



Nurse Education in the Tertiary Sector

SUBMISSION, from
Nurse Education in the Tertiary Sector (NETS)

Consultation on
Guideline for Competence Assessment
Nursing Council of New Zealand

October 2010

Contact person Kathy Holloway, National Co-ordinator
kathryn.holloway@whitireia.ac.nz



Nurse Education in the Tertiary Sector (NETS) Response

NETS response to Guideline for Competence Assessment Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this timely and important guideline. In general NETS support the information in this draft guideline, as we are aware of misunderstanding amongst nurses about competence assessment, particularly for recertification audits. However, we have some comments relating to specific aspects in the document. These are provided as “bullet points” below.

- It would be useful in the introduction to include brief information about the HPCA Act and the Council’s responsibilities for competence requirements in terms of the legislation.
- The statement in the purpose should refer to nurses who assess other nurses rather than “people”. We also note that the purpose refers to “guidelines”, but the document refers to this being a draft “guideline”.
- In the interests of clarity, it might be helpful to consider having the entire guideline numbered and in sections. For example competence assessment in undergraduate for meeting registration requirements, nurses undertaking competence assessment programmes, and competence assessment required for those nurses who are randomly selected to undertake a recertification audit to renew their annual practising certificate. This, we suggest will help clarify some confusion that has been indentified in relation to senior nurse assessment and peer assessment.
- We suggest that the section which refers to Nursing Council documents which support competence assessment is moved from page 4 to page 3 - directly below the purpose of the guideline.
- Footnote one (1) refers the reader to “see section on competence assessment at the back of the document”. We suggest this should be reworded to provide the actual page number where this is to be found. Additionally, the statement “criteria for approved assessors ... later in this document...” should provide the page number as a reference.
- Under assessment of a student an assumption is made that a programme coordinator and preceptor complete assessment. This is not always the case, and not all clinical settings have preceptors. We suggest rewording of this to clarify that this assessment occurs with a registered nurse from the education provider and a registered nurse from the clinical environment. The latter could refer to this as the registered nurse responsible for signing off competency who must have completed an appropriate course in adult education / assessment. This may be the preceptor (or equivalent) or clinical lecturer employed by an education provider.
- On page 7 there is a paragraph commencing “If assessors are uncertain as to requirements ...”. This may be more usefully situated directly below the section on page 6 directly below the statement “we recommend you do the following to prepare for the assessment”.

- The inclusion of principles for assessing the practice of other nurses is useful, particularly the reference to ethical assessment. However, some of the questions may not be helpful to an assessor - for example organizational support and quality improvement procedures. If it is identified by an assessor that there are issues here, might this mean that it influences the outcome of a competence assessment?
- On page 9 under ethical assessment, there is reference to simulation. It would be useful to consider how this could be integrated throughout to a greater extent (or left out altogether) - the use of simulation seems suddenly included. Possibly this could be included in the information for assessing another nurse on page 6, and a definition of simulation provided in the glossary.
- Additionally, on page 9 there is a statement “Nurses involved in assessment (both the assessor and the person being assessed) are always obligated by the ethical standards of their profession”. The word “person” should be changed to nurse, and clarification is required in relation to “ethical standards”. If this refers to the Nursing Council’s *Code of Conduct for Nurses, Principle Two*, which states that “[t]he nurse acts ethically and maintains standards of practice”, then that reference is an important inclusion. If this refers to some other “ethical standards”, then this should be clarified.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.