



---

PRACTICE GUIDELINE

# Scope of Practice



## Mandate

*Regulation for safe, competent, and ethical care.*

Under the *Nurses Act*, NANB is legally responsible to protect the public by regulating registrants of the nursing profession in New Brunswick. Regulation makes this profession, and nurses as individuals, accountable to the public for the delivery of safe, competent, and ethical nursing care.

© NURSES ASSOCIATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK 2025

Copyright © The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB), Fredericton, NB.

Commercial or for-profit redistribution of this document in part or in whole is prohibited except with the written consent of NANB. This document may be reproduced in part or in whole for personal or educational use without permission, provided that:

- Due diligence is exercised in ensuring the accuracy of the materials reproduced;
- NANB is identified as the source; and
- The reproduction is not represented as an official version of the materials reproduced, nor as having been made in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of NANB.

## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Role of the Nurse.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Scope of Practice .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1) Professional Scope of Practice.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2) Scope of Employment .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3) Individual Scope .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4) Client Needs .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Nursing Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix 1 –Application of the Nursing Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>19</b>

## Introduction

Healthcare is ever-changing, requiring the practice of nursing to evolve. Nurses<sup>1</sup> remain accountable to understand their scope of practice and effectively optimize their roles to respond to client<sup>2</sup> care needs. As nursing practice evolves, nurses are often faced with decisions about whether they can perform specific activities.

The purpose of this practice guideline is to:

- enhance clearer understanding amongst nurses, employers, and the public of the roles of the Registered Nurse (RN) and the Nurse Practitioner (NP);
- explain the foundational concepts associated with scope of practice; and
- provide a decision-support tool designed to assist nurses in determining whether a particular activity falls within scope and if it is appropriate to perform that activity<sup>3</sup>.

## The Role of the Nurse

Nurses are an integral and valued part of the healthcare system. Clearly articulating their role can help key decision makers, other healthcare team members and the public to determine how RNs and NPs can significantly impact client care and health outcomes.

The role of a nurse relates to the functions and responsibilities related to the practice of nursing. It is multifaceted encompassing direct client care, care coordination, advocacy and support, education, collaboration, leadership and research (Nurses Association of New Brunswick [NANB], 2019a; NANB, 2023b).

Nurses are health-care professionals who work autonomously and in collaboration with others to enable individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations to achieve their optimal levels of health (NANB, n.d.-a). Their [foundational nursing knowledge](#) supports a broad scope of practice and professional autonomy, enabling them to address the full spectrum of human experiences and responses to health and illness through health promotion, protection, maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, and end-of-life care (NANB, 2022b). Nurses provide care independently to clients of all ages and levels of acuity and complexity across a wide range

---

<sup>1</sup> The term “nurse” refers to registered nurses (RNs), graduate nurses (GNs), nurse practitioners (NPs) and graduate nurse practitioners (GNPs).

<sup>2</sup> The term “client” reflects the range of individuals and/or groups with whom nurses may be interacting, i.e. individuals, families, groups, populations or entire communities (NANB, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> Throughout the document the word activity is used, but the content also relates to tasks, procedures, roles and interventions.

of practice settings; they exercise clinical judgment and make critical decisions that directly influence client outcomes (Nova Scotia College of Nurses [NSCN], 2022).

Nursing practice is grounded in knowledge, critical thinking, evidence-informed decision-making, and sound professional judgment. These components are essential to delivering safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate care; therefore, nursing cannot be reduced to a simple list of tasks or activities.

---

*Being able to describe what it means to be a registered nurse is often difficult because nursing practice cannot be reduced to a list of tasks or activities (NANB, 2020b).*

---

## RN Role

Many RNs are directly involved in client care, serving as the primary point of contact for clients across various healthcare settings. Direct care includes a wide range of activities, such as administering medication and treatments, monitoring patient conditions, performing diagnostic tests, comfort measures, and providing education and emotional support. In this role, they also perform numerous activities (up to 70%) that are considered indirect care. These include organizing care by generating nursing knowledge, directing care plans, assigning care, facilitating communication amongst healthcare providers, and coordinating care. These are key aspects of the RN role (Allen, 2015).

RNs generate information and knowledge that guide decisions regarding client care. Through critical inquiry, they assess, plan, implement and evaluate client care and related services. They determine which information is relevant, decide what to communicate to others, and respond to changing client conditions while prioritizing interventions based on each situation.

Care coordination is a key responsibility of the RN. This involves reviewing past care, identifying current needs, and anticipating future healthcare requirements to support optimal health outcomes (Allen, 2015). Effective coordination requires knowledge of health determinants, available resources, and strong organizational skills.

RNs practice in various other nursing roles<sup>4</sup>, such as educator, administrator, researcher or consultant (NANB, 2025). Nurses in these roles support direct care providers and contribute to the healthcare system through leadership, system level planning, policy development and knowledge production and translation (Canadian Nurses Association [CNA], 2015).

---

<sup>4</sup> For a definition of active nursing practice for each role, refer to the [Guideline for Recognition of Nursing Practice - Appendix A](#).

## Advanced Nursing Practice

Advanced nursing practice requires additional formal education at the graduate level, leading to enhanced knowledge, competencies, accountability and responsibility (NANB, 2020b). The NP is a RN who has completed this advanced education, supporting the development of enhanced knowledge and clinical expertise to function in an advanced practice role.

### NP Role

NPs are autonomous healthcare professionals that integrate in-depth knowledge of advanced nursing practice and theory, health management, health promotion and disease/injury prevention, and other relevant biomedical and psychosocial theories to deliver comprehensive care. NPs collaborate with diverse client populations and other healthcare providers across various settings<sup>5</sup> to provide high quality client-centered care (NANB, n.d.-b)

NP practice is clinically focused. NPs are authorized to perform activities that are beyond the scope of practice of RNs, including diagnosing and prescribing (NANB, 2024). Using critical thinking, clinical judgment, and evidence-informed decision-making, NPs integrate knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to deliver a broad range of essential services, that include primary, acute, chronic and end-of-life care. In addition, the NP role may include research, education, consultation, and other activities as may be outlined in the [NANB Bylaws](#).

Their practice is guided by professional, ethical, and legal standards within a holistic model of care. NPs also provide leadership and collaborate with healthcare professionals across communities, organizations, and populations to enhance health outcomes and strengthen the healthcare system (NANB, 2024).

## Scope of Practice

Scope of practice refers to the activities that nurses are educated and authorized to perform and defines the boundaries of nursing practice. It encompasses the full range of roles and activities nurses undertake to address the extent of human experiences and responses to health and illness (NANB, 2022b). Given the evolving healthcare environment, nurses must continuously expand their knowledge and skills, while also making informed decisions to ensure practice is within scope.

---

<sup>5</sup> NPs work in a variety of settings such as community health centres, NP-led clinics, private practices, collaborative practices, emergency rooms, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and schools (NANB, n.d.-b).

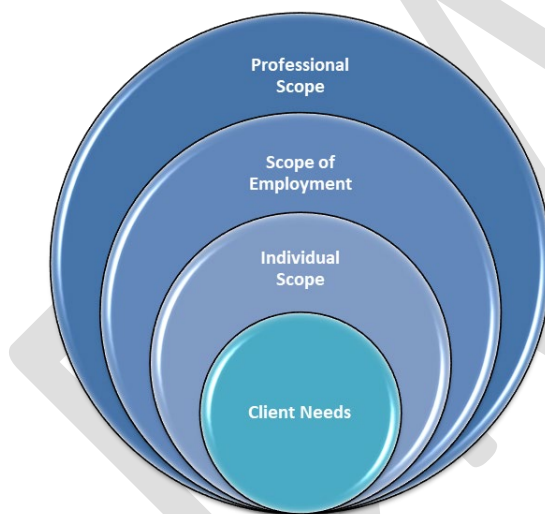
To remain responsive to evolving healthcare needs, the scope of nursing practice must remain adaptable, as rigid definitions or fixed lists of tasks can hinder this adaptability (NANB, 2020b; NANB, 2022b). With nursing roles becoming more complex, understanding and navigating the scope of practice becomes essential.

The nursing scope of practice is defined by four key parameters:

- 1) the professional scope of practice
- 2) the scope of employment
- 3) the individual scope, and
- 4) client's needs (Almost, 2021; NANB, 2022b).

Since the roles and responsibilities of nurses, and nursing practice, are ever changing and increasingly complex, it is essential that nurses recognize what defines the scope of practice and make informed decisions when determining if they should perform an activity. Figure 1 depicts how each parameter further defines the scope of practice for each nurse.

**Figure 1: Scope of Practice**



The following sections describe how each parameter defines the scope of practice.

### 1) Professional Scope of Practice

---

*All nurses are responsible for practicing within the scope of practice of the nursing profession set by **legislation**.*

---

## Nursing Legislation in New Brunswick

The legislated scopes of practice for RNs and NPs are outlined in the [Nurses Act](#). This legislation defines the professional scope of practice establishing the outermost limits of the practice of nursing. The professional scope of practice can only be modified through a legislative amendment (NSCN, 2022).

### RN Scope

According to legislation, RN practice involves assessing and treating human responses<sup>6</sup> to actual or potential health issues, and providing nursing supervision (NANB, 2002). This means that RNs apply knowledge of nursing theory and health and human sciences, and critical thinking skills to assess client responses to their health condition(s), plan and coordinate care, implement independent nursing interventions, and monitor outcomes to support optimal well-being.

The RN scope includes:

- a) assessing the client to establish their state of health and wellness;
- b) identifying response to needs based on the assessment and analysis of relevant data and information;
- c) planning, developing and implementing the nursing component of the client's plan of care<sup>7</sup>;
- d) coordinating client care in collaboration with other care providers and community resources;
- e) monitoring, evaluating and adjusting the plan of care based on client outcomes.
- f) evaluating the client's outcomes;
- g) other nursing roles, functions and accountabilities that support client safety and quality care in order to:
  - i. promote, maintain and restore health;
  - ii. prevent or alleviate illness, disease, suffering and injuries;
  - iii. manage acute illness and conditions; and
  - iv. manage chronic disease and conditions, and provide guidance, counseling and teaching;
- h) other roles that support practice (research, education, management, etc.); and
- i) other roles as set out in the *NANB By-laws*.

---

<sup>6</sup> Human responses to health problems encompass the multifaceted ways individuals react to actual or potential health issues, including physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. These responses can be both positive, such as coping effectively and maintaining well-being, or negative, leading to distress and impaired functioning. Through the art of being present and the science of evidence-based interventions, nurses use the concept of human responses to guide their care, focusing on assessing, nursing diagnoses, and intervening to support or modify these responses (Lynch et al., 2011).

<sup>7</sup> The nursing care plan can be discipline-specific, or a component of an interdisciplinary plan of care (NANB, 2021). In this case, it would include both nursing interventions and interventions authorized by a licensed independent practitioner whose practice focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions, such as a physician or NP.



NPs have an advanced legislated scope of practice that expands upon the RN scope. They apply advanced nursing knowledge, skills and judgement in delivering healthcare services.

## NP Scope

According to legislation, NPs are authorized to:

- a) diagnose or assess diseases, disorders or conditions;
- b) communicate diagnoses or assessments to clients;
- c) order and interpret approved screening and diagnostic tests<sup>8</sup>;
- d) select, prescribe and monitor the effectiveness of approved drugs<sup>8</sup> and non-pharmaceutical interventions; and
- e) order the application of approved forms of energy<sup>8</sup> (NANB, 2002).

NPs also manage and prevent diseases, disorders, injuries, and medical conditions through:

- prescribing or ordering blood and related products;
- performing invasive and non-invasive procedures;
- authorizing, administering and dispensing medication;
- consulting with and referring to other healthcare providers;
- admitting and discharging from hospital, institutions, facilities and programs (unless restricted by other legislation<sup>9</sup>); and
- completing assessments, forms and certificates as required by law<sup>10</sup>.

### Applicable Provincial and Federal Legislation

RNs and NPs are accountable for practicing in accordance with applicable provincial and federal legislation. Each RN and NP is responsible for identifying the legislation relevant to their practice and understanding how it impacts their scope of practice. Key legislation relevant to nursing practice is outlined in the [NANB Jurisprudence Guide](#) - Section 4.

Since other laws define the scope of practice of various health professionals, certain activities may be restricted to specific professions. When activities are introduced into nursing practice within a particular setting, it is essential to confirm whether these interventions are restricted or protected under other legislation (e.g. *NB Pharmacy Act, Medical Act*) (NANB, 2024).

---

*Practicing within the legislated scope of practice includes practice in accordance with **nursing regulation** that is set by the nursing regulatory body.*

---

<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the [Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners : Appendix 1 -Nurse practitioner Schedules for Ordering](#).

<sup>9</sup> Currently the [NB Hospital Services Act](#) does not grant NPs the privilege to admit and discharge from the hospital.

<sup>10</sup> Some, but not all, provincial and federal legislation recognize the NP as a medical practitioner authorized to satisfy the requirements related to their Acts and/or regulations - refer to the [Jurisprudence Guide](#) for the legislation that applies to nursing practice in NB.

## Regulation of Nursing Practice in New Brunswick

The *Nurses Act*<sup>11</sup> grants NANB the authority to regulate the practice of RNs and NPs in the province. Through this regulatory authority, NANB further defines the practice of nursing (NANB, 2022b). This includes identifying entry-level competencies (ELCs) and setting standards of practice. These form the foundation for safe, competent and ethical nursing practice, outlining the expected level of performance and informing RN and NP practice in NB in all settings and domains.

### Entry-Level Competencies

ELCs define the essential knowledge, skills, and judgment required for safe, ethical nursing practice at the point of entry into the profession (NANB, 2019a). Nurses are expected to maintain these competencies throughout their careers, in alignment with their roles and settings:

- [Entry-Level Competencies \(ELCs\) for the Practice of Registered Nurses in New Brunswick](#)
- [Entry-Level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners](#)

### Professional Accountability

All nurses are accountable for their own practice and conduct, and must practice in accordance with:

- [Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses](#)
- [Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses](#)

In addition, NPs are accountable to the:

- [Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners](#)

### Additional Standards

Nurses are also accountable to additional standards that are narrower in scope and address specific aspects of nursing practice, these include:

- [Standards for Documentation](#)
- [Standards for Medication Management](#)
- [Standards for the Nurse-Client Relationship](#)
- [Standards for Cultural Safety](#)

---

<sup>11</sup> The *Nurses Act* is the private health legislation that gives NANB the authority to regulate the practice of nursing in NB, through related regulations and by-laws, in addition to standards and practice guidelines and other resources that support safe, competent and ethical nursing practice. NB is unique in this regard, as other provinces govern health professions through public legislation applying the same governance to all health professionals (Department of Health, Government of New Brunswick, n.d.) Under the Health Professions Acts, other Canadian jurisdictions identify controlled acts which may be performed only by authorized regulated health professionals. Controlled acts are considered potentially harmful if performed by someone who does not have the required knowledge, skill and judgment (CNO, 2023).

In addition, NPs are accountable to the:

- [Standards for the Practice of Nurse Practitioners: Medical Assistance in Dying](#)

## Restrictions on Practice

### ▪ Graduate Nurses and Internationally Educated Nurses

Restrictions are placed on the practice of graduate nurses (GNs), graduate nurse practitioners (GNPs), internationally educated nurses (IENs<sup>12</sup>), and internationally educated nurse practitioners (IENPs). Their scope of practice is limited to basic nursing care in accordance with the entry-level competencies<sup>13</sup> until they successfully complete the entry-to-practice exam and/or other registration requirements, which confirms they possess the minimum knowledge, skills, and judgment required for safe, competent, and ethical nursing practice (NANB, 2023a).

The following restrictions are placed on their scope of practice:

- GNs or IENs shall not:
  - perform those functions identified as “delegated medical functions” by the employer;
  - supervise the provision of nursing care by RNs or other GNs/IENs;
  - be in charge of a nursing unit or facility;
  - practice without having access to a RN within the facility for direct assistance; and
  - accept employment in which she is required to practice contrary to the Nurse’s Act, bylaws, or rules (NANB, 2025).
- GNPs or IENPs:
  - require the co-signature of a NP or a physician on orders or prescriptions for screening and diagnostic tests, prescribed drugs or the application of forms of energy (NANB, 2025).

## RNs or NPs

- Limitations, restrictions or conditions can be placed on the practice of a nurse as a result of the [NANB complaints process](#) (NANB, 2025). These must be respected by the individual nurse.

---

<sup>12</sup> An IEN/ IENP is an internationally educated applicant who has met all the requirements for registration as determined by NANB and is eligible to write the entry-to-practice examination. The IEN /IENP can practice as a GN/GNP with a temporary registration while waiting to write the entry-to-practice examination or while waiting for the results.

<sup>13</sup> [Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses in NB - NANB](#)  
[Entry-Level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners - NANB](#)

## Other Regulatory Resources

NANB provides additional tools such as practice guidelines, fact sheets, FAQs, toolkits and consultation services to support decision-making and clarify scope of practice. These are available in the [NANB Document Library](#).

## 2) Scope of Employment

---

*In addition to practicing within the professional scope, nurses must practice in accordance with the **scope of employment**.*

---

The scope of employment defines a nurse's role within a specific workplace. It is determined by the employer through job descriptions, policies, guidelines and relevant workplace specific education. While nurses may have the competency to perform an intervention, they may not be authorized to perform it in their current employment setting. Scope of employment varies between settings and nurses are responsible for understanding what is expected of them in their current role (NSCN, 2022).

Nursing practice must be supported by employer policy. RNs and NPs are expected to work within their job description and in accordance with employer policy. If an activity is not supported by the employer, the nurse should advocate for and contribute to the development of supporting policies (NANB, 2019b).

---

*The scope of employment may not exceed the professional scope of practice.*

---

Before performing an activity, RNs and NPs must ensure the adequate clinical supports are in place, including:

- authorizing mechanisms (defined below);
- appropriate equipment and supplies to perform the activity safely;
- resources to support the nurse before, during and after the activity; and
- supervision as required.

Nurses must also understand the level of supervision required for specific activities:

- Direct supervision: an RN, NP, or physician is physically present at the point of care.
- Indirect supervision: an RN, NP or physician is available for consultation and guidance but is not physically present at the point of care. The person providing indirect supervision must be readily available to provide assistance when needed.

## Authorizing Mechanisms

Authorizing mechanisms are organizationally approved processes that enable the RN to execute identified interventions that are within the RN scope of practice. An authorizing mechanism can be a prescriber order (see Table 1), an employer policy or practice guideline, an established process, or a communication between a prescriber and nurse in a client health record (College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador [CRNNL] (2022d); NSCN (n.d.)). Nurses must understand the types of authorization required in their practice setting and ensure appropriate authorizing mechanisms are in place to support safe and effective nursing care (College of Nurses of Ontario, [CNO], 2024).

TABLE 1: Types of Prescriber Orders	
<b>Client Specific or Direct Order</b>	<i>Order (instruction or authorization) for a specific intervention provided by an authorized prescriber<sup>14</sup> for an individual client.</i>
<b>Pre-printed Orders</b>	<i>Lists of orders for specific health conditions or medical procedures from which the authorized prescriber selects applicable orders for a specific client.</i>
<b>Directives</b>	<i>Written order from an authorized prescriber for an intervention or a series of interventions that may be implemented for a number of clients when specific conditions are met and when specific circumstances exist. For the nurses accountabilities related to the application of directives, refer to: <a href="#">Fact Sheet Directive</a>.</i>

Independent nursing interventions are actions nurses can initiate and perform without a healthcare provider (HCP) order<sup>15</sup> (Thomas and Slater, 2024). This includes:

- applying the steps of the nursing process (see [Practice Guideline: The Nursing Care Plan](#) for more information);
- initiating and performing nursing interventions that are part of the nursing care plan and that are based on nursing knowledge, skills and clinical judgment (e.g. patient education, comfort measures, emotional and psychological support); and
- taking accountability and responsibility for nursing care decisions.

Some interventions require a HCP's order or directions before a nurse can perform them; these may be referred to as dependent nursing interventions (Thomas & Slater, 2024). These

<sup>14</sup> An authorized prescriber is a legally qualified health professional or a veterinarian, authorized to prescribe drugs or devices in any Canadian jurisdiction, and who gives a prescription. A prescription is a direction given by a prescriber directing that a drug, device, or treatment specified in the direction be dispensed for the person named, (...), in the direction (New Brunswick College of Pharmacists [NBCP], 2014). In NB current authorized prescribers include physicians, nurse practitioners, optometrists, dentists, pharmacists, midwives, veterinarians, and physician assistants (NBCP, n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> An order is a direction from a regulated health professional with legislative ordering authority (that permits performance of a procedure by another (Health Profession Regulators of Ontario, 2025).

interventions are not initiated by the nurse independently because they involve treatments or actions that fall under the HCP's legal and professional scope and require oversight or specialized knowledge that falls outside the nurse's autonomous scope of practice (Ernstmeyer & Christman, 2023). Authorization is typically needed for interventions initiated by regulated health professionals that are authorized to assess and treat health conditions, and have prescribing authority, such as a physician or a NP. Examples of dependent nursing interventions include, but are not limited to, administering prescribed medication, initiating an intravenous perfusion, inserting a urinary catheter, changing wound dressings with medical products, providing tube feeding, post-operative care.

Importantly, having the authority to perform an intervention does not mean it should be automatically implemented. RNs must always apply their knowledge, assessment, competence, and judgment to determine if an activity should be performed (CRNNL, 2022a). For more information, please refer to the [Nursing Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework](#).

### Advancing the Scope of Employment

There may be situations in healthcare, employment, or specific practice settings where new or emerging competencies—beyond entry-level competencies (BELCs)—are needed to meet healthcare demands (CRNNL, 2022c). When considering the introduction of new activities within the scope of employment, the boundaries for nursing practice set by the Nurses Act must be considered. To determine whether a proposed activity aligns with the professional scope of practice and should be added to the scope of employment, a critical evaluation is required (NANB, 2022a). A decision-making framework to support this evaluation process is available in the [Practice Guideline: Beyond Entry-Level Competencies](#).

Self-employed RNs/NPs who wish to add new or emerging competencies into their practice must request an assessment of nursing practice to determine whether the proposed activity is recognized as nursing practice. For details on this assessment process, refer to the [Practice Guideline: Recognition of Nursing Practice](#).

---

**BELCs** are additional competencies that are introduced in the practice of nursing; these competencies should always be within the limits of the legislated scope of practice (NANB, 2022a).

---

Nurses must ensure their practice complies with all applicable legislation, including setting specific laws and employer policies. While employers may limit a nurse's scope of practice, they cannot expand it beyond the legislated scope. In cases of conflicting policies, nurses are primarily accountable to the [Standards of Practice](#) and must advocate for policies that support safe client care.

The scope of employment significantly influences the nurse's scope of practice. Nurses are expected to optimize their individual scope of practice within the employer policies and advocate for changes that support optimized practice (NSCN, 2022).

### 3) Individual Scope

---

*In addition to practicing within the professional scope and the scope of employment, nurses must practice within their **individual scope**.*

---

Nursing education prepares RNs and NPs with the foundational competencies required for entry-level practice within the professional scope of nursing. The professional scope of practice encompasses the full range of roles and responsibilities of the nursing profession. The individual nurse's scope of practice is more specific and shaped by the nurse's education, experience, and context of practice. As the professional scope of practice sets the outer boundaries of nursing practice, the individual nurse's scope of practice must remain within these boundaries (CRNNL, 2022b and NSCN, 2022). Nurses are accountable for making informed decisions about their scope of practice, and must recognize their own limitations (Foster, 2023).

---

*The individual scope of practice is narrower than that of the profession, however individuals may have more specialized, in-depth knowledge and competence in a specific area of practice (NSCN, 2022)*

---

Since the individual scope of practice is unique and specific to each nurse, before performing an activity, RNs and NPs should reflect on whether it falls within their individual scope by asking:

- ☐ Have I obtained the education required to perform this activity competently? How will I maintain my competence?
- ☐ Do I have the knowledge, skill and judgment to:
  - (a) Assess whether it is appropriateness for me to perform the activity?
  - (b) Perform the activity safely?
  - (c) Manage outcomes effectively in my practice setting (e.g. access to emergency services, equipment or support)?

If additional learning or professional development is needed, nurses should discuss this with their employer and seek educational support.



## 4) Client Needs

---

*In addition to practicing within the professional scope, the scope of employment, and within their individual scope, nurses must consider **the client's specific needs**.*

---

Each client has unique needs. Nurses play a vital role in promoting and implementing measures that support positive client health outcomes (NANB, 2019b). Before performing an activity, nurses should assess the client's physical, psychosocial, cultural and emotional needs along with the following factors:

- Level of Complexity –
  - the degree to which a client's condition and care needs can be easily identified and how variable those needs are.
- Predictability –
  - the extent that a client's outcome and future care needs can be anticipated.
- Risk of Negative Outcome –
  - the likelihood of the client experiencing a negative outcome due to their condition or in response to treatment.

Nurses must also consider:

- whether the activity is in the client's best interest; and
- whether the nurse is the most appropriate provider to perform the activity.

Considering these factors will help the nurse determine if the care that the client requires is within the individual nurse's scope of practice.

All nursing activities must align with the client's needs, preferences, goals, and care plan. Client consent- whether implied, verbal or written- is required before proceeding with care (CRNNL, 2022d). For more information, refer to [Fact Sheet: Consent](#).

## Nursing Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework

The [Standards of Practice](#) emphasize that nurses must be competent to perform nursing activities. Competence involves not only the ability to perform an activity, but also the integration and application of knowledge, skills and judgment to provide safe, ethical and effective nursing care in a specific role and setting (NANB, 2020a). Each nurse is responsible for using professional judgment to decide whether to perform a specific activity, task, procedure,



role or intervention Even if an activity falls within the legislated scope of practice, it does not automatically mean the nurse should perform it.

The Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework is a tool designed to help nurses determine whether to perform an activity. Its application supports this decision by answering specific questions to determine whether the activity aligns with the following:

- 1) the professional scope of practice,
- 2) the scope of employment,
- 3) the individual's scope, and
- 4) the client's needs.

Answering 'No' to any question means that activity may be considered beyond scope and/or inappropriate for the individual nurse to perform. In such case, consultation with NANB may be necessary. If it is possible to answer 'Yes' for all questions, there should be sufficient information to make an informed decision about the proposed activity being within scope and being appropriate for the individual nurse to perform.

Refer to [Appendix I](#) to apply the Nursing Scope of Practice Decision Making Framework.

For assistance with the application of the framework, or for questions related to scope of practice, contact a nurse consultant at [practiceconsultation@nanb.nb.ca](mailto:practiceconsultation@nanb.nb.ca).

## Appendix 1 –Application of the Nursing Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework

- 1- Identify, describe or clarify the activity (role, intervention, procedure)
- 2- Proceed to answer each question

### ▶ Professional Scope:

*Is the activity consistent with:*

- the RN or NP scope of practice as defined by nursing legislation?
- applicable legislation (no specific prohibitions in other legislation)?
- nursing practice standards & nursing regulation?

YES

NO

If **NO** to any question, the activity may not be appropriate at this time.

Negative answers do not necessarily disqualify the activity; however, it is an indication that additional analysis and consultation with NANB is required.

STOP  
&  
CONSULT

### ▶ Scope of Employment:

*Are the necessary practice supports available:*

- authorizing mechanisms (employer policies, orders, directives, etc.)?
- proper equipment & supplies?
- necessary resources to support the nurse (before/during/after)?
- appropriate supervision?

YES

NO

### ▶ Individual Scope:

*Have I obtained the education required to perform this activity competently?*

*Will I be able to maintain my competence?*

*Do I have the knowledge, skill and judgment to:*

- Assess the appropriateness of performing the activity?
- Safely perform the activity?
- Manage the outcomes?

YES

NO

### ▶ Client Needs:

*Do I have the competency to perform this activity safely with this specific client?*

*Is the performance of the activity by the nurse in the client's best interest?*

*Do I have the client's consent?*

YES

NO

If **all** questions are answered **YES**, and there is sufficient information to make an informed decision that the proposed intervention is within scope, proceed with the activity in accordance with the standards of practice and employer policy.

\*If it is still not clear if the activity is within scope, consult NANB.

## References

- Allen, D. (2015). Making visible the unseen elements of nursing. *Nursing Times*, 111(46), 17-20. <https://www.nursingtimes.net/archive/making-visible-the-unseen-elements-of-nursing-09-11-2015/>
- Almost, Joan. (2021). *Regulated Nursing in Canada: The landscape in 2021*. [https://hl-prod-ca-oc-download.s3-ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/CNA/2f975e7e-4a40-45ca-863c-5ebf0a138d5e/UploadedImages/documents/Regulated-Nursing-in-Canada\\_e\\_Copy.pdf](https://hl-prod-ca-oc-download.s3-ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/CNA/2f975e7e-4a40-45ca-863c-5ebf0a138d5e/UploadedImages/documents/Regulated-Nursing-in-Canada_e_Copy.pdf)
- Canadian Nurses Association. (2015). *Framework for the Practice of Registered Nurses in Canada*. [https://hl-prod-ca-oc-download.s3-ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/CNA/2f975e7e-4a40-45ca-863c-5ebf0a138d5e/UploadedImages/Framework for the Practice of Registered Nurses in Canada 1 .pdf](https://hl-prod-ca-oc-download.s3-ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/CNA/2f975e7e-4a40-45ca-863c-5ebf0a138d5e/UploadedImages/Framework%20for%20the%20Practice%20of%20Registered%20Nurses%20in%20Canada_1.pdf)
- College of Nurses of Ontario. (2023). *Practice Standard: Scope of Practice*. <https://www.cno.org/Assets/CNO/Documents/Standard-and-Learning/Practice-Standards/49041-scope-of-practice.pdf>
- College of Nurses of Ontario. (2024). *As a nurse, how do I determine if I can perform a procedure? Or if an activity is within my scope of practice?* <https://cno.org/standards-learning/ask-practice/understanding-your-scope-of-practice#understanding-scope-of-practice-and-your-nursing-accountabilities-is-it-appropriate-to-perform-the-activity-within-the-context-of-your-practice-setting>
- College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador. (2022a). *Care Directives and Preprinted Orders*. <https://crnnl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/care-directives-and-preprinted-orders.pdf>
- College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador. (2022b). *Differentiating Scope of Practice within the Profession*. [differentiating-scope-of-practice-within-the-profession.pdf](https://crnnl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/differentiating-scope-of-practice-within-the-profession.pdf)
- College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador. (2022c). *Employers Adding a New/Emerging Competency*. <https://crnnl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/employers-adding-a-new-emerging-competency.pdf>
- College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador. (2022d). *Scope of Practice Framework*. <https://www.crnnl.ca/site/uploads/2022/06/scope-of-practice-framework.pdf>

Department of Health. Government of New Brunswick. (n.d.). *A Guide to Private Legislation for Self-regulated Health Professions*.

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/Publications/guide-private-legislation-self-regulating-health-professions.pdf>

Ernstmeyer, K., & Christman, E. (Eds.). (2023). *Planning*. In *Nursing Fundamentals (OpenRN)*.

[https://med.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Nursing/Nursing\\_Fundamentals\\_\(OpenRN\)/04%3A\\_Nursing\\_Process/4.06%3A\\_Planning](https://med.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Nursing/Nursing_Fundamentals_(OpenRN)/04%3A_Nursing_Process/4.06%3A_Planning)

Foster, S. (2023). Defining the scope of advanced practice. *British Journal of Nursing*, 32(20), 1017. <https://www.britishjournalofnursing.com/content/regulars/defining-the-scope-of-advanced-practice>

Health Profession Regulators of Ontario. (2025). *An Interprofessional Guide on the Use of Orders, Directives and Delegation for regulated Health Professionals in Ontario*.

<https://www.regulatedhealthprofessions.on.ca/orders%2c-directives%2c-delegation.html>

Lynch, M., Dahlin, C., Hultman, T., & Coakley, E. E. (2011). Palliative care nursing: Defining the discipline? *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*, 13(2), 106-

111. <https://www.nursingcenter.com/static?pageid=1168369#:~:text=For%20nurses%2C%20human%20response%20is,of%20life%20and%20alleviate%20suffering.>

New Brunswick College of Pharmacists. (n.d.). *Pharmacy Practice Resources. New Brunswick Provincial Legislation*.

<https://nbpharmacists.ca/legislation/federal-provincial-legislation/?highlight=Pharmacy%20Practice%20Resources.%20New%20Brunswick%20Provincial%20Legislation>

New Brunswick College of Pharmacists. (2014). *An Act Respecting the New Brunswick College of Pharmacists*.

<https://nbpharmacists.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/New-Act-with-Table-of-Contents.pdf>

Nova Scotia College of Nursing. (n.d.). *NSCN Glossary Terms*.

<https://www.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/NSCN%20Glossary%20of%20Terms%20Feb%202024.pdf>

Nova Scotia College of Nursing. (2022). *Nursing Scope of Practice. Practice Guideline*.

[https://www.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/Scope\\_of\\_Practice.pdf](https://www.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/Scope_of_Practice.pdf)

Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (n.d.-a). *Nursing Education. Education & Support*.

<https://nanb.nb.ca/en/education/nursing/>

Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (n.d.-b). *Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners*.

<https://nanb.nb.ca/en/standards/np/>

- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2002). *Nurses Act*.  
<https://nanb.nb.ca/en/library/document/nurses-act/>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2019a). *Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses in New Brunswick*. <https://nanb.nb.ca/en/library/document/entry-level-competencies-for-the-practice-of-registered-nurses-in-nb/>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2019b). *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses*.  
[https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/NANB2019-RNPracticeStandards-E-web\\_1.pdf](https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/NANB2019-RNPracticeStandards-E-web_1.pdf)
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2020a). *Nursing Intraprofessional Collaboration Guidelines. LPNs and RNs Working Together*.  
<https://nanb.nb.ca/en/library/document/nursing-intraprofessional-collaboration-guidelines-lpns-and-rns-working-together/>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2020b). What is my scope of Practice? *Info Nursing*, 17-18. <https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/INFO-What-Is-My-Scope-Of-Practice-E.pdf>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2021). *Practice Guideline. The Nursing Care Plan*.  
<https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/NANB-PracticeGuideline-NursingCarePlan-Dec-21-E.pdf>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2022a). *PRACTICE GUIDELINE Beyond Entry-Level Competencies*. <https://nanb.nb.ca/en/library/document/practice-guideline-beyond-entry-level-competencies/>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2022b). *The Jurisprudence Guide*.  
<https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/NANB-JurisprudenceStudyGuide-Jan2022-E - Amended Jan2025 .pdf>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2023a). *Fact Sheet: Graduate Nurse Scope of Practice*.  
<https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/NANB-FactSheet-GraduateNurseScopePractice-Jan-23-May-23-E.pdf>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2023b). *Entry-Level Competencies for Nurse Practitioners*. <https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/NANB-NP-ELCs-ENGLISH-Jan-2023.pdf>
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick (2024). *Standards of Practice for Nurse Practitioners. NANB Standards of Practice for NPs-Apr-24-Apr-2025-E.pdf*
- Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2025). *NANB Rules*.  
<https://nanb.nb.ca/media/documents/NANB-Rules-Jan-25-Bilingual.pdf>

Thomas, A., & Slater, A. (2024). *Nursing Interventions: Implementing Effective Client Care Plans*.  
<https://simplenursing.com/what-are-nursing-interventions/#toc3>

DRAFT



---

165 Regent Street  
Fredericton, NB, E3B 7B4  
[www.nanb.nb.ca](http://www.nanb.nb.ca)