

NATIONAL NURSING EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

PRELIMINARY REPORT

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CASN
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Canadian Association
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Association canadienne des
écoles de sciences infirmières

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In recent years, nursing education programs and delivery modalities have proliferated in Canada, at both the undergraduate and the graduate level, in response to evolving health system and societal needs. Because of the diversity in nursing education programs, the CASN National Nursing Education Framework is being developed to articulate core expectations within and across degree levels. Its purpose is to provide schools of nursing with national consensus based guidelines that may be used in developing, reviewing, evaluating, or modifying programs. Expectations for baccalaureate and master's level programs have been completed. Work on doctoral level nursing education has begun and will be incorporated into the framework in 2015.

In 2012, baccalaureate and master's education committees were struck to develop degree level expectations, and contribute to the creation of an overarching organizing framework. Members of both groups represented all parts of Canada, a range of educational institutions, and both English and French programs.

The work of the committees involved three phases. In the first phase, six domains were identified and defined to organize expectations across degree levels for baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral nursing programs. The domains were based on an analysis and synthesis of a comprehensive literature review of 1) Canadian and international documents providing guidelines and evaluation criteria for higher education across disciplines and 2) Canadian and international documents identifying entry-to practice nursing competencies, or content expectations for nursing education.

In the second phase, a multi-step, iterative process of drafting, consulting, and revising degree level expectations was implemented. The two committees worked in parallel on the development of expectations for their respective program level. For both committees the initial step was a literature review and synthesis. Working groups then drafted initial degree level outcomes and indicators based on the literature synthesis; the committees as a whole revised these drafts at an intensive one day, face-to-face meeting. Feedback was obtained for the master's draft from the CASN Graduate Study Forum in 2013. This forum is attended by educators from graduate programs across Canada. Similarly, input was obtained on the baccalaureate degree outcomes at the CASN Undergraduate Forum in 2013 attended by educators from most schools of nursing in Canada. Each committee reviewed and revised the feedback, incorporating it into the framework.

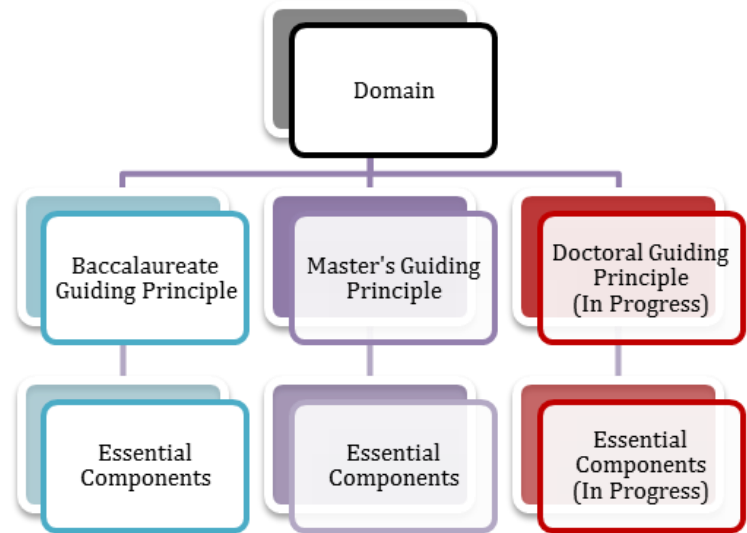
In the final phase, the work of both committees was brought together in one framework organized by the six domains. A degree level, guiding principle was formulated for each domain, followed by a list of essential components. Each essential component reflects the outcome expectations that had been identified for the domain. The last step was a survey sent to the Deans and Directors of the schools of nursing in Canada to determine the level of agreement with the guiding principles and essential components for baccalaureate and master's nursing education programs. All were identified as essential or very important by over 90% of respondents. Those with lower percentages in the essential category were reviewed for clarity. Some minor editing of baccalaureate and master's statements was carried out based on additional comments made by respondents.

Figure 1: Framework Outline

The framework is organized into six domains. Each domain has a guiding principle for each degree level, followed by a list of essential components.

The framework is organized into the following six domains:

1. Knowledge;
2. Research, Methodologies, Critical Inquiry & Evidence;
3. Nursing Practice;
4. Communication & Collaboration;
5. Professionalism; and
6. Leadership.



Domains

The domains represent a sphere of degree-level outcomes, and provide an organizing structure for the framework. In reality, they do not exist in a silo, but are interwoven together and interdependent.

- 1) *Knowledge*
This refers to the theoretical, conceptual, and factual content that is taught and learned in the programs.
 - Foundational knowledge is the knowledge base needed to develop further knowledge.
 - In-depth knowledge is comprehensive and detailed knowledge of a given area.
 - Advanced knowledge refers to knowledge developed at the graduate level that builds on, and adds further depth and greater complexity to the knowledge learned at the baccalaureate level.
- 2) *Research, methodologies, critical inquiry and evidence*
The domain includes the thinking and the inquiry skills, and the processes used to appraise, generate, synthesize, translate, and implement knowledge.
- 3) *Nursing practice*
This refers to the exercise of activities of a broad range of nursing roles that involve direct nursing care and/or indirect nursing care.
- 4) *Communication and collaboration*
The domain incorporates the interaction and relationships between the nurse and clients, the nurse and other members of the health care team, and the nurse and key stakeholders.
- 5) *Professionalism*
This relates to accountability to the nursing profession, the ethics and the values of the nurse.
- 6) *Leadership*
This refers to processes of social influence which maximize the efforts of others towards the achievement of goals or tasks.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

For each domain, there is an overarching guiding principle for each degree level; the guiding principles is followed by a list of essential components.

A **guiding principle** is a generalized direction or objective for baccalaureate or master's programs in the particular domain.

The **essential components** are the core domain related outcomes expected of students.



DOMAIN 1: KNOWLEDGE

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral—In progress
<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p>Programs provide a broad knowledge base in nursing and nursing related disciplines to support a generalist preparation.</p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundational knowledge of nursing including nursing history, nursing theories, and other theories relevant to nursing practice. 2. Foundational knowledge of human development and functioning over the life-span that builds on secondary education, from natural & life sciences, and from behavioural & social sciences (anatomy, physiology, microbiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, nutrition, pathophysiology, genetics, psychology, sociology). 3. In-depth knowledge of the health-related needs of diverse clients to provide promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and end-of-life nursing care. 4. Knowledge of professional and organizational structures (i.e. regulatory, professional and union), socio-political, historical, and economic contexts of nursing practice. 5. Knowledge of the use of information technology in nursing care, including epidemiology and statistics. 6. In-depth knowledge of relational practice (focusing attention on intrapersonal, interpersonal and contextual variables) to impact health outcomes of individuals, families, and communities. 7. Knowledge of ethical nursing practice within a legal context in dynamic healthcare systems and in emergent and multifaceted health situations. 	<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p>Programs provide a comprehensive and substantive understanding of nursing knowledge, and a critical awareness of complex problems and/or new insights</p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advanced nursing knowledge that builds on the knowledge of a baccalaureate nurse in an area of graduate study. 2. Advanced knowledge of nursing related disciplines and interprofessional collaboration in preparation for advanced professional roles. 3. Advanced knowledge of recipients, experiential knowledge, and self-knowledge in a professional nursing role. 4. Advanced knowledge of complex health systems, policy environments, and changing contexts of nursing and healthcare. 5. Integration of a breadth and depth of knowledge across the domains of research, practice, communication and collaboration, professional autonomy, and leadership. 	

8. Knowledge of primary healthcare in relation to health disparities, vulnerable populations, and the determinants of health.
9. Knowledge of social justice, population health, environment and global health issues.
10. Knowledge regarding healthy work environments including collaborative skills, leadership theories, and effective team functioning and conflict resolution.
11. Knowledge of the art and science of professional caring for persons, families, or communities.

DOMAIN 2: RESEARCH, METHODOLOGIES, CRITICAL INQUIRY & EVIDENCE

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral—In progress
<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p>Programs foster the development of critical thinking and research abilities to use evidence to inform nursing practice.</p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An appreciation of the salience of inquiry for nursing as a profession and a discipline. 2. The ability to seek, locate and interpret a broad range of information, knowledge, evidence, methodologies, and practice observations within the profession and across disciplines. 3. Critical thinking skills to use relevant information, knowledge, and communication technologies to support evidence-informed nursing practice. 4. The ability to formulate research questions arising from nursing practice and analyze research findings. 5. The ability to compose a written academic argument. 	<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs foster the ability to contribute to nursing knowledge through systematic inquiry, knowledge development, translation, and scholarship.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A commitment and ability to promote nursing inquiry and lifelong learning. 2. The knowledge and skills to access, appraise, critically examine, synthesize and judiciously use theory and empirical evidence from a variety of sources. 3. The ability to use a systematic approach to gather evidence, plan, implement and evaluate solutions to nursing practice problems. 4. The ability to identify, interpret, synthesize and judiciously use theory and evidence to identify gaps in relevant knowledge and formulate a nursing problem statement. 5. The ability to engage in written and oral scholarly activities. 6. The ability to analyze and compare different methods of inquiry. 7. The ability to apply knowledge of core research methods, to collaborate in research, to engage in systematic knowledge development, synthesis and quality assurance related initiatives. 8. The ability to analyze facilitators and barriers to knowledge uptake and use evidence-based strategies for knowledge translation. 	

DOMAIN 3: NURSING PRACTICE

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral—In progress
<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs provide practice learning experiences to develop safe, competent, compassionate, ethical, and culturally safe entry-level nurses.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holistic and comprehensive assessment of diverse clients, to plan and provide competent, ethical, safe, and compassionate nursing care. 2. The use of clinical reasoning, nursing knowledge, and other evidence to inform decision-making in diverse practice situations. 3. The ability to recognize and respond safely, competently and ethically to rapidly changing client-conditions and contexts. 4. The ability to monitor and manage complex care of clients in stable and unstable contexts using multiple technologies. 5. The use of information technologies to support quality patient care. 6. The capacity to engage in RN entry-level scope of practice as defined by the provincial/territorial regulatory body. 	<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs provide practice learning experiences to foster the use of best available evidence, theories, and expertise in an advanced nursing role.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematic and comprehensive assessment, based on the integration of theory, evidence, research and interprofessional perspectives, as a foundation for advanced reasoning and/or decision-making, in an area of practice or healthcare delivery. 2. The ability to integrate advanced knowledge and professional expertise in an area of practice, and to plan, deliver and evaluate direct and/or indirect care, in collaboration with clients and members of the health team. 3. The ability to design and implement innovative solutions to problems/issues in an area of practice. 4. The ability to respond creatively and effectively to complex system-related issues and report clearly to professional and lay audiences. 5. The ability to analyze current and emerging trends, and synthesize evidence to inform strategic responses at the unit and at the organizational level. 6. <i>If an NP program</i>, the ability to exercise the full scope of extended RN practice as defined by the provincial/territorial regulatory body. 	

7. Engagement and leadership in the provision of comfort care, including pain and symptom management.
8. The ability to counsel and educate clients to promote health, and symptom and disease management.
9. The coordination of patient care in collaboration with individuals, families and other members of the healthcare team.
10. The ability to facilitate client navigation through health-care services.
11. The ability to promote the health of individuals, families, communities, and populations through actions to address health disparities.
12. The use of the core elements of patient safety and quality care.

DOMAIN 4: COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral—In progress
<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs prepare students to communicate and collaborate effectively with clients and members of the health care team.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with diverse clients and members of the health care team to provide high quality nursing care. 2. The ability to self-monitor one's beliefs, values, and assumptions, and recognize their impact on interpersonal relationships with clients and team members. 3. The ability to communicate using information technologies to support engagement with patients/clients and the interprofessional team. 4. The ability to articulate a nursing perspective and the scope of practice of the registered nurse in the context of the health care team. 5. The ability to collaborate with diverse clients, adapt relational approaches appropriately, and accommodate varying contextual factors in diverse practice situations. 6. The ability to contribute to positive health-care team functioning through consultation, application of group communication theory, principles, and group process skills. 	<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs prepare students to use advanced communication, collaboration and consultation abilities to participate and lead in diverse contexts.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The communication skills to participate in, or lead, diverse teams to improve outcomes and to initiate and/or support policy changes. 2. Advanced knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that influence effective intra- and interprofessional, collaborative practice. 3. The ability to integrate information technologies, resources, and advanced communication principles to communicate to a wide range of audiences. 4. The ability to articulate an advanced nursing perspective when working with colleagues in order to optimize health-care. 5. The ability to articulate verbally, and in writing, to a wide range of audiences, the evidence for nursing decisions. 	

DOMAIN 5: PROFESSIONALISM

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral—In progress
<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs prepare students to meet standards of professional nursing practice and conduct, and become life-long learners.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to practice within the context of professional standards of practice, ethical, regulatory, and legal codes. 2. An understanding of the significance of fitness to practice as it relates to self-care and life-long learning. 3. The ability to act as a role model for the intraprofessional nursing team. 4. The ability to maintain professional boundaries with clients and other members of the health care team. 5. The ability to ensure client confidentiality and privacy. 6. An understanding of the importance of participating in a professional nursing organization. 7. Foundational knowledge and skills required to pursue graduate studies as desired. 	<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs prepare students to initiate and model best practices, and to promote their own personal and professional growth in an advanced nursing role.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovation, autonomy, sound judgement, adaptability and responsibility in an advanced nursing role. 2. Initiative to continually advance knowledge and competence in an advanced nursing role. 3. The ability to articulate the contributions of nursing at basic and advanced levels to recipients of care, health-care providers, and to various healthcare stakeholders. 4. The ability to maintain a professional and ethical environment of accountability and respectful communication in difficult or conflictual situations. 5. Accountability in decision-making related to the individual's area of practice. 6. Initiative, professional responsibility and accountability to address complex issues in an advanced nursing role. 	

DOMAIN 6: LEADERSHIP

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral—In progress
<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs prepare students to coordinate, delegate, and influence change.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to influence the development of programs to improve health outcomes. 2. Leadership abilities in the coordination of a healthcare team, including the delegation of tasks, performance evaluation, and facilitation of continuity of care. 3. The ability to collaborate with, and act as a resource for, LPNs or other members of the health-care team to meet the patient/client needs. 4. The ability to analyze and influence public policy related to health. 5. The ability to advocate for change to address issues of social justice, health equity, and other disparities affecting the health of clients. 	<p><i>GUIDING PRINCIPLE</i></p> <p><i>Programs prepare students to provide leadership, oversight, and accountability for practice delivery and outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS</i></p> <p><i>The program prepares the student to demonstrate...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to participate in the design and implementation of new models of nursing and/or healthcare delivery in an area of practice. 2. The ability to integrate theories and evidence-informed knowledge in leading the healthcare team to design, coordinate, implement, and evaluate the delivery of care. 3. The ability to coach, mentor, and teach nurses, nursing students and other members of the health-care team. 4. The ability to participate in the development and implementation of institutional, local, provincial, or national policy. 5. The ability to create a culture of learning in a focused area of nursing practice that fosters a spirit of inquiry. 6. The ability to promote quality improvement and patient safety using informatics, health care technologies and high quality evidence to optimize standards of care. 7. The ability to implement safety and quality-improvement initiatives using effective communication (scholarly writing, speaking, and group interaction) skills. 	

8. The ability to evaluate technologies to support safe practice environments, and to optimize safety, cost-effectiveness and health outcomes.
9. The ability to promote ethical principles and standards for the use of information and communication technologies.
10. The ability to advocate for the ethical conduct of research in health care.

Term	Definition
Accountability	An obligation to the public to accept responsibility for one's actions and conduct, in accordance with legislative requirements and standards of the nursing profession. Accountability resides in a role and can never be delegated away (CNO, 2014).
Advanced nursing role	Nursing roles requiring additional expertise and a deeper, more extensive knowledge base, developed through post-graduate study. Some, such as the clinical nurse specialist and the nurse practitioner, have a clinical focus, whereas others in areas such as health policy, nursing research, health system management, nursing education, and nursing administration may have a non-clinical focus and affect the recipients of health care services indirectly.
Client	The recipient of care: may be an individual, family, group, community, or population.
Direct care	Nursing services that require direct interaction between the health-care provider and the recipient(s).
Fitness to practice	All the qualities and capabilities of an individual relevant to his or her capacity to practise as a nurse, including, but not limited to, any cognitive, physical, psychological or emotional condition, or a dependence on alcohol or drugs, that impairs his or her ability to practise nursing (CRNBC, 2014).
Generalist	A Registered Nurse prepared to practise safely, competently and ethically along the continuum of care in situations of health and illness throughout a client's lifespan (CNO, 2014).
Global health	The optimal well-being of all humans from the individual and the collective perspective and is considered a fundamental human right, which should be accessible to all (CNA, 2009).
Health care team	A number of health care providers from different disciplines (often including both regulated professionals and unregulated workers) working together to provide care for and with individuals, families, groups, populations or communities (CNA, 2008).
Indirect care	Nursing services that affect health care recipients indirectly.
Information and communication Technologies	Digital and analogue technologies that facilitate the capturing, processing, storage, and exchange of information via electronic communication (CASN, 2012).
Knowledge Translation	a dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically-sound application of knowledge to improve the health of Canadians, provide more effective health services and products and strengthen the health care system (CIHR, 2012).
Relational practice	An inquiry that is guided by conscious participation with clients using a number of relational skills including listening, questioning, empathy, mutuality, reciprocity, self-observation, reflection, and a sensitivity to emotional contexts. Relational practice encompasses therapeutic nurse-client relationships and relationships among health care providers (CRNBC, 2014).

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