

## What?

The following information describes what is tested during a nursing competence assessment.

All RNs in Canada are educated as generalists, with knowledge in medical, surgical, pediatric, obstetric and psychiatric nursing. The content tested during the competence assessment is specific to these practice areas, the Canadian health care system and professional nursing practice in Canada.

There are several types of competence assessments done at RNPDC.

Nurses may be referred for:

- A **general** competence assessment (medical-surgical).

And one or more of the following:

- A focused competence assessment in **psychiatric-mental** health
- A focused competence assessment in **pediatrics** (child health)
- A focused competence assessment in **obstetrics** (maternal-infant health)

A **complete** competence assessment includes the general assessment and all three focused assessments (i.e., psychiatric-mental health, child health and maternal-infant health).

Thirty-four competencies are tested during the competence assessment. These 34 competencies are based on the Entry-level Competencies and Standards for Practice for registered nurses in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick; and comply with national competencies.

The 34 competencies are listed below, along with some detail on what each competency measures.

Assessment Centre Competencies
<b>1. Displays a professional image of nursing.</b>
➤ Introduces self by name, professional designation and role.
➤ Demonstrates professional presence.
➤ Models professional behaviours
<b>2. Demonstrates an understanding of the scope of practice of the registered nurse.</b>
➤ Demonstrates knowledge of the role and responsibilities of a registered nurse in Canada.
➤ Engages in activities that are within the scope of practice of the registered nurse.

## Assessment Centre Competencies

### **3. Is accountable for own decisions and actions.**

- Accepts responsibility for own decisions and actions.
- Is aware of scope of practice based on own competence level.
- Tells others appropriately of any knowledge gaps (e.g., simulated client, assessor, health care team member).
- Seeks assistance from others when uncertain of own capabilities.
- Accepts responsibility when assigning or delegating activities to other health care team members.

### **4. Exercises professional judgment in relation to agency policies and procedures.**

- Identifies applicable agency policies and procedures to guide practice.
- Identifies appropriate resources to use in the absence of agency policies and procedures.

### **5. Demonstrates ability to organize own workload effectively.**

- Considers time frames in planning activities.
- Organizes own workload based on priorities.
- Re-organizes planned work based on emerging priorities.

### **6. Demonstrates knowledge concerning population health.**

- Has knowledge of population health issues (e.g., pandemics, food and water safety).
- Understands the significance of primary health care in relation to population health.
- Identifies the principles of primary health care.
- Identifies the principles of population health.
- Has knowledge of the determinants of health.
- Understands how the determinants of health influence client health.

### **7. Demonstrates knowledge to practice in diverse settings.**

- Identifies an awareness of organizational structures of hospital, clinic, and community settings; Canadian healthcare system.
- Identifies an awareness of resources available in hospital, clinic, and community settings.
- Identifies awareness of expectations of a registered nurse's role and responsibilities within hospital, clinic, and community settings.
- Understands how the practice setting can influence the role and responsibilities of the registered nurse. (scope of employment)

Assessment Centre Competencies

**8. Demonstrates knowledge from health sciences as a foundation to practice nursing safely.**

➤ Has evidence of a knowledge base in the health sciences (e.g., physiology, pathophysiology, psychopathology, pharmacology, microbiology, epidemiology, genetics, immunology, and nutrition).

**9. Demonstrates knowledge from the social sciences, the humanities, and health-related research to nursing practice.**

➤ Has evidence of a knowledge base in social sciences, the humanities, and health-related research (e.g., culture, power relations, spirituality, philosophical, and ethical reasoning).

**10. Demonstrates knowledge to care for diverse populations.**

➤ Has evidence of a knowledge base about human growth, development, and role transitions for people of all ages and genders.

**11. Articulates unique challenges of specific populations in relation to maintenance of health.**

➤ Understands some of the unique health issues of specific populations (e.g., Aboriginal peoples, Black Canadians of African descent, Gay-Bisexual-Lesbian-Transgender communities, persons with disabilities, immigrants, poor, and homeless people, racial, ethnic and faith minorities, linguistic minorities).

**12. Identifies current health care trends and practices.**

➤ Demonstrates knowledge from nursing and other disciplines concerning current health care issues (e.g., the health care needs of older people, vulnerable and/or marginalized populations, health promotion, pain prevention and management, end-of-life care, problematic substance use).

**13. Demonstrates knowledge of a safe practice environment.**

➤ Understands key safety concepts (e.g., adverse events, close calls) and processes (e.g., reporting, analyzing events).

➤ Has evidence of knowledge about workplace health and safety (e.g., safe work practices, prevention of aggressive behaviour).

➤ Has evidence of knowledge to properly assess environment for client safety, personal safety, and safety of other health care team members.

➤ Identifies factors that influence future risk for an unsafe environment.

**14. Demonstrates knowledge of relational practice.**

➤ Has evidence of knowledge of the establishment and maintenance of therapeutic relationships with clients.

➤ Has evidence of knowledge of the establishment and maintenance of relationships with other health care team members.

## Assessment Centre Competencies

### **15. Performs relevant, holistic health assessments individualized to clients and their situations.**

- Uses a framework to guide health assessment (e.g., systems, Gordon's Functional Health Patterns).
- Determines pertinent aspects to include in an assessment (e.g., focused vs. complete assessment).
- Uses appropriate assessment tools and techniques to collect data based on client's needs and the situation (e.g., inspection, palpation, percussion, auscultation, pain scale, GCS, mini mental, fall assessment, Braden Scale) .
- Considers client characteristics which could influence interacting (e.g., developmental, generational, cultural, cognitive, emotional).
- Demonstrates ability to assess client's past and current health status (e.g., chief complaint, allergies, medication history, social history, family medical history, psychological status, cultural history, spiritual history, sexual history).
- Demonstrates methods of data collection (e.g., client interview, lab data).
- Collects subjective and objective data.
- Assesses determinants of health pertinent to the client and the situation. (e.g., education, social support, employment, environment).
- Assesses client's strengths and assets (e.g., coping resources, family support, community resources).
- Determines client's definition of family.
- Discusses meaning of the health and illness experience from the client's perspective.
- Engages client as appropriate in the health assessment.
- Demonstrates an ability to complete a physical assessment.
- Identifies client's health beliefs and practices (e.g., diet, spirituality).
- Assesses client's learning needs.
- Assesses stressors (e.g., child care, healthcare insurance, role in family).
- Validates assessment findings with client and other health care team members.
- Ensures that own personal values and beliefs do not influence or bias the assessment.
- Completes assessments in a timely manner.

### **16. Identifies client's health problems.**

- Differentiates normal from abnormal client data (e.g., physical assessment findings, lab data).
- Identifies actual client health problems.
- Identifies potential client health problems.

## Assessment Centre Competencies

➤ Explains the rationale for the actual/potential health problems identified.

➤ Engages clients in identifying their health needs, strengths, capacities, and goals.

➤ Identifies the need to collaborate with other health care team members to assist in identifying actual/potential client health care needs, strengths, capacities, and goals.

➤ Establishes priorities for actual/potential health problems based on threats to the client.

### **17. Plans relevant interventions consistent with priorities for care in collaboration with the client.**

➤ Individualizes the plan of care.

➤ Uses principles of primary health care in developing care plans.

➤ Identifies realistic short and long-term goals with individualized expected outcomes.

➤ Explores possible approaches for care with client.

➤ Considers all pertinent health assessment data when planning care.

➤ Uses best practices in planning client care.

➤ Validates plan of care with client.

➤ Promotes family involvement and support.

➤ Identifies appropriate nursing and collaborative interventions for plan of care.

### **18. Demonstrates appropriate decision-making during the delivery of client care.**

➤ Provides rationale for nursing care actions and decisions that is evidenced-informed (e.g., research, theory, clinical practice, safety) .

➤ Identifies alternative actions/choices and potential outcomes when necessary, based on available information.

### **19. Demonstrates sensitivity and respect for client diversity.**

➤ Respects diverse health status, diagnosis, experiences, beliefs and health practices of a client.

➤ Provides nursing care with a non-judgmental, sensitive approach.

➤ Ensures that own personal values and beliefs do not influence client care.

### **20. Applies the concepts of primary health care and population health.**

➤ Uses population health strategies to prevent illness and injury (e.g., communicable diseases, abuse, neglect).

➤ Assists the client to identify the role of health promotion (e.g., exercise, sleep, nutrition, family planning) and illness/injury prevention (e.g., immunizations, screening) in meeting health outcomes .

### **21. Intervenes appropriately in response to client's health status. (e.g., health promotion, illness/injury prevention, disease management).**

➤ Individualizes care to accommodate the client's capacities.

## Assessment Centre Competencies

- Collaborates with the client to achieve health outcomes.
- Manages multiple nursing interventions for the client.
- Implements interventions consistent with the plan of care within the expected time frame.
- Provides care that is evidenced-informed.
- Coordinates the delivery of client care.
- Supports the client with chronic health issues (e.g., mental health, diabetes).
- Applies principles of pain management.
- Identifies appropriate care before and after diagnostic tests and treatments.
- Supports palliative care interventions (e.g., symptom control, spiritual support).
- Identifies strategies to prevent development of complications (e.g., skin breakdown, constipation).
- Identifies appropriate community resources (e.g., support groups, home care).

### **22. Intervenes in a timely manner in response to a rapidly changing condition in a client's health status.**

- Recognizes the rapidly changing condition of the client (e.g., myocardial infarction, surgical complications, acute neurological event, shock, acute respiratory event, cardiopulmonary arrest, perinatal crisis, premature birth, diabetes crisis, mental health status).
- Implements appropriate nursing interventions for the client with a rapidly changing health status.
- Seeks immediate assistance, as necessary, for the client with a rapidly changing condition.

### **23. Manages pharmacotherapeutics in a safe and effective manner.**

- Demonstrates knowledge of legal and professional guidelines, principles, and policies of safe medication administration.
- Assesses the client's need for medication.
- Accesses appropriate resources for information on medications, if necessary (e.g., drug handbook, pharmacy).
- Reviews pertinent client information prior to medication preparation (e.g., allergies, age).
- Assesses client's understanding of the medications ordered.
- Provides information to the client about medications (e.g., purpose, compliance).
- Demonstrates knowledge of abbreviations related to medication administration.
- Calculates dosages, concentrations, rates, and volumes safely.
- Applies the seven rights of medication administration.

## Assessment Centre Competencies

➤ Identifies information related to medications (e.g., side effects, nursing implications).

➤ Prepares medications properly.

➤ Administers medications according to policy and procedures.

➤ Documents medications appropriately.

➤ Assesses for appropriate response to medications.

➤ Recognizes and manages drug reactions.

### **24. Demonstrates effective psychomotor skills.**

➤ Applies knowledge of current practice standards for select nursing psychomotor skills (e.g., care of nasogastric tube, chest tubes, central lines, trache care, catheterization, IV therapy, etc.).

➤ Uses appropriate techniques and principles when performing skills in select scenarios.

### **25. Promotes a safe environment for the client, self, other health care workers, and the public.**

➤ Applies infection control measures.

➤ Uses safety measures (e.g., safe disposal of sharps).

➤ Identifies appropriate actions to take if there is an issue regarding staff safety.

➤ Recognizes and reports unsafe practices.

➤ Reports on actual and potential safety risks to clients, self, or others.

➤ Questions unclear orders, decisions, or actions made by other health care team members.

➤ Recognizes and reports own or others' near misses and errors.

➤ Takes action to stop and minimize harm arising from adverse events.

➤ Takes action to protect client, self, and others from injury (e.g., aggressive client, communicable disease).

### **26. Applies principles of teaching and learning for client education.**

➤ Assesses client's readiness to learn.

➤ Assesses barriers to the teaching and learning process (e.g., education, language, stress).

➤ Identifies strategies to meet identified client learning needs.

➤ Provides evidenced-informed health information to the client.

➤ Uses language at a level for the client to understand.

➤ Encourages questions.

➤ Verifies that the client understands the necessary information and skills to enable participation in care.

## Assessment Centre Competencies

### **27. Collaborates with other health care team members for delivery of client care.**

- Identifies appropriate consults with other health care team member (e.g., when change in client status, plan of care development).
- Updates other health care team members regarding client status, as appropriate.

### **28. Evaluates client's responses to interventions.**

- Collaborates with client and the health care team to evaluate client responses to care at appropriate times.
- Compares client responses to interventions with expected outcomes.
- Individualizes client care based on emerging priorities.

### **29. Establishes and maintains a therapeutic nurse-client relationship.**

- Demonstrates caring behaviours appropriate for the client (e.g., empathy, warmth, respect).
- Engages in phases of the nurse-client relationship appropriately.
- Uses therapeutic communication strategies and skills (e.g., active listening, restating).
- Explores the effect own values, beliefs, and experiences have on client relationships.
- Maintains appropriate professional boundaries.

### **30. Demonstrates an ability to effectively communicate with other health care team members.**

- Uses relational knowledge and ethical principles.
- Applies principles of decision-making and problem solving.
- Recognizes that own values and assumptions affect team interactions.
- Supports the full scope of practice of the various health care team members.
- Provides constructive feedback among health care team members.
- Uses basic conflict resolution strategies.
- Identifies when, how, and to whom client care should be reported.
- Applies principles of documentation in charting client care.

### **31. Applies ethical and legal principles to the practice of nursing.**

- Identifies the difference between ethical responsibilities and legal rights.
- Respects and preserves the client's rights based on the code of ethics.
- Uses an ethical reasoning and decision-making process to address situations of ethical dilemmas.

## Assessment Centre Competencies

➤ Supports the client in making informed decisions about health care (e.g., capacity, disclosure, understanding, voluntariness, choice-consent or refusal of treatment).

➤ Respects the client's decisions about health care.

➤ Maintains client confidentiality in all forms of communication.

### **32. Advocates for the client.**

➤ Shares client perceptions, as appropriate, with other health care team members.

➤ Facilitates meetings between the client and other health care team members.

➤ Advocates for the client's family as necessary.

### **33. Practices within the context of professional self-regulation.**

➤ Identifies role in reporting unsafe practice in the context of professional regulation.

➤ Demonstrates knowledge of nursing as a self-regulating profession.

### **34. Understands the concept of continuing competence.**

➤ Understands the concept of fitness to practice and continuing competence in the context of individual performance and public protection.

➤ Identifies need to practice safely within the parameters of own level of competence.

➤ Identifies need to practice safely within the legislated scope of practice.

➤ Identifies individual learning needs.

➤ Identifies need to seek new knowledge that may enhance competency in practice.