

Notice of Replacement by the Nursing Council of New Zealand of the Scope of Practice and the Prescribed Qualifications for Registered Nurses

Commencement

This notice is given pursuant to sections 11(1) and 12(1) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (“the Act”) and comes into effect on **9 July 2015**.

On that date it replaces the Notice of Replacement Scope of Practice and Qualifications Prescribed by the Nursing Council of New Zealand for Registered Nurses published in the [New Zealand Gazette, 26 August 2010, No. 108, page 2916](#), which came into force on 30 September 2010, and the Notice of Replacement Qualifications Prescribed by the Nursing Council of New Zealand for Registered Nurses from Overseas published in the [New Zealand Gazette, 24 January 2013, No. 5, page 286](#), which came into force on 1 March 2013.

Explanatory Note

Introduction

Under sections 11(2) and 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, the Nursing Council of New Zealand (“the Council”) is required to describe the scope of practice for nursing in New Zealand and prescribe the qualifications required for each scope of practice.

Changes coming into effect on 9 July 2015

In July 2014, the Nursing Council consulted on possible changes to the prescribed qualifications for the registered nurse scope of practice to include a pre-registration master’s degree. A pre-registration master’s degree in nursing would offer an additional pathway for entry into nursing for candidates already holding a bachelor’s degree in another discipline. This pathway is already available in other countries.

The Council sought the views of stakeholders in aged care, allied professional organisations, consumer groups, district health boards, educational institutions, government agencies, health and homecare agencies, international nursing regulatory authorities, professional organisations representing nurses, Māori advisors and nurse executives. The consultation document was also available on the Council website for public comment.

77 submissions were received with submitters divided on support for the proposal. In February 2015, after considering the consultation feedback, the Council agreed to amend the prescribed qualifications to allow graduate (Level 7, New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF)) or postgraduate (Level 8, NZQF) nursing qualifications that meet the Council’s *Education programme standards for the registered nurse scope of practice* to lead to registration in the registered nurse scope of practice. This amendment was in response to some submissions requesting a broader range of graduate and postgraduate qualifications leading to registration in the registered nurse scope of practice.

In prescribing qualifications under section 12 the Council must be guided by the following principles set out in section 13 of the Act:

- a. The qualifications must be necessary to protect members of the public; and
- b. the qualifications may not unnecessarily restrict the registration of persons as health practitioners; and
- c. the qualification may not impose undue costs on health practitioners or on the public.

The Council’s decision was that graduate (Level 7, NZQF) or postgraduate (Level 8, NZQF) nursing qualifications will offer a shortened pathway to registration for graduates. However, the Council requires such programmes to meet the same *Education programme standards for the registered nurse scope of practice*, including programme content, clinical experience and demonstrating competence and fitness for registration. These requirements would ensure that programme graduates demonstrated safe and competent practice on completion of a pre-registration nursing qualification.

The amendment therefore adheres to the principles that the qualification is necessary to protect members of the public and will not restrict the registration of persons as registered nurses.

Previous notices

The Council last published the scope of practice for New Zealand and Overseas Registered Nurses in September 2010, the prescribed qualifications for New Zealand Registered nurses in September 2010 and the prescribed qualifications for Overseas Registered Nurses in March 2013.

Dated at Wellington this 1st day of July 2015.

CAROLYN REED, Registrar, Nursing Council of New Zealand.

Scope of Practice—Registered Nurses

Registered nurses utilise nursing knowledge and complex nursing judgment to assess health needs and provide care, and to advise and support people to manage their health. They practise independently and in collaboration with other health professionals, perform general nursing functions, and delegate to and direct enrolled nurses, health care assistants and others. They provide comprehensive assessments to develop, implement, and evaluate an integrated plan of health care, and provide interventions that require substantial scientific and professional knowledge, skills and clinical decision making. This occurs in a range of settings in partnership with individuals, families, whānau and communities. Registered nurses may practise in a variety of clinical contexts depending on their educational preparation and practice experience. Registered nurses may also use this expertise to manage, teach, evaluate and research nursing practice. Registered nurses are accountable for ensuring all health services they provide are consistent with their education and assessed competence, meet legislative requirements and are supported by appropriate standards. There will be conditions placed in the scope of practice of some registered nurses according to their qualifications or experience limiting them to a specific area of practice.

The Nursing Council competencies for Registered Nurses describe the skills and activities of registered nurses.

Prescribed Qualifications

New Zealand Graduates

- a. A bachelor's degree in nursing approved by the Nursing Council of New Zealand; or
- b. a graduate nursing qualification at Level 7 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework approved by the Nursing Council of New Zealand; or
- c. a postgraduate nursing qualification at Level 8 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework approved by the Nursing Council of New Zealand; and
- d. a pass in an assessment of Nursing Council Competencies for Registered Nurses by an approved provider; and
- e. a pass in an Examination for Registered Nurses set by the Nursing Council of New Zealand.

Registered Nurses from Overseas

- a. Current registration with an overseas regulatory authority; and
- b. successful completion of a nursing programme that is, in the Nursing Council's opinion, equivalent to or as satisfactory as a bachelor's degree programme in nursing at Level 7 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework; or
- c. successful completion of a graduate pre-registration nursing programme that is, in the Nursing Council's opinion, equivalent to or as satisfactory as an approved New Zealand graduate nursing programme at Level 7 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework that leads to registration in the registered nurse scope of practice; or
- d. successful completion of a postgraduate pre-registration nursing programme that is, in the Nursing Council's opinion, equivalent to or as satisfactory as an approved New Zealand postgraduate nursing programme at Level 8 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework that leads to registration in the registered nurse scope of practice; and
- e. two years' post-registration nursing practice as a registered nurse of at least 2,500 hours within the five years immediately preceding the date of the application; and
- f. at the direction of the Nursing Council, successful completion of a Nursing Council approved competence assessment programme.