

ICN Regulation Series

Nursing Care Continuum Framework and Competencies



International Council of Nurses

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ICN Framework of Competencies

Initially, the **ICN Framework of Competencies for the Generalist Nurse** was developed to identify competencies expected of a generalist nurse at the point of entry into professional practice.⁸ It has been used in various ways internationally. For example, the regulatory bodies of the concerned countries used it to identify common competencies for registered nurses in South East Asia and the Western Pacific.⁹ Another application was as a guide to the development of a competency inventory for registered nurses in the People's Republic of China.¹⁰ In the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre in Saudi Arabia, the ICN Framework formed the basis for a clinical practice assessment portfolio for new graduates undertaking a period of internship.¹¹

As a result of the consultation for the Continuum the major domains and some of the sub-domains of the Framework have been revised (Figure 1). The competencies under three domains are:

1. Professional, ethical and legal practice
2. Care provision and management
3. Professional, personal, and quality development

In undertaking work on the Continuum the ICN competencies for the registered (generalist) nurse were used as the initial benchmark against which all other competencies in the Continuum have been set. As the registered nurse competencies were five years old ICN took the opportunity to review and revise them as part of the Continuum development process. The specialist nurse competencies were based on those developed as part of work

undertaken in collaboration with the European Parkinson's Disease Association. The advanced practice competencies have been developed in collaboration with the ICN International Nurse Practitioner and Advanced Nursing Network.

In some cases an individual practitioner may develop competencies in one or more of the areas beyond those set as the initial benchmarks. This can occur as a result of progress from novice to expert in their role, as part of preparation for moving to more developed roles, or as part of a particular demand of the position to which they have been appointed. Any individual who functions at a level beyond the initial benchmark in one or more areas is not considered competent or recognised as functioning at the higher level unless all requirements are met and any additional formal preparation or assessment have been completed.

Finally, in developing the Nursing Care Continuum Framework and Competencies ICN consulted widely in order to arrive at international consensus. However, these competencies should not be regarded as prescriptive. Those utilizing the Continuum need to refer to their particular context and make revisions accordingly. Some areas may need further expansion and others may be inappropriate, while areas that are important to practice in their country may have been omitted. Additionally, some countries may wish to use the competencies as the basis for developing more detailed guidance that can inform curriculum development by identifying the underpinning knowledge and skills required to achieve the competencies. Figure 2 provides an example of how this may be developed.

Figure 1: Revised ICN Competency Framework

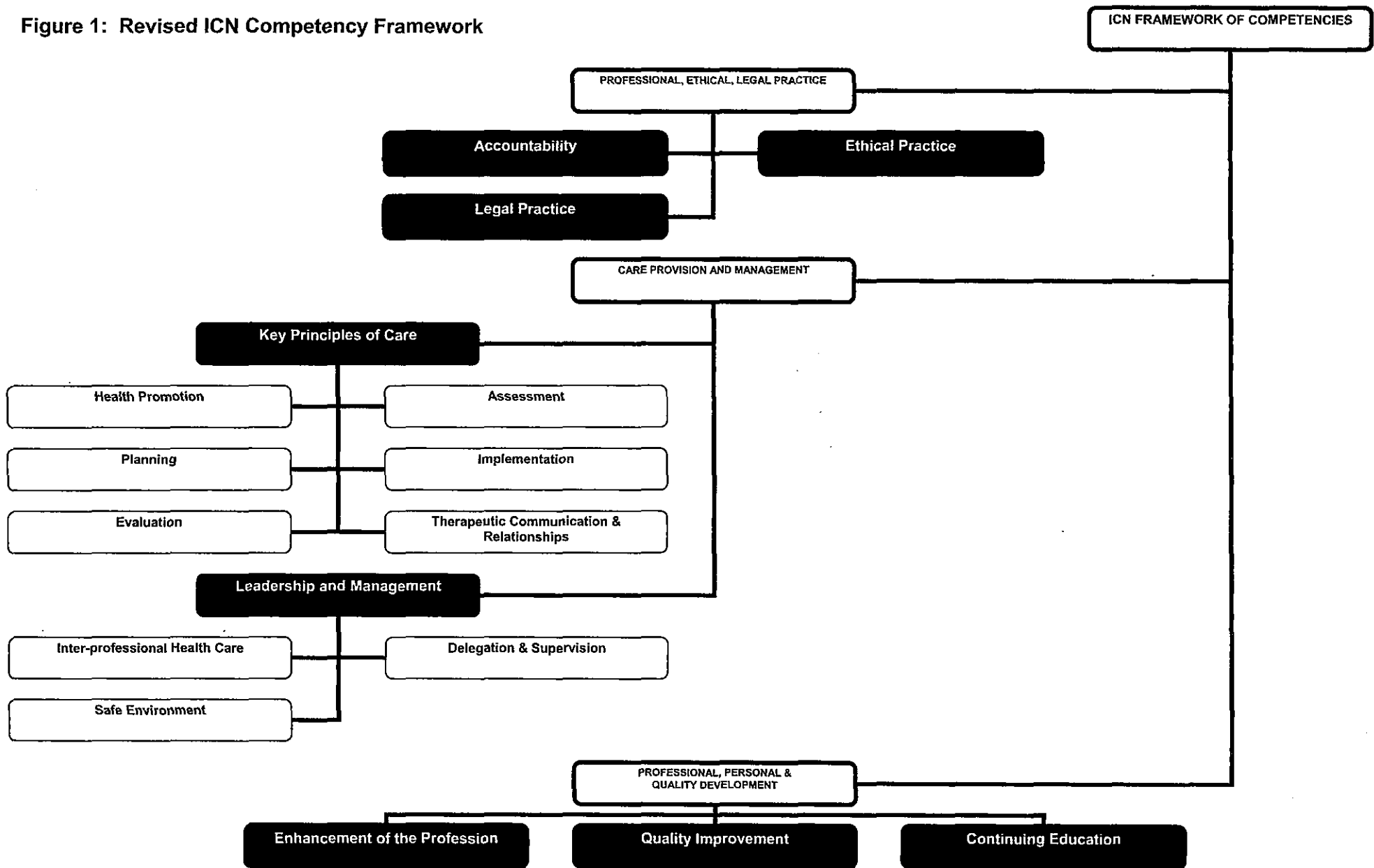


Figure 2: Example of knowledge and skills required to achieve competencies associated with delegation and supervision

Delegation and Supervision

Knowledge & Skills	SW	EN	RN	NS	APN
Definition and principles of effective delegation (5 rights of delegation)		✓	→	→	→
Forms of delegation including the use of protocols, guidelines, standing orders				✓	→
Relation of delegation to professional role, scope of practice and personal accountability/responsibilities, statutory and regulatory authority for delegation		✓	→		
Organisational responsibilities, policies and procedures to support delegation decisions and supervisory activities				✓	→
Definition and principles of supervision of individuals		✓	→		→
Types and methods of supervision (direct and indirect)			✓	→	→
How delegation/supervision contributes to effective use of health resources and the continuum of care		✓	→		→
Role as receiver of delegation/supervision: Concept of delegation/supervision	✓	→			→
How/when to request additional instruction, training and support	✓	→			→
Right to decline a delegated activity	✓	→			→
Skills: 1. Formulating organisational policies/procedures and creating adequate structures and resources to support delegation and supervisory responsibilities					✓
2. Communicating delegated task		✓	→		→
3. Monitoring and providing feedback delegated tasks		✓	→		→
4. Using a variety of methods for guidance, instruction, support			✓	→	→

✓ Denotes level at which initial knowledge and/or skill is obtained. Knowledge in that area may be further expanded in breadth and depth as a person progresses in experience and the Continuum.

Assessment

	Support Worker	Enrolled Nurse	Registered Nurse	Specialist Nurse	Advanced Practice Nurse
33	Undertakes delegated aspects of health data collection within sphere of competence.	Undertakes delegated aspects of health data collection within sphere of competence and contributes data and information to the assessment made by the registered nurse.	Gathers accurate and relevant objective and subjective data through systematic health and nursing assessments-	Gathers accurate and relevant objective and subjective data required for practice in specialty area through systematic health and nursing assessments, ordering diagnostic tests and procedures as permitted in the scope of specialist practice and legislation.	Gathers accurate and relevant objective and subjective data for client assessment using multiple data collection strategies and information sources, ordering diagnostic tests and procedures as permitted in the scope of advanced nursing practice and legislation.
34	Reports changes that may affect health and well being.	Identifies common and overt actual and potential health problems and notes findings that lie outside the norm.	Organises, synthesizes, analyses, and interprets data from different sources to derive a nursing diagnosis and determine a care plan.	Organises, synthesizes, analyses, and interprets data from different sources to derive nursing diagnoses and determine a care plan.	Applies advanced clinical reasoning judgement and in-depth knowledge to derive a differential diagnosis and determine a comprehensive care plan.
35	Reports observations and complies with organisational policy.	Reports and keeps accurate, timely records of findings complying with professional standards and organisational policies.	Shares and documents findings accurately and in a timely manner complying with professional standards and organisational policies.	Shares and documents findings accurately and in a timely manner complying with professional standards and organisational policies.	Shares and documents findings accurately and in a timely manner complying with professional standards and organisational policies.