



Nurses Association
OF NEW BRUNSWICK

PRACTICE GUIDELINE

**Graduate Nurse
Scope of Practice**



MANDATE

We regulate registered nurses and nurse practitioners in New Brunswick to ensure the provision of safe, competent and ethical care in the interest of the public.

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ISBN 1 895613-60-4

TABLE OF CONTENT

PREAMBLE.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	4
GRADUATE NURSE SCOPE OF PRACTICE.....	5
SUPPORTING SAFE PRACTICE OF GRADUATE NURSES.....	6
CONCLUSION.....	8
SUPPORT DOCUMENTS.....	9
REFERENCES.....	10



PREAMBLE

Guidelines are recommendations for nursing practice. They are evidence-informed and provide guidance for registered nurses (RNs) and for employers of RNs. Guidelines are meant to inform nursing practice by supporting the delivery of safe, competent and ethical care.

INTRODUCTION

A graduate nurse (GN) is a graduate of an approved Canadian nursing education program or an internationally educated nurse applicant¹ who has filed an application to write the entry-to-practice examination, is awaiting examination or is awaiting results and is on NANB's temporary register. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for graduate nurses (GNs), registered nurses and employers by increasing their understanding of the scope of practice of graduate nurses.

¹ An internationally educated nurse (IEN) is an applicant who has met all the requirements for registration as determined by NANB and is eligible to write the entry to practice exam. The IEN can practice as a graduate nurse with a temporary registration while waiting to write the entry-to-practice examination or while waiting for the results.



GRADUATE NURSE SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Graduate nurses are entry-level practitioners who have been educated to perform those competencies identified in the *Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses in New Brunswick* document. GNs have not yet received confirmation of having successfully passed the entry-to-practice examination. This examination validates that GNs have acquired the minimal knowledge, skill and judgement necessary for safe, competent and ethical nursing practice. While waiting to write or awaiting the results of the examination, GNs can practise nursing as defined in the NANB rules.

According to NANB's Rules:

Rule 1.16

A person whose name is entered in the temporary register may provide basic nursing care in accordance with the Association's Entry-Level Competencies as adopted and amended by the Board from time to time.

Rule 1.17

A person whose name is entered in the temporary register shall not:

- a) Perform those functions identified as "delegated medical functions²" by the employer;*
- b) Supervise³ the provision of nursing care by registered nurses⁴ or other graduate nurses;*
- c) Be in charge⁵ of a nursing unit or facility;*
- d) Practise without having access to a registered nurse within the facility for direct assistance;*
- e) Accept employment in which she is required to practice contrary to the Act, bylaws or rules.*

² Delegated tasks are those tasks that are normally performed by other health professionals. A delegated task is always client and time specific (one client and one time only) and cannot be applied to other clients.

³ Supervision entails initial direction, periodic inspection and corrective action when needed. It is the active process of directing, assigning, delegating, guiding, monitoring an individual's performance of an activity to influence its outcome. (CNPS, 2012)

⁴ The word "nurse", "duly qualified nurse", "registered nurse" or any like words or expressions used alone or in combination with other words or expressions connoting a person recognized by law as a nurse or member of the nursing profession in the Province shall be read as including a person registered in the register. (Nurses Act)

⁵ A GN cannot be assigned the responsibility for the operation of a nursing unit or facility or the overall supervision of care for that nursing unit or facility. Thus, GNs cannot be in charge during lunch and health breaks.



SUPPORTING SAFE PRACTICE OF GRADUATE NURSES

Transitioning into professional practice

As the complexity of nursing's knowledge base expands, applying knowledge gained in academic programs to practice situations is increasingly challenging for graduate nurses and new registered nurses. There is a growing recognition; however, that like their colleagues in other health disciplines, graduate nurses and new nurses need a transitional period with support in the workforce to effectively integrate and safely transfer the competencies they have acquired.

Adapted from: Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing. The Case for Healthier Canadians: Nursing Workforce Education for the 21st Century (Ottawa, ON, 2010)

Support in the practice setting is especially important for graduate nurses. GNs are valued team members who accept responsibility and demonstrate accountability for their practice by recognizing their limitations, asking questions, exercising professional judgement and determining when consultation is required. Graduate nurses work experience allows them to consolidate and continue their learning by observing other registered nurses and by acquiring a better understanding of the workplace culture and expectations. When GNs are employed to practice nursing, a registered nurse must be present in the area and available to direct the work actions or performance of the graduate nurse in a collaborative practice. This involves the registered nurse and graduate nurse working together, in each other's presence as necessary.

RNs are expected to supervise GNs in the practice setting at the point of care, providing supervision when the GN begins employment and for as long as required (direct supervision). When the RN determines that the GN demonstrates increasing competence in the practice setting, the level of supervision may vary. The RN may be located on the unit, on an adjacent unit, but must be within the four walls of the facility. When practicing with GNs, RNs remain responsible for the initial development of the nursing care plan and for the assignment of clients or nursing care activities to the GN.



Expectations of graduate nurse practice

Graduate nurses are expected to:

- have achieved the entry-level competencies;
- practice under the supervision of an RN;
- know and respect the limitations on GN practice;
- provide safe, competent and ethical care in a variety of practice settings;
- practise according to legislation, NANB's standards, *CNA's Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses* and employer policies; and
- function within own level of competence.

Expectations of registered nurse practice

Registered nurses are expected to:

- be familiar with the practice setting and the client population before assigning clients to the GN;
- know and respect the limitations on GN practice;
- direct the development and implementation of the nursing care plan;
- assign patients or nursing activities to GNs;
- mentor and supervise GNs;
- promote an environment that encourages GNs to ask questions, engage in reflective practice and ask for assistance; and
- identify and inform GNs of the resources available to support GN practice.



Expectations of employers

Employers are expected to:

- ensure the GN is on NANB's temporary register and authorized to practice;
- identify the competencies required in a particular setting, position or situation of added responsibility and provide opportunities to acquire the competencies before the GN is placed in such a situation;
- provide position-specific education and professional development through orientation, in-service education and mentorship programs;
- encourage and support experienced registered nurses to mentor GNs;
- provide initial work experiences in the same practice environment and with similar client populations to facilitate consolidation of knowledge;
- ensure that workload and staff scheduling decisions are made considering the needs of the GN (e.g., providing sufficient time to discuss and plan care with colleagues and clients receiving care and to receive feedback on their performance);
- ensure a registered nurse is readily available within the facility for supervision, guidance and consultation to support safe client care; and
- provide ongoing constructive feedback via established formal evaluation processes.

CONCLUSION

GNs are entry-level practitioners whose level of practice, autonomy and proficiency will develop best with collaboration, mentoring and support from registered nurses, managers and other health-care team members. Mentoring will contribute to increasing their knowledge and skill, and ability to independently deliver nursing care with confidence and efficiency.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

- *Examining Requests for Post Entry-Level Procedures*
<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-ExaminingRequestsPostEntryLevelProcedures-E.pdf>
- *Entry-Level Competencies for Registered Nurses in New Brunswick*
<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-EntryLevelCompetencies-2013-E.pdf>
- *Nurses Act*
<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-NursesAct-2008-Bilang.pdf>
- *Practice Guideline: Supporting Learners in the Workplace*
<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-PracticeGuidelines-SupportingLearners-E.pdf>
- *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses*
<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-StandardsOfPractice-RegisteredNurses-2012-E.pdf>
- *The Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*
<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/CNA-CodeOfEthics-E.pdf>

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