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PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

Supporting Western Health's nurses
and midwives to deliver Best Care



NURSING+
MIDWIFERY



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Western Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of all the lands and waterways on which Western Health staff, volunteers, consumers and caregivers come together. As we work, learn and grow, we pay our deep respects to the Elders and Traditional Custodians past, present and emerging of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung, Boon Wurrung, Bunurong and Wadawurrung Countries of the greater Kulin Nation.

We are committed to the healing of country, working towards equity in health outcomes, and the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Western Health is committed to respectfully listening and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and we are truly guided by the values of relationship, responsibility and respect.

Thank you

We would like to express our thanks to members of Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee (2020 onwards) for their contributions and feedback. We would also like to acknowledge our nursing and midwifery colleagues and students at Western Health, who provided thoughtful and pragmatic feedback that formed this Nursing & Midwifery Framework.

Nursing & Midwifery Advisory Committee members (at the time the Framework was initially proposed) - Adj/Prof Shane Crowe, Nicole Davies, Maree Dell, Melissa Dodsworth, Prof Bodil Rasmussen, Helen Sinnott, Prof Linda Sweet, Melody Trueman, Doug Mill, Jo Mapes, Joy Turner & Wendy Watson. Additional work on this Framework has been completed by Adjunct Associate Professor Tony McGillion.

Western Health nursing and midwifery staff and student representatives.



INTRODUCTION



Western Health's Nursing & Midwifery Professional Practice Framework provides a clear and cohesive foundation for nursing and midwifery practice at Western Health. It articulates the professional standards, behaviours and expectations required to support nurses and midwives to deliver **Best Care – every patient, every time**, across all care settings and stages of practice.

Nurses and midwives are central to the delivery of safe, high-quality healthcare and play a critical role in shaping patient experiences and outcomes throughout the healthcare journey. This Framework recognises their contribution by defining how professional practice is enacted through five core domains: **Clinical Expertise, Education, Research, Evidence-Based Practice and Leadership**. These domains describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to practise safely, effectively and professionally, while supporting career development, workforce capability and succession planning.

The Framework is intentionally aligned with Western Health's Essentials of Best Care, which translates the organisation's values, consumer expectations and safety priorities into everyday clinical practice. The Essentials of Best Care defines what excellence looks like at the point of care, focusing on **person-centred, coordinated, right and safe care**. When integrated with our Professional Practice Framework, it ensures that professional capability and clinical behaviours are consistently aligned with what matters most to patients, families and carers.

Together, the Professional Practice Framework and the Essentials of Best Care provide a unified approach to professional development and care delivery. The Framework outlines how nurses and midwives grow, lead, learn and apply expertise, while the Essentials of Best Care clarifies how care is experienced by patients and consumers. This alignment strengthens clinical decision-making, supports accountability, promotes kindness and teamwork, and reinforces a culture of safety, quality and continuous improvement.

Underpinned by national standards, professional models and contemporary evidence, the Framework supports nurses and midwives across all roles and levels — from students and early-career clinicians to advanced practitioners and senior leaders. It provides a shared language and structure to guide performance development, role clarity, workforce planning and career progression.

Ultimately, the Nursing & Midwifery Professional Practice Framework enables Western Health to support a capable, confident and compassionate nursing and midwifery workforce, committed to delivering Best Care for the diverse communities of the West.

Adj Prof Shane Crowe
Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery



HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK



Getting started

We want this Framework to serve as a professional resource and guide to articulate the professional standards inherent for all nurses and midwives at Western Health in both direct and indirect care roles. It details the support and opportunities available to help with the development of you as an individual and your team, and offers a career pathway for those wishing to advance.

We use some language that may be new to you in this framework and have included some scenarios to assist your understanding.

Is the Framework for all nurses and midwives?

The Framework is designed to support nurses and midwives across the professional spectrum including undergraduate students, early career nurses and midwives, more experienced nurses and midwives, those in advanced practice roles and those in primary leadership roles such as Unit Managers or Directors of Nursing & Midwifery.

We believe that it will provide consistent professional advice, aid in workforce planning, and will be an invaluable resource for our staff and the wider Western Health team.

The theories behind the Framework

The Framework draws on the five domains of the Australian College of Nursing's *Clinical nursing practice domains* (2017), the *Strong Model of Advanced Practice* (Ackerman, M et al., 1996; Chang et al., 2010) and an achievement model based on the Dreyfus's (1980) model of skill acquisition. Visual diagrams of these models are outlined in Appendices. Western Health staff will also see reference to our Best Care Framework, our Values and the importance of the community that we serve.

The aim of the Framework is to further enhance and develop the capability and competency of the nursing and midwifery workforce through professional development, leadership development, skill acquisition and career development. This will promote:

- the provision of Best Care to our community,
- a culture that supports and values our nurses and midwives,
- Western Health strengthening our position as an employer of choice of nurses and midwives
- the retention of our nurses and midwives through a rewarding and enriching career.

Skills and knowledge are developed over time and are interdependent on role, experience, competence and the confidence of individual nurses and midwives.



THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

Our Nursing and Midwifery Professional Practice Framework model represents the systems, structures and processes that support the competency and capability development of our nursing and midwifery team.



THE FRAMEWORK EXPLAINED

REPRESENTING

The communities of the West

Western Health provides a comprehensive, integrated range of services from its various sites, ranging from acute tertiary services in areas of emergency medicine, intensive care, medical and surgical services, through to subacute care, specialist ambulatory clinics, mental health and wellbeing, correctional care, aged care and provides a combination of hospital and community-based services to people who are aged, adults, paediatrics and newborns.

As nurses and midwives, our purpose is to work collaboratively with the multidisciplinary team to provide quality health and well-being services for the people of the western metropolitan region of Melbourne and this is represented by the outer wheel of the Framework.

Unified and strengthened by our Values

The core of the Framework depicts the importance we place on how we work and learn with our patients and consumers, the community and each other using our shared values of compassion, accountability, respect, excellence and safety. We keep these values at the heart of everything we do.

Every day we Live Best Care

The outer ring of the Framework is representative of Western Health's Best Care framework, comprising:

- Person Centred Care
- Safe Care
- Coordinated Care
- Right Care

The Best Care Framework outlines how Western Health works in partnership with our patients, consumers and their families to continue to strive for high quality care that is person-centred, co-ordinated, right and safe. The Best Care framework combined with the Professional Practice Framework ensures that great care is able to be provided and builds on the strengths of our clinical and health support staff supported by managers, leaders, the Executive and the Board.

The professional practice domains

The five domains that are the core elements of nursing and midwifery practice at Western Health:

1. Leadership
2. Research
3. Evidence-based practice
4. Education & Learning
5. Clinical expertise

OPERATIONALISED

A reminder of our overarching key purpose is the provision of healthcare to the people of Melbourne's western metropolitan region.

The values are at the centre or heart of everything we do. We are supported and strengthened by them.

The Best Care Framework supports the delivery of Best Care to our patients and consumers through documenting the expected standard of care that is person centred, co-ordinated, right and safe.

The 5 domains inform the position descriptions and practice of every nurse and midwife at Western Health.

ESSENTIALS OF BEST CARE

1. How We Think and Engage

Focuses on behaviours and teamwork, sets the tone for safe, person-centred care, to reflect culture, communication, and partnership with patients.

2. How We Assess and Plan

Promotes clinical thinking, risk assessment, and planning aligned to the NSQHS approach.

3. How We Deliver Care

Covers the specific actions and tasks that put plans into practice. These represent the practical, task-based elements of care delivery.



Communicating
with Kindness



Shared
Decision Making



Person-centred
Handover



Team Care



Assessment



Care planning
& Evaluation



Safety &
Quality



Medication &
Blood safety



Monitoring &
Observation



Proactive
Rounding



Infection
Prevention



Documentation



Team Care

Person-centred Handover

Communication with Kindness

Shared Decision Making



Safety & Quality

Infection Prevention

Medication & Blood



Assessment

Care Planning
& Evaluation

Monitoring &
Observation

Proactive Rounding



Assessment

Safety & Quality

Monitoring & Observation

Infection Prevention

Medication & Blood Safety

Documentation



Communication with Kindness

Person-centred Handover

Shared Decision Making

Documentation



THE INTENT OF THE FRAMEWORK

The Professional Practice Framework seeks to make explicit the expected and aspirational standards for our nurses and midwives when working and learning across the various areas of professional practice. It seeks to provide a consistent and objective method for you to assess your capability, review and measure your performance and achievements, formulate and guide future development plans and advance your career goals.

It aims to support the individual clinician by promoting common behaviours and skills, which comprise and represent the complex roles of nursing and midwifery.

It offers a point of reference for nurses and midwives and their managers in developing roles, responsibilities and undertaking skill-mix analysis and workforce planning.

It is not intended as a scale of measurement or to be used as a punitive tool. Rather, it is a pathway or career map, which may be helpful for various aspects of staff development:

For the Individual

- Clarity regarding the organisation's expectations of practice
- Guide for measuring progress
- Guide for identifying professional development requirements or gaps
- Guide for identifying career pathways
- Guide to inform clinical supervision dialogue

For the Manager

- Clarity regarding the organisation's expectations of practice across all domains, including non-clinical skills and behaviours
- Guide for measuring and enhancing performance
- Guide to support the development of individual staff professional development objectives and plans
- Guide for identifying workforce profile and targeted recruitment and opportunities for advanced practice roles
- Guide to support the development of position descriptions and selection of successful candidates
- Guide to assist in discussions related to the identification of career pathways
- Guide to inform and support clinical supervision dialogue with staff



OUR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE DOMAINS



Leadership

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2017) definition of a clinical leader is a clinician with management or leadership roles in a health service organisation who can use their position or influence to change behaviour, practice or performance. We however recognise that a nurse or midwife does not need to be in a formal management or leadership role to be able to influence behaviours, practice and performance.

Governance can be defined as doing the right thing, at the right time, by the right person - the application of the best evidence to a clinical problem, in the way the patient or consumer wishes, by an appropriately trained and resourced individual or team (Gray, 2005).

But that is not all - that individual or team must work within an organisation that is accountable for the actions of its staff. This is undertaken through the organisation valuing its staff through appraising and developing them, minimising risks, and learning from good practice and indeed errors and adverse events.



Research

Research is an essential element of what underpins our professional practice. It drives clinical decision-making and advances in nursing and midwifery practices. Research provides academic and professional leadership to staff and students, and recognises the importance of combining expertise from industry, community and academia to inform the delivery of Best Care.

Our nurses and midwives generate knowledge through leading, collaborating and participating in research projects. A defining feature of nursing and midwifery research is that it fosters a rich diversity of activities in health research. At Western Health we aim to build research capacity and capability, and enhance the research culture to provide tangible benefits for patients and consumers, the community, staff, students and academics.

We are committed to upholding an environment that develops critical thinking, innovation and questioning of clinical practices. We encourage our staff to speak up, challenge practice assumptions, ask questions and be curious about ways to improve practice and outcomes. Our nurses and midwives improve patient and consumer care experiences and the safety and quality of care.

We are dedicated to continuing to develop leadership in research and growing our current vibrant associations with research centres of excellence, so we remain at the forefront of new and innovative healthcare for the benefit of the whole community.

We support the development policies, procedures, guidelines and standards of care that are evidence-based.

The Deakin University and Western Health Partnership conducts collaborative clinical research and provides staff and students with the opportunity to engage in clinically-focussed, multidisciplinary research and research training. This partnership assists staff through academic mentoring, supporting the preparation of abstract and publications, conference presentations and journal clubs led by our Chair in Nursing and our Chair in Midwifery.

Through this commitment the Deakin University and Western Health Partnership will continue to ensure the organisations work collaboratively together to improve the health outcomes for our patients and consumers, and the employment and learning outcomes for our staff and students.



Evidence-based practice

Evidence-based practice is an approach to care which takes into account the combination of high-quality research and evidence, clinical expertise and patient values. The successful application of these three key areas has the potential to improve patient and consumer outcomes, including quality of life, productivity and the reduction in healthcare costs (Sackett et al, 2000).

It requires the translation of quality evidence into practice, also known as knowledge translation, ensuring that health practitioners, patients and consumers, family and carers are aware of and use research evidence to inform their health-related decision-making (Grimshaw et al, 2012). The relatively easy acquisition of information of varying-quality through social media and the internet has made the application of high-quality evidence more challenging.

We utilise evidence to also inform how we work and optimise systems. This ensures our practice contributes to the effective functioning of health systems and Western Health as a service. This includes role advocacy, promoting innovative care, supporting occupational health and safety and facilitating equitable, person-centred systems of health care.

Integration of evidence based practice may also apply to non-clinical facing roles, and includes ensuring Safety and Quality priorities are upheld, planning for the future in service delivery and workforce, and integrating best practice approaches to systems and support functions across the professions of nursing and midwifery. Examples include strategies to optimise recruitment and retention, wellbeing and occupational safety.

It is important for nurses and midwives to ensure that their practice is always informed by evidence from high-quality research. We encourage our nurses and midwives to challenge practice assumptions, ask questions and be curious about ways to improve practice. We recognise that routines and traditions are not always based on high-quality research and evidence.



Education & Learning

We promote and support all levels of professional development, including early career programs for nurses and midwives to facilitate a successful transition into professional practice.

Continuing professional development (CPD) will always be an integral requirement for nurses and midwives, to support the ongoing education and learning within the workplace to stay up-to-date with best practice, maintain and expand skills, knowledge and attributes and develop expertise.

We provide opportunities for our nurses and midwives to be able to discover, explore and try out new clinical areas and specialities through supported educational and supervision programs.

For our nurses and midwives that wish to develop their expertise, we offer a diverse array of specialty post-graduate programs in conjunction with our partner universities and education providers. We also support our nurses and midwives to be able to deepen career-oriented knowledge and skills through undertaking a Master's degree, and research-based Doctorate degrees to develop critical research, analytical and writing skills in an effort to fill industry knowledge gaps.

Our nurses and midwives are committed to work in an environment of ongoing learning throughout their professional lives and our education framework supports this in a myriad of ways:

- **Induction and Orientation:** All of our nurses and midwives are provided with an individualised orientation plan to their new role. This includes supernumerary time in roles with patient contact. Mentorship is provided in non-patient contact roles.
- **Preceptorship:** We have a program to develop preceptor, mentor and clinical supervision capability.
- **Competency acquisition:** Through CPD, in-service opportunities, bedside supervision and teaching, we support the credentialing process to enable staff to work safely and effectively within their speciality area of practice.
- **Mandatory CPD:** We support mandatory CPD to enable staff to work safely and effectively within the workplace. Mandatory CPD is available via the WeLearn platform.
- **Speciality skill and knowledge development:** Through formal learning opportunities, including conferences, short-courses and post graduate programs, we offer diverse opportunities for our nurses and midwives to be able to broaden their knowledge, expertise and gain new skills and experience.



Clinical Expertise

The development of clinical expertise is highly valued by Western Health.

Nurses and midwives are accountable and responsible for the care they deliver and prescribe or delegate. Critical clinical decision making is crucial and underpins safe and evidence-based care.

As members of the multi-disciplinary team, nurse and midwives contribute to formation of the clinical plan for our patients and consumers, and the direct and indirect provision of care. Nurses and midwives lead and participate in clinical decision making. We are represented on and lead working groups, committees and other decision-making processes.

Western Health nurses and midwives contribute to local, state-wide, national and international policy, standard and practice development. We encourage the achievement of clinical nurse and midwife specialist status, and Enrolled Nurse career advancement.

We know that expertise is different to experience and is not reliant on a specific career path.



PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The Professional Practice Framework can be utilised to:

- Self-assess and undertake reflective practice, relative to your current role and experience
- Guide the delivery of formal and informal feedback
- Guide peer-to-peer review
- Provide clarity regarding the organisational expectations of practice standards
- Assist in identifying professional development requirements
- Guide and assist career planning and setting future goals
- Guide clinical supervision dialogue

The examples outlined below are activities or opportunities you can use to support your professional practice development. You can use these suggestions to build a handy 'toolkit' to support your professional journeys:



Leadership

- Seek opportunities for leadership roles
- Represent your department or profession on a committee outside your unit
- Deputise for more experienced staff or your manager at organisational forums
- Develop an understanding of management responsibilities, for example rostering requirements or financial management
- Undertake a management course or source training opportunities
- Demonstrate initiative in supporting early career and less experienced staff
- Role model behaviours consistent with the professional Code of Conduct and Western Health's Values and challenge others when their behaviour does not meet expectations
- Support your manager through participating in interviewing and reference checking new staff
- Volunteer for a unit portfolio role
- Lead redesign or improvement initiatives within your department
- Contribute to peer feedback and engage in appraisals of early career staff, as directed by your manager

At a higher level, the nurse or midwife performing at Proficient or Expert level may:

- Role model high standards of professional conduct and an ongoing commitment to sustaining and strengthening performance and accountability across the organisation
- Lead by example, and motivate staff to strive for excellence with acknowledgement of high performance through rewards and incentives
- Foster an environment that encourages staff to ask questions, and answer these as honestly and directly as possible
- Take accountability for own actions and others under direction and sphere of responsibility
- Plan strategically and work dynamically to manage competing priorities of the service/organisation
- Act to ensure workloads are manageable and others have opportunity to self-manage and regulate
- Exhibit a high level of emotional self-control and flexibility in complex, changing, and/or ambiguous situations and when confronted with challenges
- Plan strategically and work dynamically to manage competing priorities of the service/organisation
- Act to ensure workloads are manageable and others have opportunity to self-manage and regulate
- Exhibit a high level of emotional self-control and flexibility in complex, changing, and/or ambiguous situations



Research

- Use evidence to support improvement to patient care and practice
- Lead unit-level quality projects
- Participate in system level research projects
- Write up an improvement project, case study or article for publication with appropriate guidance
- Promote evidence-based practice and share findings at internal and external forums
- Contribute to writing and submitting an ethics submission
- Join a journal club and promote research awareness in your clinical area

At a higher level, the nurse or midwife performing at Proficient or Expert level may:

- Engage in the dissemination of research to improve and develop care delivery approaches
- Conduct and collaborate in healthcare research
- Lead quality or practice improvement initiatives at local level and/or contributes to or leads quality or practice improvement initiatives at program or organisational level
- Participate in generating nursing-led and midwifery-led research
- Evaluate Clinical practice against research evidence and identifies areas for practice improvement highlighting gaps in research evidence
- Develop strategies to inform practice in the absence of high level evidence

- Contribute to practice improvement broadly across the sector and relevant specialty
- Support generation of research by others through coordinating or leading studies
- Apply research evidence to clinical practice, has well developed strategies to inform practice in the absence of high level evidence
- Evaluate clinical practice against research evidence and prioritises areas for practice improvement
- Identify and supervises clinical champions in research or practice improvement activities



Evidence-based practice

- Initiate innovations that support continuous improvement
- Contribute to adverse event investigations, and undertake individual and team-based reflective practice
- Be familiar with local and organisational policies, procedures and guidelines
- Be aware of Western Health's Strategic Priorities, and ensure activities align with these priorities.
- Participate in new initiatives to enhance patient and consumer outcomes and experience, or staff employment outcomes and experience
- Contribute to the update of procedures and guidelines as applicable

At a higher level, the nurse or midwife performing at Proficient or Expert level may:

- Act as an ambassador for Western Health as a great place to work when communicating with other health professionals, key external stakeholders and at local, national and international professional forums
- Leads initiatives to address gaps at a service and organisational level
- Implements and evaluates initiatives, making modifications as required
- Lead and motivate staff to strive for and achieve inter-professional team goals using a compelling organisational vision
- Contribute to strategic planning at an organisational level
- Act to ensure safety by expertly managing clinical risk and intervene, as necessary, to achieve optimal outcomes for patients/consumers and teams
- Contribute to the development and implementation of processes to manage clinical risk
- Foster a supportive and open culture which utilises mistakes as opportunities for improvement
- Utilise evidence and proven strategies to support:
 - Planning for the future – services, workforce and demand
 - Ensuring safety and quality priorities are achieved
 - Support recruitment and retention, staff wellbeing and safety in the workplace



Education & Learning

- Contribute to the updating of educational information provided to patients and consumers, and their families and carers
- Support new staff through the orientation buddy role
- Become a preceptor, providing support and mentorship to students, early career and novice staff
- Join a professional network or special interest forum
- Attend relevant conferences and seminars
- Showcase work and improvement activities
- Deliver unit based in-service education
- Ensure current education and induction resources are up to date
- Consider leading an educational portfolio
- Provide timely informal and formal feedback to students, early career and novice staff

At a higher level, the nurse or midwife performing at Proficient or Expert level may:

- Support and foster patient education strategies that contribute to provide continuity, thereby preserving and strengthening therapeutic relationships
- Lead and promote activities that include the patient/consumer as part of the care team
- Develop and evaluate policy initiatives that aim to foster patient/consumer involvement and provide them with real and meaningful choices about treatment options

- Support and deliver education of others including patients/consumers, families and healthcare professionals
- Develop and foster a learning culture
- Act to ensure processes, frameworks and/or support tools are in place for enhancing learning through reflection
- Act to ensure peer review processes are appropriately resourced, and occur in an open and positive organisational culture which emphasises excellence in clinical care
- Foster a culture in which feedback is used as a strategy to enhance goals, awareness, and learning, and is a positive experience
- Support staff in their development and achievement of professional goals and objectives
- Promote the development of, and involvement in, professional networks and learning communities
- Plan and conduct teaching sessions, encouraging participation and reflection on experience
- Facilitate staff access to learning through the development of cross-discipline relationships/networks
- Provide feedback to higher education partners regarding student performance & course content
- Recognise the role of infrastructure in supporting lifelong learning, and advocate for investment and changes that will enhance organisational learning capability
- Influence organisational learning and development strategies to ensure the workforce is supported to develop the abilities it requires to meet current and future needs



Clinical expertise

- Attend relevant workshops and training
- Obtain a speciality post-graduate qualification
- Shadow a more experienced or an advanced practice nurse or midwife
- Undertake 'discovery days' in other departments/units
- Participate in simulation-based training
- Attend or deliver unit based in-service education
- Volunteer to undertake new clinical skills that are within your professional scope of practice, with direct supervision
- Role model best practice and reference latest research
- Identify clinical practice improvement opportunities and discuss with your manager

At a higher level, the nurse or midwife performing at Proficient or Expert level may:

- Lead /oversee high performing clinical teams
- Provide expert advice on clinical issues
- Extract key issues from complex, ambiguous and rapidly changing situations
- Influence and contribute to transformation of clinical services at broader levels (program/Division/site)

- Develop, apply and promote appropriate and innovative models of care
- Implement appropriate actions in complex situations to enhance care and anticipate change
- Recognise when input is required from expert colleagues to support the achievement of treatment goals
- Use own clinical experience and knowledge to:
 - Support others in ensuring care delivery is safe and effective
 - Monitor and evaluate care outcomes
 - Ensure timely access to care
 - Coordinate care and services



SUMMARY OF BEHAVIOUR LEVELS

NOVICE	ADVANCED BEGINNER	COMPETENT	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
Works within a known and stable context , consulting when abnormalities arise before taking action	Works within a known and stable context , consulting when abnormalities arise	Acts independently in routine situations within scope, and responds to known dilemmas	Acts independently in complex situations within scope, and responds to unknown dilemmas	Provide vision and direction and shape and implement strategies and initiatives that enable others to perform as required

Levels do not equate to roles or hierarchy within the workforce. Instead, the levels reflect what level of behavioural skill is required to achieve the desired care goals or outcomes in a given situation. Levels should be treated as cumulative, meaning that behavioural indicators at subsequent levels in the scale should be read in conjunction with the behaviours specified at any lower level.

Some levels may serve as an aspirational standard in some instances, rather than accurately reflecting behaviours of current practice. Where a gap exists between current and future practice behavioural skill requirements, there should be aspiration to meet the standard specified to enhance or effectively meet individual and community health needs.

In applying the framework, the levels are progressive and build on each level - this could mean that:

- A nurse/midwife exhibits behaviours at the level required of their role, **plus** those at any lower level
- A nurse/midwife exhibits behaviours at the level required of their role, **and** has behavioural skills specified at any lower levels, though their expression may not be required in their current role

Some levels may serve as an inspirational standard in some instances, rather than accurately reflecting behaviours of current practice. Where a gap exists between current and future practice behavioural skill requirements, there should be aspiration to meet the standard specified to enhance or effectively meet individual and community health needs and include these in the performance development process.

In addition, the framework references the Western Health values, which are integral to adequately performing all aspects of behaviour and skill and provide the primary framework for all staff.

The table below describes definitions across a range of nursing and midwifery activities/requirements (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980; Benner 1984).

SKILL ACQUISITION

	NOVICE	ADVANCED BEGINNER	COMPETENT	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
Knowledge	Some disconnect between knowledge and practice	Working knowledge of key aspects of practice	Good working & background knowledge of area of practice	Depth of understanding of discipline & area of practice	Authoritative knowledge of discipline & deep tacit understanding across area of practice
Work standard	Satisfactory completion with close supervision	Straightforward tasks completed to an acceptable standard without close supervision	Achieving required standard but may require further development or refinement	Fully acceptable standard achieved routinely	Excellence achieved with relative ease
Autonomy	Needs close supervision or instruction	Able to achieve using own judgement, but supervision needed for overall performance	Able to achieve using own judgement	Able to take full responsibility for own work (& that of others where applicable)	Able to take responsibility for going beyond existing standards & creating own interpretations
Coping with complexity	Minimal ability to identify and manage high complexity requirements	Appreciates complex situations and can achieve partial management and resolution	Ability to manage complex situations through deliberate analysis & planning	Deals with complex situations holistically, decision-making more confident	Holistic grasp of complex situations, moves between intuitive & analytical approaches
Perception of context	Tends to see actions in isolation	Sees actions as a series of steps	Sees actions with growing consideration for longer-term goals	Sees overall 'picture' & appreciates the impact of individual actions	Sees overall 'picture' & alternative approaches; has vision of what may be possible

	ESSENTIALS OF BEST CARE ELEMENTS THAT ALIGN	LINK TO PDP	EVIDENCE EXAMPLES
LEADERSHIP DOMAIN	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife demonstrates leadership behaviours by creating psychologically safe teamwork, role modelling kindness, and supporting shared decision-making with patients and families.	Leading a huddle, escalating concerns, supporting junior staff, role-modelling positive handover techniques, promoting teamwork on shifts.
RESEARCH DOMAIN	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife used evidence to change practice. Reading research, using evidence to guide practice, contributing to safety initiatives.	Embed new infection-prevention strategies, safe blood practices. Participation in audits, quality projects, or falls/pressure injury data review.
EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE DOMAIN	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentatio	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife embeds and uses information meaningfully (not as a tick-box).	How they identify risks, use patient goals in assessment and planning, escalate deterioration, evaluate care effectiveness.
EDUCATION DOMAIN	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife uses communication, teaching and learning. Documentation practices and insight.	How they provide patient education. How they support junior staff, students, or carers. How they use EMR documentation as an educational and care-coordination tool.
CLINICAL EXPERTISE DOMAIN	Assessment Safety & Quality Monitoring & Observation Infection Prevention Medication & Blood Safety Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife understands clinical expertise is about critical thinking, decision-making, contribution to standards, using risk information to guide care.	How they used clinical judgement in deterioration, complex care, or risk assessment decisions. Contribution to unit governance, champion programs or policy work. Participation in safety huddles or escalation pathways.



SCENARIOS

The annual performance appraisal of a nurse or midwife needs to be completed

The Framework provides an outline of the expected standards of performance for the role and classification. The manager and staff member can map the individuals' performance and identify learning needs, areas of high performance and any areas for improvement. The Framework informs the Position Descriptions for all Western Health nurses and midwives. It should be used in conjunction with the Western Health performance development plan tool where the discussion and learning plan is documented.

A suitably experienced Registered Nurse is seeking career advancement to Clinical Nurse Specialist

The Framework offers opportunity to map the expectations of a Clinical Nurse Specialist in the particular specialty and guide the applicant on the requirements of the role, and the expected level of knowledge and performance. Their application and supporting documentation should reflect their ability and experience to undertake the role at the required domains. The position description should also be referenced in preparation, as it also reflects the expected standards, required knowledge and skills outlined in the Framework.

An inexperienced Registered Nurse is seeking career advancement to Clinical Nurse Specialist

In conjunction with the Clinical Nurse Specialist application pack and guidelines, the Framework can be used to complement coaching of the staff member and to demonstrate areas for

further development to assist in meeting the expected standards of readiness for the role. It offers clear direction for areas for improvement and acquisition of knowledge and skill, thus enabling a development plan for the individual to reach their goal, whilst empowering the manager to outline why promotion at present is not realistic.

Vacant nursing or midwifery position is to be filled via a recruitment process

The Framework informs position descriptions and performance development plan templates and can be used to develop advertising text for the desired candidate. Once candidates are short listed, the existing interview template can be used to develop suitable questions to assist selection.

A unit or department believes it needs a nurse or midwife with advanced skills and knowledge to complement the model of care

The Framework can be utilised to undertake a skills analysis of the current workforce and establish which staff profile is required to meet practice and skill deficits. Once the skill profile is identified a manager can utilise this information in further discussions with the relevant Director of Nursing & Midwifery and senior managers to engage support for advance practice roles and business case development.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

A clearly defined development pathway enables nurses and midwives to identify and plan the next steps in their professional career journey as well as identifying options for future specialisation and advancement.

Figure 2 maps the professional development pathway opportunities into leadership, research, education or clinical roles for nurses and midwives at Western Health. Although the pathway appears linear due to the columns, there are no rules forbidding pathways which cross into other specialties and roles, or choosing multiple pathways to progress to your next role.



Figure 2: Professional practice development pathway opportunities in Nursing & Midwifery (examples only)

ESTIMATED STAGE OF SKILL ACQUISITION	CLINICAL PRACTICE	LEADERSHIP	EDUCATION	RESEARCH	GRADE
Expert	• Executive Director Nursing & Midwifery (Chief Nurse & Midwifery Officer)				8/9
Expert	• Nurse Practitioner	• Director of Nursing & Midwifery	• Director Education	• Director • Professor/Chair	7
Expert	• Clinical Nurse/Midwife Consultant	• Deputy Director • Manager	• Deputy Director • Education Co-ordinator	• Associate Professor • Deputy Director • Senior Research Fellow	6
Expert	• Nurse Practitioner Candidate • Clinical Nurse/Midwife Consultant	• After Hours Coordinator • Assistant Director of Nursing & Midwifery	• Manager • Nurse/Midwife Educator	• Senior Research Nurse/Midwife • Research Fellow	5
Proficient/Expert	• Clinical Nurse/Midwife Consultant • Clinical Nurse Co-ordinator	• Unit Manager	• Nurse/Midwife Educator	• Research Nurse/Midwife	4
Competent/ Proficient	• Clinical Nurse/ Midwife coordinator • Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist	• Associate Unit Manager	• Clinical Support Nurse/Midwife	• Research Nurse/Midwife	3
Advanced Beginner/ Competent	• Registered Nurse/Midwife • Community Nurse/Midwife				2
Novice	• Graduate Nurse / Midwife • Enrolled Nurse (different levels)				2
Novice	• Registered Undergraduate Student of Nursing/Midwifery (RUSON/RUSOM)				

Skill acquisition may not always be linear as there may be a period of 'novice' activity in any new role before competence, proficiency and expertise are achieved.



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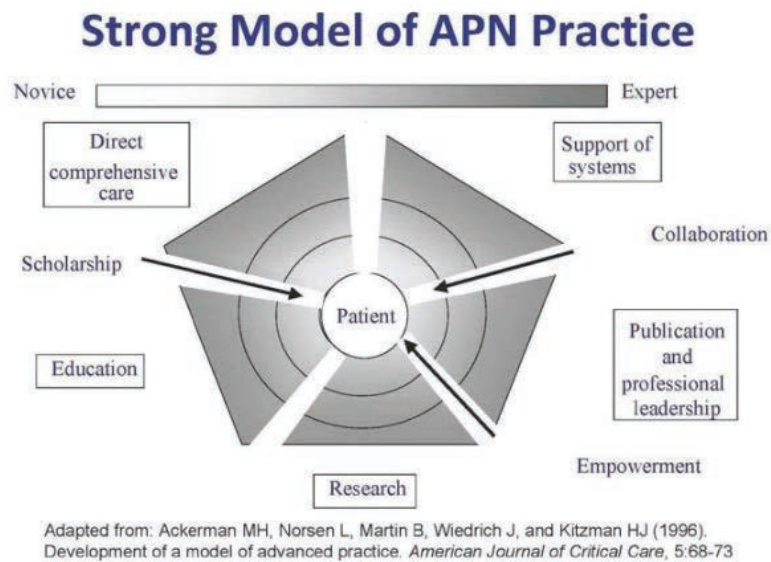
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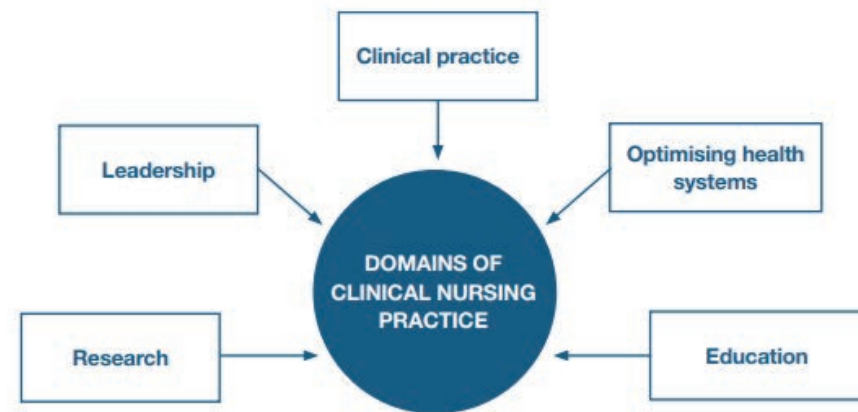
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Strong Model of Advanced Practice Nursing



Appendix 2 – Australian College of Nursing's Domains of Clinical Nursing Practice





Communicating with Kindness

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We respect our patients and each other
- We advocate for patients and each other
- We respect all views and opinions
- We ensure communication and diet/risk boards are up to date
- We show the WH CARES values in all we do
- We keep patients and families updated with plans and well informed



Shared Decision Making

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We include patients, families and carers in goal setting and care planning
- We respect advance care directives and goals of care decisions
- We include the whole team in leadership decisions about our service/unit
- We embrace multidisciplinary collaboration
- We show professional respect
- We advocate on behalf of patients and families



Person-centred Handover

COORDINATED CARE

- We include the patient, family and carers in handover
- We update the communication board and Goals of Care
- We communicate with the multidisciplinary team
- We keep patients, families and carers updated
- We create trust and safety for patients to tell us what is important to them



Team Care

COORDINATED CARE

- We work together, we are better together
- We trust each other
- We share responsibility for patient care and outcomes
- We role model for our early career staff
- We teach, nurture and guide
- We create a safe environment for all staff to speak up
- We share our fears, experience, wisdom and learning in a positive and safe way

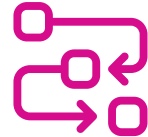




Assessment

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We complete and record a full patient head to toe systems assessment
- We complete and document all relevant risk assessment
- We don't wait to escalate
- We initiate referrals for specialist and multidisciplinary care



Care planning & Evaluation

RIGHT CARE

- We include patients, families and carers in goal setting and care planning
- We respect advance care directives and goals of care decisions
- We include the whole team in leadership decisions about our service/unit
- We embrace multidisciplinary collaboration
- We show professional respect
- We advocate on behalf of patients and families



Safety & Quality

SAFE CARE

- We prioritise keeping our patients safe
- We report incidents, adverse events, near misses and learn from the outcomes
- We celebrate success
- We monitor data, performance and feedback to know how we are doing
- We complete mandatory training
- We are a highly trained, skilled, professional workforce
- We actively contribute to safety portfolios



Medication & Blood safety

SAFE CARE

- We administer medication and blood products safely
- We report and monitor incidents and data
- We reflect and learn from mistakes and near misses
- We seek specialist support and help from others





Monitoring & Observation

SAFE CARE

- We engage with patients, families and carers
- We complete regular patient checks and pre-empt care needs
- We complete and record observations, vital signs and measure clinical data
- We don't wait to escalate
- We utilise additional care resources, delegation and allocation to ensure safe care



Proactive Rounding

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We complete regular patient rounding and safety checks
- We complete leader rounding
- We see our leaders and managers regularly
- We complete and document regular and frequent interactions with our patients



Infection Prevention

SAFE CARE

- We perform Hand Hygiene
- We adhere to PPE requirements
- We keep us and patients safe
- We seek and follow expert advice
- We Scrub the Hub
- We adhere to aseptic technique safely
- We collaborate with patients and families to share infection prevention responsibilities



Documentation

COORDINATED CARE

- We maintain contemporaneous medical records
- We don't copy and paste
- We only use approved abbreviations and terminology
- We complete progress notes and shift reports
- We document risk assessments and care plans
- We read records and share important information
- We document any missed or refused care



Appendix 4 - Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition

The Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004).

Table 1. Five Stages of Skill Acquisition

Skill Level	Components	Perspective	Decision	Commitment
1. Novice	Context free	None	Analytic	Detached
2. Advanced beginner	Context free and situational	None	Analytic	Detached
3. Competent	Context free and situational	Chosen	Analytic	Detached understanding and deciding; involved outcome
4. Proficient	Context free and situational	Experienced	Analytic	Involved understanding; detached deciding
5. Expert	Context free and situational	Experienced	Intuitive	Involved

Note: Components: This refers to the elements of the situation that the learner is able to perceive. These can be context free and pertaining to general aspects of the skill or situational, which only relate to the specific situation that the learner is meeting. Perspective: As the learner begins to be able to recognize almost innumerable components, he or she must choose which one to focus on. He or she is then taking a perspective. Decision: The learner is making a decision on how to act in the situation he or she is in. This can be based on analytic reasoning or an intuitive decision based on experience and holistic discrimination of the particular situation. Commitment: This describes the degree to which the learner is immersed in the learning situation when it comes to understanding, deciding, and the outcome of the situation—action pairing.