integrity assessment including pressure injury risk assessment • Nutritional assessment • Wound assessment

S/N	Skills Category	Core Knowledge and Skills
1	Client/Health Assessment and Re-assessment	
		5) Interpret basic ECG (basic rhythm)
		6) Collect laboratory specimens (e.g. urine, stool, sputum, blood)
		7) Perform venepuncture
2	Development of Care Plan	
		1) Develop, implement and evaluate a nursing care plan
		2) Use clinical pathways and care paths
		3) Monitor, document, evaluate and report
3	Provision of/Assist in Client's Activities of Daily Living	
3.1	Client Safety and Comfort	1) Perform and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene • Oral care • Grooming • Perineal care • Continence care • Bowel care
		2) Perform nursing intervention to maintain skin integrity
		3) Perform nursing intervention to maintain body temperature
		4) Apply, monitor and evaluate the use of physical restraints
		5) Apply, monitor and evaluate the use of pressure relieving devices
3.2	Mobility and Ambulation	1) Apply and evaluate appropriate client positioning
		2) Apply appropriate lifting and transferring techniques
		3) Monitor and evaluate the use of walking aids
		4) Care of clients on continuous passive movement
		5) Care of clients on functional mobility aids/devices
3.3	Nutrition, Fluids and Electrolyte Balance	1) Determine and evaluate the use of the various types of diet and feeds
		2) Prepare feeds and ensure fluid consistency
		3) Perform oral feeding
		4) Perform intake and output balance recording
		5) Insert and remove naso-gastric tube
		6) Perform enteral tube feeding – bolus, intermittent and continuous
		7) Use and care of feeding pumps
		8) Perform gastric aspiration (intermittent and manual modes)

S/N	Skills Category	Core Knowledge and Skills
3	Provision of/Assist in Client's Activities of Daily Living	
3.4	Elimination	1) Perform female adult urinary catheterisation
		2) Assist in male adult urinary catheterisation
		3) Assist with toileting – bedpan, urinal, commode
		4) Care of clients on indwelling urinary catheter
		5) Perform continuous bladder washout
		6) Care of clients with stoma
		7) Care of the incontinent client
		8) Conduct health education for the incontinent client
4	Coordination and Management of Care	
4.1	Respiratory Care	1) Perform insertion of oropharyngeal airway
		2) Use of non-invasive assisted respiratory devices
		3) Perform oro-pharyngeal and naso-pharyngeal and tracheal suctioning
		4) Implement and evaluate the use of oxygen therapy
		5) Perform tracheostomy care
		6) Perform chest tube care
		7) Teach and evaluate coughing and deep breathing exercises
		8) Implement and evaluate the use of incentive spirometry
		9) Use of manual resuscitator
4.2	Administration of Medication	1) Administer, monitor and evaluate the following medications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral and enteral • Intramuscular (IM) injection • Subcutaneous (SC) injection • Intravenous (IV) • Rectal/vaginal • Nebulizer and inhaler • Topical administration
		2) Recognise and apply indications, contraindications, precautions, adverse effects and client education on effects of medications, including drug allergy
		3) Apply 5 Rights of medication
		4) Perform drug calculation
		5) Perform drug reconstitution
		6) Manage controlled medications

S/N	Skills Category	Core Knowledge and Skills
4	Coordination and Management of Care	
4.3	Pre and Post Operative/Procedural Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Care of clients pre and post operatively (including diagnostic procedures) 2) Monitor and transfer clients to and from the Operating Theatre (OT) and Procedural Centres (e.g. endoscopy and radiology) 3) Perform post-operative/procedural monitoring and observations (include sedation level and conscious level) 4) Care of clients with different modes of anaesthesia: general, regional, local etc
4.4	Intravenous (IV) Therapy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Administer IV fluids, blood and blood products 2) Care of clients on IV therapy 3) Care of clients on total parenteral nutrition 4) Operate infusion and syringe pumps 5) Perform IV cannulation
4.5	Wound Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perform wound assessment and dressing 2) Care of pressure injuries/decubitus ulcers 3) Perform removal of stitches, drains, catheters etc 4) Apply, monitor and evaluate the use of wound products 5) Perform stoma care 6) Educate clients and family in wound dressing/care 7) Monitor and document using a wound chart
4.6	Diabetes Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perform peripheral blood glucose monitoring 2) Perform glucometer calibration 3) Perform diabetic foot screening 4) Perform client education on diabetic foot care
4.7	End of Life Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Support/coordinate spiritual care 2) Perform death procedures and support for the bereaved family
4.8	Medical Emergencies Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perform Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS) and/or Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) 2) Perform Automated External Defibrillation (AED)/Assist in defibrillation 3) Management of clients during medical emergency situations (include next of kin)

S/N	Skills Category	Core Knowledge and Skills
5	Infection Control	
		1) Perform hand hygiene/surgical hand wash
		2) Practise Standard, Contact, Airborne and Isolation Precautions
		3) Donning and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
		4) Prepare and use sterile items
		5) Manage spillage
		6) Manage waste (general and hazardous waste)
6	Communication, Teamwork and Service Skills	
		1) Respect client's rights and preserve dignity; demonstrate sensitivity to cultural diversity
		2) Maintain effective communication with transdisciplinary team
		3) Demonstrate accountability, responsibility, teamwork and good customer service skills
		4) Maintain accurate documentation in compliance with guidelines and medico-legal requirements, manually or electronically
		5) Empower client towards self-care
		6) Review plan of care and client outcomes with team members
		7) Demonstrate coordination skills
7	Client/Health Education and Community Care	
		1) Identify learning needs and learning styles of clients/families
		2) Apply principles of learning and teaching in health promotion and education
		3) Provide resources for clients and caregivers in collaboration with nursing colleagues and others
		4) Plan, conduct and evaluate health education programmes
		5) Use health education resources
8	Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving Skills	
		1) Collect and analyse data pertaining to client care
		2) Identify problem/s and take appropriate action
		3) Practise reflective thinking
		4) Escalate when in doubt: recognise situations beyond own skills and competence and seek assistance