

Nurses Scope of Practice

There are 2 parts to understanding scope of practice – there is scope of professional practice and scope of the individuals practice.

1. **Professional Practice:** The scope of the [professional practice](#) is set by legislation — professional standards such as competency standards, codes of ethics, conduct and practice and public need, demand and expectation. It may therefore be broader than that of any individual within the profession. To practice within the full scope of practice of the profession may require individuals to update or increase their knowledge, skills or competence.
2. **Individual Practice:** The scope of practice of an **individual Nurse** also includes that which the individual is
 - Educated
 - Authorised and
 - Competent and confident to perform.

So the scope of practice of an individual nurse or midwife may be more specifically defined than the scope of practice of their profession.

The actual scope of an individual's practice is **influenced** by the:

- context in which they practise
- consumers' health needs
- level of competence, education, qualifications and
- experience of the individual
- service provider's policy, quality and risk management
- Framework and organisational culture.

Definition from [Registered Nurse Standards of Practice](#):

“Scope of practice is that in which nurses are educated, competent to perform and permitted by law. The actual scope of practice is influenced by the context in which the nurse practises, the health needs of people, the level of competence and confidence of the nurse and the policy requirements of the service provider.”

This means that what we do in our day to day work must 'fit' within our own individual level of education, our competence, within the context of where we are practicing, and within the legal and professional framework.

So in other words, your own scope of practice may vary considerably from that of another nurse colleague working in your practice, or in the practice down the road.

This is where it is vitally important to understand how you might ascertain what steps are needed to be taken to establish your capabilities and competence, and assess whether there is opportunity for you to expand your practice and undertake a new role or perform a new task.

We recommend that you also consider the following when considering expanding or optimizing your scope of practice.

- Establish what relevant training or education you will require
- Determine how you will ensure you are performing safely or how you might credential in this
- Speak with your professional Indemnity Insurer and ascertain whether your cover will include cover for the new provision of service
- How will you ensure continuity and recency of practice in this area?
- Ensure there is a policy and procedure in place in your practice which supports the procedure including skill review annually

Resources to assist with scope of practice

You might like to review the APNA online learning course titled: Scope of Practice which is free to APNA members – [here](#)

Also review: [Practice Standards for Nurses working in General Practice](#)

The [Framework for assessing national competency standards](#) and other relevant guideline information found [here](#) and as a [PDF](#)

This is a set of tools and principles to assist nurses in the process of making decisions about whether specific tasks are within their individual scope of practice(2). It also provides a framework for nurses seeking to expand their individual scope of practice. “Differences in the education, experience and competence of the individual, and in the context in which they practise, are considered in using the template tools