United Arab Emirates

SCOPE OF PRACTICE
For
REGISTERED NURSES

PRE-PUBLICATION COPY

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The United Arab Emirates Nursing and Midwifery Council (UAE NMC), kindly acknowledges:

the excellent work of the members of the Scientific Committee on Nursing and Midwifery Practice, mentioned herewith. The Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses was developed with input from national, regional and international experts and references the scopes of practice previously issued by the Ministry of Health, the Health Authority of Abu Dhabi, and Dubai Health Authority.

This document establishes a nation-wide Scope of Practice to be adopted by all Registered Nurses and healthcare organizations in the country.

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PREAMBLE

The UAE Nursing and Midwifery Council was established in 2009 to regulate the nursing and midwifery professions, promote and advance nursing and midwifery services and protect and promote the health and safety of the public based on the highest standards.” (UAE NMC establishment ministerial decree #10, 2009)

This scope of practice sets the foundation for the practice, education and regulation of nursing in the UAE. It is a concrete example of the UAE NMC commitment to fulfill its purpose and to systematically advance the nursing profession across the UAE.

The Council sincerely appreciates the concerted efforts of all involved in making this publication possible – expressing special gratitude to:

- HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, President of the UAE NMC, wife of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice - President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai; for her infinite guidance and support for the nursing and midwifery professions.
- HE. Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim, UAE Minister of Health.
- The UAE NMC Board members.
- All Members of the Scientific Committee on Nursing and Midwifery Practice, who expertly developed this document.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) for the ongoing support through-out the development of this document.
- All nursing colleagues and UAE NMC staff who participated in the development, validation and revision of this document.
- All institutions and individuals who contributed in one way or another to the development of this document.
INTRODUCTION

The scope of practice is the range of roles, functions, responsibilities and activities which a registered nurse is educated for, competent in accountable for and authorized to perform. It defines the accountability and limits or boundaries of professional practice.

A registered Nurse is a self-regulated healthcare professional who works autonomously and in collaboration with other healthcare providers within a determined scope of practice.

This document sets forth the Scope of Practice with standards criteria for the Registered Nurses practicing in the UAE. As such, it should be used as a reference and/or resource for nurses, nursing educational institutions, nursing leadership teams as well as other healthcare professionals and stakeholders in the UAE.

Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles.

This document was developed by the Scientific Committee for Nursing and Midwifery Practice (SCNMP). The members of this committee represent all major healthcare stakeholders in the UAE. These include but are not limited to: UAE NMC, Health Authority-Abu Dhabi (HAAD), SEHA, Ministry of Health (MOH), Dubai Health Care City (DHCC), Dubai Health Authority (DHA), University of Sharjah (UOS), Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), Medical Services Corps (MSC)-UAE Armed Forces, Dubai Police, Institutes of Nursing (ION) and Emirates Nursing Association (ENA).

In developing this document, national consensus was sought and several resources were utilized including, but not limited to, the MOH Professional Code of Conduct for Nurses (2001), the MOH Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses (2009), the MOH Core Practice Standards for Registered Nurse/Midwife (2005), ICN publications, the MOH Midwifery Scope of Practice (2008), the HAAD Registered Nurses’ Scope of Practice (2007) and DHA Registered Nurses Scope of Practice.
SCOPE OF PRACTICE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The Scope of Practice is written as a Competency Framework for the Registered Nurses. This framework is organized by role domains (described below) and defines specific competencies for each domain. The scope of practice identifies the competencies expected of a generalist nurse at the point of entry into professional practice. It can be used in various ways. For instance, regulatory bodies can use it to identify common competencies for registered nurses; licensing procedures can be aligned accordingly. Educational institutions will use the scope to develop curriculum and evaluate student competencies. Practice settings will use the scope as a foundation for nursing roles, professional development and performance appraisal. The major domains and Competency Standards of the Framework have been presented in Figure 1. Performance criteria for these domains shall be aligned with each competency. By meeting these criteria the professional nurse has the knowledge, skills and attitudes to safely and competently provide evidence-based client care.

DOMAINS OF THE SCOPE OF NURSING PRACTICE:

The roles and responsibilities of the registered nurse are broad and complex. For this reason, the competency standards for nursing practice have been organized into three domains:

- **Domain one**: Professional, Ethical and Legal practice.
- **Domain two**: Care Provision and Management.
- **Domain three**: Professional, Personal & Quality Development.

In undertaking work on the competencies for the Registered nurse, the ICN Continuum was used as the initial benchmark against which all competencies have been set. A registered nurse who functions at a level below the scope of practice standards in one or more areas is to be considered not competent. A registered nurse who functions at a level beyond the benchmark is to be recognized as functioning at a higher level.

These competencies should not be regarded as prescriptive. Those utilizing the scope of practice need to refer to their particular context and apply accordingly. Some areas may need further expansion and others may be to some extent not applicable, while areas that are important to their practice may be briefly mentioned and need to be further elaborated. Additionally, some may wish to use the competencies as the basis for developing more detailed guidelines for curriculum development by identifying the underpinning knowledge and skills and attitudes required to achieve the competencies.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- The nursing code of conduct (2001)
- The client/patient bill of rights (acknowledged by own institution, authority, ministry)
- The UAE nurses act
- The scope of practice toolkit
Domain one:

Professional, Ethical and Legal Practice
This domain reflects the registered nurse’s professional accountability, ethical and legal practice towards clients, families, community and society, under relevant UAE regulations in relation to professional practice.

Competency Standard 1.1: Accountability
Accepts accountability for own actions and decision making.

Performance criteria:
1.1.1 Demonstrates accountability for own professional judgment, actions, outcomes of care and continued competence in accordance with the Scope of Practice\(^1\) and UAE laws and regulations.

1.1.2 Recognizes the boundaries of the Scope of Practice\(^1\) and the limits of one’s own competence.

1.1.3 Seeks appropriate guidance when encountering situations beyond the Scope of Practice\(^1\) and the limits of one’s own competence.

1.1.4 Acknowledges and respects the accountability and responsibilities of other healthcare professionals and personnel.

1.1.5 Assumes accountability for delegation of nursing care.

1.1.6 Participates in activities to optimize client access to the full range of services required for effective healthcare.

1.1.7 Assumes accountability for improving the quality and effectiveness of healthcare services provided.

Competency Standard 1.2: Ethical Practice
Delivers nursing care and practices within an ethical framework and a socio-cultural context.

Performance criteria:
1.2.1 Practices according to the Professional Code of Conduct for Nurses\(^2\).

1.2.2 Engages in ethical decision-making with respect to own professional responsibilities or where ethical issues affect the healthcare team.

1.2.3 Acts as client advocate to protect the client’s rights in accordance with the UAE law and the Professional Code of Ethics

1.2.4 Maintains confidentiality and security of written, verbal and electronic client/patient information

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1 Scope of Practice in this document refers to the UAE NMC Scope of Practice in force.
2 Code of Conduct in this document refers to the Professional Code of Conduct in force approved by UAE NMC.
1.2.5 Respects the client’s right to be fully informed establishing a context for self-determination and informed consent.

1.2.6 Respects and maintains the client’s right for privacy and dignity.

1.2.7 Demonstrates sensitivity to diversity, including such factors as cultural and religious beliefs race, age, gender, physical/mental state, and other relevant considerations.

1.2.8 Liaises and collaborates with other healthcare professionals and personnel to ensure ethical practice is maintained.

**Competency Standard 1.3: Legal Practice**
Functions in accordance with legislative, regulatory and policy guidelines relevant to registered nursing practice

*Performance criteria:*

1.3.1 Practices in accordance with policies and procedures that guide nursing practice.

1.3.2 Practices in accordance with relevant laws and regulations that govern nursing practice.

1.3.3 Maintains valid registration and licensure to practice in the UAE

1.3.4 Recognizes and acts upon breaches of laws and regulations relating to the professional role and/or professional code of conduct.

**Domain two:**

**Care Provision and Management**
This domain encompasses the key principles of the registered nurse’s role in health promotion, illness prevention, care provision, leadership and management, as well as therapeutic and interpersonal relationships pertaining to clients, families, community and society utilizing the nursing process.

**Competency Standard 2.1: Promotion of Health**
Engages in health promotion and disease prevention activities with clients, families, community and society.

*Performance criteria*

2.1.1 Provides formal and informal health education sessions to individuals/groups utilizing the teaching-learning process.

2.1.2 Identifies and utilizes appropriate educational resources, including other healthcare professionals.

2.1.3 Acts as a role model by promoting a healthy lifestyle for self and others, and by demonstrating environmentally responsible behaviors.
2.1.4 Identifies environmental hazards and eliminates and/or prevents them where possible.

**Competency Standard 2.2: Provision of Care**

Provides skilled safe, holistic and culturally competent nursing care to clients, families, community and society, in collaboration with clients and other healthcare professionals in a variety of healthcare settings.

**Performance criteria**

2.2.1 Performs a comprehensive and systematic nursing assessment for individuals/groups.
   - Collects subjective and objective data from interviews, examinations, observations and client records in an accurate, meaningful and timely manner.
   - Shares and documents findings accurately and in a timely manner.

2.2.2 Analyzes assessment data to determine healthcare needs with clients.

2.2.3 Identifies client problems that serve as a basis for care planning.

2.2.4 Implements a prioritized plan of care by:
   - Providing care.
   - Assisting with care.
   - Assigning, delegating and supervising care.
   - Teaching clients, family members and/or significant others.
   - Utilizing appropriate resources.
   - Enabling and promoting independent self-care.
   - Utilizing a range of effective and appropriate communication and engagement skills.

2.2.5 Responds in a timely manner to sudden changes in clients’ condition.

2.2.6 Applies evidence-based knowledge to support clinical decisions and safe practices.

2.2.7 Provides culturally competent care in collaboration with other healthcare professionals.

2.2.8 Performs an ongoing evaluation of the response(s) of clients/groups to nursing interventions.

2.2.9 Reviews/revises the plan of care as required and in response to the evaluation of client outcomes.

2.2.10 Documents nursing interventions and client/group responses accurately and in a timely manner.

2.2.11 Plans for continuity of care to achieve expected outcomes.
Competency Standard 2.3: Leadership and Management
Exhibits leadership qualities and manages nursing care safely, efficiently and ethically.

Performance Criteria

2.3.1 Applies critical thinking and problem solving skills in the provision and management of care.

2.3.2 Prioritizes workload and manages time effectively.

2.3.3 Provides feedback, offers suggestions for changes and deals effectively with the impact of change on own practice or on the organization.

2.3.4 Maintains infection control practices.

2.3.5 Acts in accordance with the national and/or institutional disaster plan as needed.

2.3.6 Implements quality assurance and risk management strategies.

2.3.7 Ensures a safe environment by identifying actual and potential risks and takes timely action to meet national legislations and workplace health and safety principles.

2.3.8 Acknowledges own limitations in knowledge, judgment and/or skills, and functions within those limitations.

2.3.9 Delegates activities to team members according to their competence and scope of practice.

2.3.10 Accepts delegated activities in line with one’s own competence and scope of practice.

2.3.11 Utilizes a multidisciplinary approach in the management and provision of health care

2.3.12 Advocates for and contributes to the establishment and maintenance of a positive working environment.

2.3.13 Adapts own leadership style and approaches to different situations.

2.3.14 Resolves conflicts in a nonjudgmental manner, making effective use of communication skills and existing mechanisms to achieve resolution.

2.3.15 Leads teams effectively communicating own responsibilities and supporting other healthcare professionals and personnel.

2.3.16 Contributes to the development, implementation and review and update of organizational policies, guidelines and procedures.

2.3.17 Contributes as appropriate to national health policy development and implementation.
**Competency Standard 2.4: Therapeutic and Interpersonal Relationships**
Establishes professional, therapeutic and interpersonal relationships with clients and families.

**Performance Criteria**

2.4.1 Establishes therapeutic relationship with clients/groups.
- Initiates, develops and terminates therapeutic relationship with clients through the use of appropriate communication and interpersonal skills.
- Communicates in a culturally competent manner.

2.4.2 Maintains collaborative working relationship with colleagues.
- Communicates effectively within the workplace for the delivery of safe, competent, and ethical care.
- Respects and supports the roles of other healthcare providers.

2.4.3 Consistently communicates relevant, accurate and comprehensive information in verbal, written and electronic forms.

**Domain three:**

**Professional, Personal & Quality Development**
Registered nurses are required to maintain professional standards to provide quality health care. They have a professional obligation to develop themselves, and to support other nursing colleagues and healthcare providers, in their professional development.

**Competency Standard 3.1: Professional Development**
Assumes responsibility for own professional development through lifelong learning to ensure continued competence in nursing practice.

**Performance criteria:**

3.1.1 Undertakes regular self-assessment and reviews own practice through reflection, peer review, critical examination and evaluation.

3.1.2 Identifies the need for updating knowledge and skills for practice.

3.1.3 Actively engages in ongoing professional development.

3.1.4 Maintains record of learning and professional development activities

**Competency Standard 3.2: Enhancement of the Profession**
Demonstrates commitment to the enhancement of the nursing profession

**Performance criteria:**

3.2.1 Promotes and maintain a positive image of nursing.
3.2.2 Promotes dissemination, use, monitoring and review of professional standards and best practice guidelines.

3.2.3 Maintains evidence based practice as a standard.

3.2.4 Engages in advocacy activities through recognized professional organizations such as Emirates Nursing Association (ENA), UAE NMC, ICN, WHO and other relevant organizations to positively influence health and social policy that promotes quality and access to care for individuals and populations.

3.2.5 Contributes to nursing research and uses findings as a mean to improve standards of care.

3.2.6 Represent the nursing profession in relevant committees, taskforces, boards and/or forums where applicable.

3.2.7 Assumes leadership responsibilities, as appropriate, in the delivery of nursing care.

3.2.8 Acts as a role model for colleagues, students and those entering the profession.

3.2.9 Supports others who are less experienced or new to the profession informally and through preceptorship and mentorship programs.

**Competency Standard 3.3: Development of Others**

Demonstrates commitment to the development of other members in the healthcare team, as well as clients, families, community and society

**Performance criteria:**

3.3.1 Shares professional knowledge and research findings with others.

3.3.2 Acts as a resource person for others.

3.3.3 Participates in facilitating and coordinating learning opportunities for others.

**Competency Standard 3.4: Quality Management**

Ensures nursing practice meets organizational quality and safety standards and guidelines and participates in continuous quality improvement.

**Performance criteria:**

3.4.1 Practices in accordance with approved quality standards and guidelines reflecting recognized evidence-based best practices.

3.4.2 Participates in organizational quality management processes and activities.

3.4.3 Seeks evidence from a wide range of credible sources to maintain the quality of nursing care.
References


### Abbreviation List

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>DHA</td>
<td>Dubai Health Authority</td>
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<td>DHCC</td>
<td>Dubai Health Care City</td>
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<td>DON</td>
<td>Director of Nursing</td>
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<td>ENA</td>
<td>Emirates Nursing Association</td>
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<td>HAAD</td>
<td>Health Authority of Abu Dhabi</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCT</td>
<td>Higher Colleges of Technology</td>
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<td>ION</td>
<td>Institutes of Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<td>MSC</td>
<td>Medical Services Corps Armed Forces</td>
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<td>SCNMP</td>
<td>Scientific Committee on Nursing and Midwifery Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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<td>UOS</td>
<td>University of Sharjah</td>
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<td>UAE NMC</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates Nursing and Midwifery Council</td>
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

**Accountability:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Client:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Competence:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Competency Standard:**
A major function/functional area in the total set of competencies required of a Registered Nurse, defining the minimum acceptable functions performed by a registered nurse.

**Continuing Professional Development:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Cultural competence:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Cultural Sensitivity:**
Being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on: values, learning and behavior.

**Delegation:**
The transfer of responsibility for the performance of a task from one person to another. Although the responsibility for the tasks is transferred, the accountability for the process or outcome of the task remains with the person delegating the activity.

**Evidence Based Practice:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Governance:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Health:**
Good health is a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the object of living, and is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities.

**Illness:**
Poor health resulting from disease of body and mind A person’s perception of having poor health Illness and disease are not necessary the same.

**Nursing:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 20)

**Nursing Process:**
The process that serves as an organizational framework for the practice of nursing; it encompasses all of the steps taken by the nurse in caring for a patient: assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The rationale for each step is founded in nursing theory. The process requires a systematic approach to the person's situation, beginning with assessment and including an evaluation and reconciliation of the
perceptions by the person, the person's family, and the nurse. A plan for the nursing actions to be taken may then be made, and, with the participation of the person and the person's family, the plan may be set. The plan developed with the person and the person's family is then implemented. The outcome is evaluated with the person and the person's family. The steps follow each other at the start of the process but may need to be taken concurrently in some situations. The process does not reach completion with evaluation. The steps are begun again, allowing recurrent evaluation of the assessment, plan, goals, and actions.

**Performance Criteria:**
Descriptive statements which are measurable and reflect the intent of a standard in terms of performance, behavior or circumstance

**Positive working environment:**
It is a work environment that supports performance excellence and optimal social and psychological well-being of staff through: sustaining absence of work pressure, job security and workplace safety; encouraging team work, leadership and autonomy; supporting a motivated, empowered and autonomous staff while recognizing and rewarding their achievements. Healthy work environment has an evident positive impact on nurse satisfaction and retention; in addition to the strong influence it has on patient safety, patient satisfaction and quality care.

**Quality Management:**
Quality management can be considered to have four main components: quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement. Quality management is focused not only on product/service quality, but also on the means to achieve it. Quality management therefore uses quality assurance and control of processes as well as products to achieve more consistent quality. Quality Management requires establishing quality policies, procedures and practices, and then auditing the systems on a regular basis. It encompasses all the processes in an organization and seeks to ensure the quality of products through systematic adherence to quality management procedures and practices.

**Registered Nurse:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 21)

**Responsibility:**
The obligation that an individual assumes when undertaking to carry out a delegated function; the individual who authorizes the delegated function retains accountability.

**Scope of Practice:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 21)

**Self-Regulation:** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 21)

**Standard(s):** (Rf. UAE NMC terminology pg. 21)

**Supervision:**
Provision of guidance by a registered nurse for the accomplishment of a nursing task or activity with initial direction of the task or activity and periodic inspection of the actual act of accomplishing the task or activity.
UAE NMC Terminology

**Accountability:**
Obligations of a professional, to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and disclose the results in a transparent manner.

**Client:**
A person or persons who engage(s) or is/are served by the nurse or midwife with advice and/or care; client may refer to an individual, family, community or society; its use acknowledges that a significant part of nursing and midwifery services are delivered to people who are well and proactively engaging in healthcare. The terms *client* and *patient* can be used synonymously to acknowledge that the same services may be used for both clients and patients.

**Competence:**
The effective application of a combination of knowledge, skills and judgment demonstrated by nurses and midwives in daily practice or job performance. Competence reflects the following:

1. Knowledge understanding and judgment
2. A range of cognitive, technical, psychomotor and interpersonal skills.
3. A range of personal attributes and attitudes

**Continuing Professional Development:**
The establishment of increasing competence across the span of a professional’s career; in the range of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform duties or support interventions, be they in clinical practice, management, education, research, regulation or policy-making.

**Cultural competence:**
The understanding of and sensitivity to the cultural background and primary language of the client as demonstrated throughout the healthcare process, in any service delivery setting.

**Evidence Based Practice:**
The process by which the best available research-based evidence, clinical expertise and client preferences are used to guide clinical decision making and therapeutic interventions and evaluation of care.

**Governance:**
The process of controlling or guiding the nursing and midwifery profession.

**Nursing:**
Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people.
Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles.

**Registered Nurse:**
A registered nurse is a self-regulated health care professional who works autonomously with others within a determined scope of practice. A registered nurse:

- has successfully completed a recognized basic educational program in nursing that is duly recognized in the country where it is located, and that is also duly recognized by the UAE NMC.
- holds current registration with the UAE NMC.
- Adheres to and advocates for the scope of practice for registered as well as the professional code of conduct for nurses.

**Scope of Practice:**
The range of roles, functions, responsibilities and activities, which a registered/licensed professional is educated for, competent in, and is authorized to perform. It defines the accountability and limits of practice.

**Self-Regulation:**
The relative autonomy by which a profession is regulated and practiced within the context of public accountability to serve and protect the public interest. The rationale for self-regulation is the recognition that the profession is best able to determine what can be practiced, how it is to be practiced and who can practice as long as the public is well served.

**Standard:**
The desirable and achievable level of performance against which actual practice is compared.