Competency Programme and Evaluation Framework for Senior Staff Nurse and Senior Midwife

2. Information Booklet

Nursing Services Directorate
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**SCOPE OF DOCUMENT**

The *Competency Framework: Information Booklet* has been developed as a guide for applicants who are in the process of compiling the Competency Framework for the post of Senior Staff Nurse and Senior Midwife. This document entails a brief overview of the background, objectives and structure of the competencies. This is followed by a step by step guide on the compilation process. The document also outlines the evaluation process following submission of completed Competency Framework through a call of application.

The Competency Framework can also be used as a benchmark of practice and professional development both by management and future potential applicants who can in turn start planning and compiling the documents for future use.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Nursing Services Directorate gratefully acknowledges the professional input of all individuals and organisations who contributed to the development of this Competency Programme and Evaluation Framework for Senior Staff Nurse and Senior Midwife.
FOREWORD

It is the pleasure of the Nursing Services Directorate to present the Competency Programme and Evaluation Framework for Senior Staff Nurse/Midwife. In an era where focus on high quality of care is increasing, it is essential that nurses and midwives are able to demonstrate their competencies in the provision of care.

Nurses and midwives must not only be proud of what they do but they must also be proud of how they achieved it. The framework support staff nurses and midwives who wish to progress towards a senior staff nurse/midwife position in carrying out a self assessment of their skills, knowledge and attributes required for such a position.

The competency framework is a tool built to assist professional nurses and midwives to understand what is required from them to carry out their job to the highest standards of care. They are core competencies which apply irrespective of whether one practice in a general or specialised area. Moreover, the framework serves as public protection through the creation of a mechanism for nurses and midwives to demonstrate their competence to practice.

The framework is also useful for managers to be able to assist and support their professionals’ nurses and midwives in achieving such competency.

I am grateful for the support by all stakeholders involved in the development of this framework. I will look forward to continue to build on this to improve on the quality of care provided by our professionals.

Mr. Jesmond Sharples
Director
Nursing Services Directorate
June 2016
**Definitions**

**Accountability**: being responsible for one’s actions and decisions and accepting the consequences.

**Area of Practice**: the general or specialty area in which the nurse/midwife works.

**Continuing Professional Development**: the ongoing, systematic, learning process that nurses and midwives undertakes to maintain their competence to practise and to enhance their professional and personal skills and knowledge.

**Clinical Judgement**: the process, by which the nurse/midwife decides on data to be collected about a client, makes an interpretation, arrives at a diagnosis and identifies appropriate plan of actions. This involves problem solving, decision making and critical thinking.

**Critical Thinking**: the process of identifying a problem, determining the best solution, choosing the most effective method of reaching the solution and finally reflecting on the situation to figure out what was effective and what could have been done better.

**Ethics**: ethical principles are rules of conduct that have been agreed to and in accordance to the Code of Ethics.

**Leadership**: a multifaceted process of identifying a goal/target, motivating other people to act and providing support and motivation to achieve mutually negotiated goals. It involves making decisions, delegating appropriately, resolving conflict and acting with integrity.

**Legal**: actions allowed or enforceable by being in conformity with the law.

**Supervisor**: refers to the Charge Nurse/Midwife or the respective manager / director. In situations where the Charge Nurse/Midwife is not available, the Deputy Charge Nurse/Midwife acting as Charge Nurse/Midwife or the Senior Nursing/Midwifery Manager shall be consulted if necessary.

**Therapeutic Relationship**: refers to the relationship between a healthcare professional and a client or/and his/her informal carers through which they engage with each other.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

The implementation of a Competency Programme and Evaluation Framework, hereinafter referred to as the Competency Framework, into the nursing and midwifery practice has been identified as an essential element in maintaining professional standards. The availability of competent nurses and midwives is the key to the delivery of quality health care services. The competency framework formally recognises nurses and midwifery skills, knowledge and abilities which can be a means of communicating to the public the level of competency to expect from senior staff nurses /midwives.

The development of the Competency Framework is in line with the Nurses and Midwives Sectoral Agreement dated 6th February 2013. All employees within the grades of Staff Nurse/Midwife (Conversion course, SN Traditional Course, Diploma and Degree holders), and are interested to progress to the grade of Senior Staff Nurse/Midwife are obliged to undertake the Competency Programme and Evaluation Framework. This is a onetime evaluation programme carried out as part of the application requirement. This process shall apply to all nurses and midwives working within the Maltese National Health System.

The Competency Framework for Senior Staff Nurse and Senior Midwives incorporates core competencies which are transferable across different practice settings and client populations.

2. **BACKGROUND**

The health care environment is constantly evolving requiring greater flexibility in the nursing and midwifery profession. The competency framework is designed to identify the extent of knowledge, attitudes and skills expected for that level of practitioner. The framework recognises that to deliver effective nursing and midwifery care, practitioners must be competent to fulfil a number of functions within health care regardless of the area of practice. Moreover, it is essential that nurses and midwives expand in their area of competence to achieve excellence in care.

The competencies included in this document are based on a thorough review of evidence based literature and the senior staff nurse/ midwife job description. The framework will be subject to periodic revision to keep up with the progress and evolution of the health care delivery system. The identified competencies are a reflection of the domains which all staff nurses and midwives must possess.
Nursing and midwifery managers can use the framework to support the development of their teams across departments and different organisations/entities. Furthermore, it provides a consistent benchmark of practice and development. It can also be utilised by Practice Nurses and Midwives: Practice Development to ensure consistent standards of competence across the nursing and midwifery profession. For the purpose of this document, a competency is defined as a: “state of having the knowledge, judgement, skills, energy, experience and motivation required to respond adequately to the demands of one’s professional responsibilities” (Roach, 1992).

3. **OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPETENCY PROGRAMME AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

The objectives of this framework are to enable nurses and midwives to:

i. Reflect upon their practice core roles and responsibilities;

ii. Identify personal and professional development needs; and

iii. Provide evidence of achievements to support career development and progression.

4. **STRUCTURE OF THE COMPETENCY PROGRAMME AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

Competencies are the essential building blocks that shape nursing and midwifery work in all clinical and practice settings. As practitioners acquire skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence in their field of practice, they must also be able to demonstrate how they met these competencies.

The identified core competencies have been grouped under **Four Main Domains** including:

i. **Professional and Ethical Practice:**

   This domain contains competencies that relate to professional, legal and ethical responsibilities and cultural safety. These include being able to demonstrate knowledge and judgement and being accountable for own actions and decisions, while promoting an environment that maximises clients’ safety, independence and quality of life and health.

ii. **Provision of Nursing and Midwifery Care:**

   This domain contains competencies related to assessment and provision of nursing and midwifery care, which is responsive to clients and informal carers’ needs, and which is supported by nursing knowledge and evidence based research.
iii. **Interpersonal and Therapeutic Relationships**

This domain contains competencies related to initiating and maintaining interpersonal and therapeutic relationships with clients/informal carers and other health care professionals.

iv. **Interprofessional Collaboration and Quality Management.**

This domain contains competencies to demonstrate that as a member of the health care team, the nurse/midwife is able to evaluate the effectiveness of care, collaborates effectively with different members of team to promote teamwork, to facilitate care and promotes excellence and quality throughout the entire care process.

5. **Compiling the Framework for Senior Staff Nurses and Senior Midwives**

i. The candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the relevant documents including:

   a. **Documents 1 and 1.1** -> The nursing self assessment and the midwifery self assessment competency framework tool respectively. These 2 documents contain 19 competencies which must be substantiated with evidence.

   b. **Document 2** -> Information booklet which contains all the necessary details about the competency framework and evaluation programme. Applicants are advised to read this document first to get acquainted with the competency assessment framework tool. This document provides background information on the competency framework and how it should be compiled. It also includes the process of evaluation that will pursue once the framework is submitted.

   c. **Documents 3 and 3.1** -> The nursing guide for evidence and indicators and the midwifery guide for evidence and indicators. These documents contain the 19 competencies, together with a guide for evidence and indicators for each competence. The Guide for Evidence (2nd Column) represent a set of questions which can be answered to provide evidence for the respective competence. The Indicators (3rd column) serve as the standards upon which the appointed Board will evaluate the provided evidence. Therefore applicants are encouraged to read them and ensure that the evidence provided addresses the indicators.
d. **Documents 4 and 4.1** -> Nursing worked examples and Midwifery worked examples. These two documents contain samples of evidence for each competence.

ii. The eligible candidate shall complete the Competency Framework Self-Assessment Booklet, providing evidence of how his/her practice meets the competencies.

iii. Each domain has a number of competencies which must all be completed. Some competencies overlap; if one evidence addresses more than one competency there is no need to repeat the evidence but applicants are advised to make appropriate cross-reference.

iv. Applicants shall ensure that the evidence provided demonstrate concepts of accountability, leadership, critical thinking, clinical judgement and experience as well as the ability to tailor them to suit the particular situation throughout the four domains as would be expected from a senior staff nurse/midwife.

v. The quality of evidence provided shall be valid, sufficient, authentic, and current (Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1: Rules of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sufficient</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Authentic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

vi. The type of evidence can include, but is not limited to:

a. **Self Evaluation**: the nurse/midwife will reflect on everyday practice or an episode of practice and compare it against the relevant competency. The nurse/midwife can provide evidence through reflective accounts, documentation and / or through reflective journal.

    **Writing a Reflective Account** – One can utilise models such as Gibbs, Johns, Atkins and Murphy and others as a guide for reflection. The write up does not
have to be academic and must entail a description of the event or experience, what has been learned and how the event or experience changed or/and improved one's practice or way of thinking as a result. One must ensure that the individuals mentioned or alluded to in the account are not identifiable.

b. Professional review / workplace appraisal: a signed certificate or statement from the reviewer or written feedback notes provided by the reviewers. The reviewers can be from the nursing and midwifery professional stream scale 8 or higher including practice nurse/midwife, charge nurse/midwife, deputy charge nurse/midwife, and senior staff nurse/midwife or in case of nurses/midwives working in isolation or in an independent role can seek review from other independent professionals who work within their setting. These reviews can include observations of performance; audit of documents such as clinical records or other relevant documentation; reviewers’ interview of the nurse/midwife to ascertain nursing attitudes and competence in different setting.

c. Continuing professional development:
   o Formal CPD - A list of attended CPD should be submitted. CPD activities listed must be accompanied by a short summative summary of the key points of the learning activity, what you learnt and how can the learning experience be applied in your practice. In situations where the applicants attended more than three (3) CPD within the same year a summative summary of overall activities will be sufficient. Original certificates are to be presented during the interview; Evidence of clinical supervision and mentorship can also be submitted. Applicants are requested to submit proof of clinical supervision and/or mentorship either by the Faculty of Health Sciences and/or their respective supervisor.
   o Informal CPD – Applicants who actively read articles on specific subjects can submit a reference list of the articles read together with a summative write up incorporating key points of the learning activity, what was learnt and how the learning experience was applied into practice.
Figure 2 summaries the types of evidence described above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Framework</th>
<th>Self Evaluation</th>
<th>Professional review / workplace appraisal:</th>
<th>Continuing Professional Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection on everyday practice</td>
<td>• Signed statements; • Observations of performance; • Audit of documents; • Reviewers’ interview.</td>
<td>• List of certificate of attendance; • Professional publication &amp; presentation • Clinical supervision and mentorship; • Informal CPD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2: Types of Evidence**

**A mixture of evidence is expected.** It is up to the individual nurse/midwife to decide which type of evidence to produce for the respective competency. However, it is recommended that predominantly the evidence provided shall be from **Self Evaluation and Professional review/Workplace Appraisals.**

vii. The supporting evidence must be clearly indexed and cross referenced to the addressed competency example **Evidence 1 - Pg 1.**

viii. The right Column of the Competency Framework Self Assessment needs to be adequately filled and referenced as seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Insert the reference and page number where evidence is provided.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency 1.1: Demonstrates adherence with standards of the professional practice, code of ethics, and relevant Maltese Legislation.</td>
<td>Evidence 1 - Pg 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ix. Each page containing the supporting evidence shall be numbered; font size for text shall not be smaller than 11 point and with a line spacing of 1.5. **Although there is no word limit, it is advised that the evidence provided for each competency should not be longer than one (1) page.**
x. Once the Competency Framework Self-Assessment Booklet is compiled and completed, the nurse/midwife shall sign the declaration form and hand a copy of the framework together with the evidence as per instructions in the call of application.

6. **Evaluation of Evidence**

i. Once the completed documents are received by the Nursing Services Directorate, they will be handed to the appointed Evaluation Board/s who shall review the competency framework and conduct an interview with the respective candidates. The aim of the interview is to ensure that the evidence presented is truly the applicants’ work. It is also a means for the evaluation board to critically evaluate the evidence provided, positively appraise achievements and suggest improvements as deemed necessary. The interview also presents a means for the management to get feedback from staff about overall general areas for improvement.

ii. The board will also carry out random observations and/or seek further evidence from the applicants’ place of work.

iii. Completed reports are sent to the Permanent Secretary (Health) for the issuing of results.

iv. The results will be published in accordance to the standard as set by the PSC.

v. In the eventuality that an applicant is in disagreement with the results, s/he may file an appeal as per instructions in the call of application within the stipulated time frames.

vi. Applicants, who were unsuccessful in the process but are in agreement with the published result, can request feedback on the competency framework by sending their request to the board chairperson once the appeal period has been completed.

vii. Unsuccessful applicants can resubmit an updated competency framework in the subsequent call showing proof that they have reached the necessary competencies. There is no need to re-apply through the following call however applicants are advised to contact the Nursing Services Directorate to be reinstated in the following call.
7. **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE**

The Nursing Services Directorate embarked on a quality improvement initiative which consists of:

i. An evaluation survey to all applicants who completed the competency framework;

ii. Round table discussion with the evaluation board members;

iii. Evaluation of evidence through random sampling of complete frameworks in order to ensure the consistency of evidence across entities; and

iv. Review and update of the competency framework in accordance with feedback received and evolving practices.

8. **CONCLUSION**

This Competency Framework for senior staff nurse and senior midwives will allow the eligible candidates to follow their professional development against standardised desired competencies. It can aid in identifying personal and professional developmental needs which are common across entities as well as provide the confidence in the quality of care across all the different sectors in the Maltese Healthcare system.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

g%20People%20Core%20Framework%20for%20Nurse/midwives

