Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses (RN)

Health Regulation Department
Dubai Health Authority (DHA)
Introduction

Health Regulation Department in DHA is responsible for regulating nursing practice in the Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Scope of Practice (SOP) refers to the activities that registered nurses are educated, authorized and competent to perform as well as their decision making capacity. Such activities are established through the legislated definition of licensed nursing practice, complemented by standards, limits, conditions and education and influenced by setting, environment and health needs of the population. The Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) of the World Health Organization (WHO) in its Global Advisory Group Meeting in 2000 identified lack of legislation as the most prevailing reason for nurses not to work to their full potential.

In recognizing its responsibilities in the public interest and to ensure public safety DHA health regulation supports the following statements:

“Individual nurses must self assess their competence and make individual decisions about their practice within unique circumstances and settings. Furthermore nurses retain accountability for their own practice and are accountable to the patient/client, the public, their employer and the regulatory authority”

“The scope of practice of an individual nurse may be more specifically defined than the scope of practice of the profession. To practice within the full scope of practice of the profession may require individuals to update or expand their knowledge skills and competence.”

Nurses Board South Australia ‘A Scope of Practice Decision – Making Tool’ Feb 2006

Healthcare services and the work trends of nurses globally are undergoing dramatic reform. In Dubai this is being driven by significant demographic and epidemiological change. The primary purpose of this document is to guide and direct nurse’s practice within this environment. Through this framework DHA health regulation meets its responsibility to regulate nursing practice in the public interest and address incompetent, impaired or unethical practice amongst nurses.

This document is the result of a collaborative effort from nursing, regulatory, legal experts and others from within both the public and private health care sectors of Dubai, which has provided a broad and enabling framework which supports nurses to make decisions about and within their scope of practice. The framework has been rigorously benchmarked against international best
practice and provides mechanisms to ensure nurses are competent and fit to practice their profession.

The Scope of Practice for the Licensed Nurse is endorsed by DHA health regulation and should be read in conjunction with DHA health regulation Code of Conduct and Ethics for Nurses and Midwives.

*DHA health regulation upholds that no nurse should be directed or compelled to undertake any practice that falls short of DHA health regulation standards or code of conduct requirements.*

**Competency Standards**

It is recognized that the role and responsibilities of the licensed nurse are broad and complex. As stated in the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Scope of Nursing Practice Position 2004 (excerpt)

“The scope of practice is not limited to specific tasks, functions or responsibilities but includes direct care giving and evaluation of its impact, advocating for patients and for health, supervising and delegating to others, leading, managing, teaching, undertaking research and developing health policy for health care systems.”

For this reason the following competency framework for the licensed nurse has been organized into four (4) domains of competence

- Care Delivery
- Professional and Ethical Practice
- Professional Development
- Quality Improvement and Collaborative Healthcare

Evidence of safety to practice is demonstrated when the nurse meets the competency criteria’s within the domains.

The indicators and evidence guides are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive but rather provide examples of evidence of competence.
### Domain 1 Care Delivery

This domain contains competencies related to providing nursing care to patients/clients in a manner that is responsive to individual needs and which is supported by the application of evidence based nursing knowledge and research.

### Competency 1.1

Provides planned care about actual or potential problems and strengths, plans and performs interventions and evaluates outcomes.

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<th>Indicator</th>
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| 1.1.1 Collects information on patient/client status from a variety of sources using assessment skills including observation, communication and physical assessment | 1.1.1.1 Undertakes assessment in an organized and systematic way | Knowledge of:  
- Major determinants of health  
- Healthy lifestyle behaviours  
- Physical, mental, spiritual and social health factors |
| | 1.1.1.2 Applies relevant research to underpin nursing assessment | |
| | 1.1.1.3 Utilizes a range of effective and appropriate communication and engagement skills | |
| 1.1.2 Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant and valid information when making decisions about patient/client status and reporting outcomes | 1.1.2.1 Ensures that current nursing research and evidence is incorporated in care delivery | Knowledge of:  
- Acute and chronic conditions across the lifespan, including mental health (manifestations, pathophysiology, etiology, risk factors, complications, diagnostic studies, laboratory values, medical emergencies, surgical interventions, treatment and health education)  
- Care for the pregnant woman from conception to birth  
- Care for the normal newborn  
- Communicable and reportable diseases  
- Health screening immunization |
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| 1.1.3 Develops plans of care that include data about assessments, decisions about patient/client status, planned interventions and evaluation criteria for client outcomes | 1.1.3.1 Contributes to care planning, involving patients/clients and demonstrates an understanding of patient/client rights to make informed decisions | • Knowledge of:  
• Nursing process  
• Physical assessment  
• Growth and development across the lifespan |
|                                                                         | 1.1.3.2 Demonstrates understanding of the process and environments that support recovery |                                                                                       |
|                                                                         | 1.1.3.3 Consults with patients, clients to identify their need and desire for health promotion advise |                                                                                       |
| 1.1.4 Sets priorities when planning and giving care                      | 1.1.4.1 Establishes priorities for care based on individual needs               | • Knowledge of:  
• Nursing process  
• Risk assessment                                                         |
| 1.1.5 Carries out interventions in accordance with polices, guidelines and care standards | 1.1.5.1 Administers interventions, treatments and medications within legislation, codes and scope of practice | • Knowledge of:  
• Medication administration and management protocols (the rights of drug administration’)  
• Blood and blood products transfusions  
• Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)  
• Controlled substances  
• Formula for calculating drug dosages (all routes)  
• Evidenced based nursing skills for therapeutic interventions (wound care, urinary catheterisation, suctioning and oxygen administration, pain administration, etc.) |
<p>|                                                                         | 1.1.5.2 Administers interventions, treatments and medications according to authorized prescription, established policy and guidelines |                                                                                       |</p>
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<th>Evidence  Guide  Examples</th>
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| 1.1.6 Evaluates patients/clients response to interventions and revises the plan as necessary | 1.1.6.1 Identifies criteria for evaluation of expected outcomes of care including time frames | - Knowledge of:  
- Nursing outcomes evaluation  
- Individual needs identification  
- Time management  
- Prevention of complications  
- Discharge planning for continuity of care |
|  | 1.1.6.2 Evaluates the effectiveness of the patient's/client's response to prescribed treatments, interventions and health education in collaboration with the patient/client and other health care team members. |  |
|  | 1.1.6.3 Reflects on patient/client feedback on the evaluation of nursing care and health service delivery |  |
| 1.1.7 Ensures timely and accurate documentation of records | 1.1.7.1 Maintains clear, legible, concise, timely, accurate and current patient/client records within a legal and ethical framework | Knowledge of:  
- Factors and process of nursing documentation |
|  | 1.1.7.2 Demonstrates literacy and computer skills necessary to record, enter, store, retrieve and organize data essential for care delivery |  |
|  | 1.1.7.3 Ensures confidentiality of patient information |  |
| 1.1.8 Initiates, maintains and concludes therapeutic and professional relationships in an appropriate manner. | 1.1.8.1 Demonstrates respect, empathy and interest in patient/client | Knowledge of:  
- Principles of therapeutic professional patient relationships  
- Advocacy  
- Patient rights |
<p>|  | 1.1.8.2 Establishes rapport and trust with patients/clients |  |
|  | 1.1.8.3 Undertakes nursing care that ensures patients/clients receive and understand relevant and current information |  |</p>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.8.4</td>
<td>Concerning their healthcare that contributes to informed choice</td>
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<td>1.1.8.4</td>
<td>Implements nursing care in a manner that facilitates the independence, self esteem and safety of the patient/client</td>
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**Competency 1.2** Promotes an environment that enables patient/client safety, independence, quality of life and health

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<tr>
<td>1.2.1</td>
<td>Identifies environmental hazards and eliminates and/or prevents where possible</td>
<td>1.2.1.1</td>
<td>Maintains infection control principles</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1.2.1.2</td>
<td>Accesses, maintains and uses emergency equipment and supplies</td>
<td>- Principles of Infection Control</td>
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<td>1.2.1.3</td>
<td>Identifies and reports situations that affect client/patient or staff health and safety</td>
<td>- Environmental hazards</td>
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<td>- Disaster planning</td>
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<td>- Risk Management</td>
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**Domain 2 Professional and Ethical Practice:** This domain contains competencies that relate to professional, legal and ethical responsibilities. These include being able to articulate knowledge and judgment as well as being accountable for own actions and decisions, while promoting an environment that maximizes client/patient safety, autonomy, quality of life and health

**Competency 2.1** Maintains standards of nursing practice and professional conduct determined by Department of Health and Medical Services and the practice setting

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Is accountable and takes responsibility for own nursing actions and professional conduct</td>
<td>2.1.1.1</td>
<td>Accepts responsibility for actions and decision making within scope of practice</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2.1.1.2</td>
<td>Identifies breaches of law that occur in practice and reports them to the appropriate person(s)</td>
<td>- ‘to prevent harm’</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2.1.1.3</td>
<td>Consults other health professionals when care needs fall outside the scope of nursing practice</td>
<td>- Scope of practice and scope of practice decision making tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>Functions within the legally recognized scope of practice</td>
<td>2.1.2.1</td>
<td>Practices nursing in accordance with relevant legislation/codes/policies and upholds</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
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<td>- Professional responsibilities</td>
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<td>Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>and within all relevant legislation</td>
<td>2.1.2.2 Understands accountability for directing, monitoring and evaluating nursing care provided by nurse assistants and others</td>
<td>• Duty of care (see Glossary)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.2.3 Seeks advice from a more senior registered nurse if unsure about the role and competence of others when delegating</td>
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<td>2.1.3 Complies with and or helps to develop polices and evidence-based care standards</td>
<td>2.1.3.1 Demonstrates knowledge of, and accesses policies and procedural guidelines that have implications for practice</td>
<td>Knowledge of: • Organisational Policies • Practice setting standards • Clinical protocols, pathways and guidelines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.3.2 Identifies relevant changes/advances in practice and disseminates it to colleagues</td>
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<td>2.1.4 Takes action to promote the provision of a safe environment and appropriate and ethical care to patients/clients</td>
<td>2.1.4.1 Identifies and reports situations that affect patient/client health or safety</td>
<td>Knowledge of: • Basic Life Support • Fire Safety • Principles of Infection Control • Risk Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.4.2 Accesses, maintains and uses emergency equipment and supplies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.4.3 Maintains infection control principles</td>
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<td>2.1.4.4 Recognizes and manages risks to provide care that best meets the needs and interests of patients/clients and the public</td>
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**Competency 2.2 Adheres to the ethical standards of the nursing profession**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2.1</th>
<th>Upholds the values contained in the DHA health regulation <em>Code of Conduct and Ethics for Nurses and Midwives</em>, namely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Respect for people</td>
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<td>• Honesty</td>
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<td>• Safe and competent care</td>
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<td>• Confidentiality</td>
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<td>• Informed consent</td>
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<td>• Team work</td>
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<td>• Risk management</td>
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</table>

| 2.2.1.1 | Practices in a way that respects each patient’s/client’s identity and right to hold personal beliefs, values and goals |
| 2.2.1.2 | Reflects on own practice and values that impact on nursing care in relation to the patient’s/client’s age, ethnicity, culture, beliefs, gender and or disability |

**Knowledge of:**
- Differences in cultural and religious practices/needs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2.2.2</th>
<th>Consistently practices according to the obligations in DHA health regulation <em>Code of Conduct and Ethics for Nurses and Midwives</em></th>
</tr>
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</table>

| 2.2.2.1 | Ensures confidentiality and security of written and verbal information acquired in a professional capacity |
| 2.2.2.2 | Maintains, supports and acknowledges the rights of individuals in the health care setting |
| 2.2.2.3 | Provides care which demonstrates sensitivity to the diversity of patients/clients |

**Knowledge of:**
- Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Patient and Family rights
- Relevant legislation
### Domain 3 Professional Development

This domain assumes primary responsibility for maintaining competence and fitness to practice is with the individual nurse (self regulation). It includes a commitment to the development of self, others and the profession.

### Competency 3.1

**Demonstrates a commitment to development of self, others and the profession**

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<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>Maintains current registration/licensure to practice in Dubai</td>
<td>3.1.1.1 Updates knowledge on current licensing requirements</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
<td>• Self regulation</td>
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<td>3.1.2</td>
<td>Practice within own level of competence</td>
<td>3.1.2.1 Determines one’s own level of competence and seeks assistance and knowledge as necessary</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
<td>• Self assessment skills to determine own competence • Performance review</td>
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<td>3.1.3</td>
<td>Meets the requirements for continuing competence</td>
<td>3.1.3.1 Updates knowledge related to best practice guidelines within area of practice e.g. clinical practice, management or education 3.1.3.2 Maintains record of all learning and professional development activities attended 3.1.3.3 Engages with, and evaluates, the evidence base that supports safe nursing practice</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
<td>• Technology and scientific advances • Life long learning • Reflective practice • Sources of evidence based research information • Professional practice portfolio</td>
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<td>3.1.4</td>
<td>Maintains own physical, psychological and emotional fitness to practice</td>
<td>3.1.4.1 Demonstrates good health, good character, sufficient for safe and effective practice as a nurse</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
<td>• Healthy lifestyle</td>
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<td>3.1.5</td>
<td>Contributes to the support, direction and teaching of colleagues to enhance professional development and</td>
<td>3.1.5.1 Takes responsibility for one’s own professional development and for sharing knowledge with others 3.1.5.2 Supports colleagues that are new or less</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
<td>• Unique competence of the healthcare team members • Preceptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Sub Indicator</td>
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<td>Examples</td>
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</table>
| the profession | experienced | • Mentoring  
| 3.1.5.3 Identifies opportunities and contributes to nursing research | | | • Research and nursing knowledge |

**Domain 4 Quality Improvement and Collaborative Healthcare:** This domain contains competencies to demonstrate that, as a member of the healthcare team, the nurse evaluates the effectiveness of care and promotes a nursing perspective within the interprofessional activities of the team.

**Competency 4.1** Recognizes and values quality improvement activities to monitor and improve standards of nursing.

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</table>
| 4.1.1 Participates in quality improvement activities | 4.1.1.1 Recognizes that quality improvement involves ongoing consideration, use and review of practice in relation to practice outcomes, standards and guidelines and new developments | | | Knowledge of:  
| | 4.1.1.2 Participates in case review activities | | | • Safe administration of therapeutic substances  
| | 4.1.1.3 Participates in clinical audits | | | • Risk assessment tools  
| | 4.1.1.4 Uses appropriate risk assessment tools to identify actual and potential risks | | | • Quality Management |

**Competency 4.2** Demonstrates accountability for communication, consulting and collaborating with other health professionals and health providers regarding activities of care planning, implementation and evaluation of care.

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</table>
| 4.2.1 Recognizes that the membership and roles of healthcare teams and service providers will vary depending on an individual's/groups needs and healthcare setting | 4.2.1.1 Recognizes when to negotiate with, or refer to other healthcare or service providers | | | Knowledge of:  
| | 4.2.1.2 Establish positive and productive working relationships with colleagues | | | • Health care systems  
<p>| | | | | • Roles and responsibilities of various models of interdisciplinary health teams |</p>
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<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Demonstrates knowledge of effective inter-professional work practices which respect and utilize the contributions of members of the health team</td>
<td>4.2.2.1 Participates with members of the healthcare team in decision-making</td>
<td>Knowledge of:</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of decision making frameworks • Processes for referrals</td>
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<td>4.2.2.2 Reviews and evaluates care with members of the healthcare team</td>
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**SCOPE OF PRACTICE DECISION MAKING**

*Decision making* in nursing practice is complex and relies on a number of factors. Nurses should use the following *steps* to assist in making appropriate and accountable decisions.

**Step**

1. **Is the function within the scope of practice of the registered nurse?**
   
   Nursing practice in Dubai is guided by contemporary standards and policy endorsed by DHA health regulation and benchmarked against standards and procedures endorsed by national and international associations.

   **IDENTIFY**
   
   - Is the activity within the scope of practice of the registered nurse?
   - Does the practice comply with nursing standards, is it supported by policy and is it supported by research/evidence based practice for this situation?
   - Are there other standards or regulatory policy that I must consider and will the practice comply with these?
   - Do I require regulatory authorization to perform this activity?

2. **Is the function within the individual’s scope of practice?**

   It is the responsibility of every nurse to understand and apply the relevant standards of professional practice within their own scope of practice. In making decisions in relation to their scope of practice nurses must actively engage in continuous self assessment and self regulation to ensure continuing competence to practice.

   **IDENTIFY**
   
   - Do I possess the current knowledge, training, skill and experience to perform the function?
   - Are these skills and abilities documented in my employment file?
   - Do I have required authorization to perform this activity?
   - Do I require the expert assistance of other health professionals?
   - Have I met the requirements for delegation?
   - Have I met the requirements for supervision?

3. **Is there an identified client/patient need or benefit?**

   Nursing care should occur in consultation with the client/patient and their families.

   **IDENTIFY**
   
   - Is there a legitimate need by the client/patient for this service?
   - Will the client/patient/public benefit from my performing this service?
   - Has the patient/client/public been consulted in the decision process?
4. Does the employing facility support this function?
   Nurses have the responsibility to practice within professional standards and guidelines which are supported by appropriate policies and procedures provided by employers.

   - Is this function identified within my role/job description?
   - Do I have the support of my supervisor to perform this function?
   - Is there organizational policy or procedure in place?

**Step**

5. Am I willing to accept accountability and responsibility for my decision?
Question: How do I know what is my current Scope of Nursing Practice?

ASK

Step 1. Is the function within Licensed nursing practice?

YES

Step 2. Is the function within the individual’s scope of practice?

YES

Step 3. Is there an identified client/patient need or benefit?

YES

Step 4. Does the employing facility support this function?

Yes

Step 5. Am I willing to accept accountability for my decision?

YES

PROCEED

EVALUATE

• Is the activity within the licensed nursing practice?
• Does the practice comply with nursing standards and supported by policy and is it supported by research/evidence based practice for this situation?
• Will the practice comply with other relevant standards and policies?
• Do I have the appropriate regulatory authorization to perform the activity?

• Do I possess the current knowledge, training, skill and experience to perform the function?
• Are these skills and abilities documented in my employment file?
• Do I have required authorized from my employer to perform this function?
• Do I have the expert assistance of other health professionals for this function if required?
• Have I met the requirements for delegation?
• Have I met the requirements for supervision?

• Is there a legitimate need by the client/patient for this function?
• Will the client/patient/public benefit from my performing this function?
• Has the patient/client/public been consulted in the decision process and has consent been given?

• Is this function identified within my role/job description?
• Do I have the support of my supervisor to perform this function?
• Is there a organizational policy or procedure in place which describes and supports this function?

• Do I accept accountability for the performance and outcome of this function in this situation and mindful of my competence?

DO NOT PROCEED

Review & consult resources & seek advice
DELEGATION WITHIN THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF THE REGISTERED NURSE

DELEGATION BY REGISTERED NURSES
For the purpose of this document delegation is the conferring of authority to perform specific functions or tasks/activities in a specific situation, to a person whose role/job description and training allows them to perform such functions but does not have the authority to perform such functions without supervision.

Only REGISTERED NURSES are able to delegate. It is not permitted for Assistant Nurses to delegate.

Registered Nurses who delegate health care tasks retain accountability for the decision to delegate and the subsequent performance of the delegated task. The decision to delegate is based on the nurse’s professional judgment and determination that the person to whom the delegation is to be given is competent to perform the function.

DELEGATION must not be given in circumstances which involve a compromise to client/patient safety or a breach of legislation or professional standards.

SUPERVISION
Supervision is defined as the activities of oversight, direction, advice, guidance, support, monitoring or evaluating.

Supervision can be of the individual or a group of persons and is usually only for a defined time as determined by the licensed nurse depending on the situation and activity.

Supervision can be direct where the Registered Nurse works with the Assistant Nurse or Health Care Assistant or Student Nurse and can provide observation and intervention where necessary.

Supervision can be indirect where the Registered Nurse is not present and supervision is provided other than by direct observation. Processes which are the shared responsibility of the licensed nurse as well as the employer must be in place to support the Assistant Nurse or Health Care Assistant in this situation.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACCOUNTABILITY
A Registered Nurse is answerable to the client/patient, the employer, the regulator and the public for her/his decisions, actions and behaviours and for the consequences of those decisions, actions and behaviours.

ASSISTANT NURSE
A person registered under the Assistant Nurse scope of practice

CLIENT
An individual, family, group or community that is a consumer of nursing service.

COMPETENT
Having the required abilities or qualities.

COMPETENCE
The combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that underpin effective performance as a nurse.

DUTY OF CARE
A duty to use care toward others that would be exercised by an ordinarily reasonable and prudent person in order to protect them from unnecessary risk of harm.

PUBLIC
The community of the Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

REGISTERED NURSE
A person registered under the registered nurse scope of practice

SELF ASSESSMENT
Self assessment of competence is a continuous process of examination against professional standards and guidelines. The nurse has the responsibility to maintain and further develop the competence necessary for their area of practice. The focus should be on improvement.

SELF REGULATION
Self regulation is a dynamic process for the health professional which involves accountable practice and sound decision making. Critical continuous self assessment of competence to practice and actions to maintain and enhance competence is its foundation.
References


College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia; Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, www.crnbc.ca accessed 3/9/07

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