Directive: compliance is mandatory

Authenticating Nurse Practitioner Credentials

Policy developed by: Health Reform Division
Approved at Portfolio Executive on: 16 February 2012
Next review due: 28 February 2016

Summary
This Policy outlines the requirements to authenticate the credentials of Nurse Practitioners employed in advanced practice roles across SA Health.

Keywords
Nurse Practitioners, authenticate, authenticating, credentials, scope of practice, directive

Policy history
Is this a new policy? Y
Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? N
Does this policy replace an existing policy? N

Applies to
All SA Health Portfolio

Staff impact
Management, Clinical, Nursing and Midwifery, Mental Health, Pathology staff

PDS reference
D0263

Version control and change history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date from</th>
<th>Date to</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>16/2/2012</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Original version</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Department of Health, Government of South Australia. All rights reserved.
1. **Purpose/Background**

This Policy outlines the requirements to authenticate the credentials of Nurse Practitioners employed across SA Health.

Nurse Practitioner’s role is endorsed with an advanced scope of practice by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.

The level of a Nurse Practitioner’s endorsement requires verification as a prerequisite to employment, appointment and on an annual basis at the time of registration renewal for these practitioners.

This policy directive is in response to:

- The South Australian Safety and Quality Framework and Strategy (2007-2011) and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) 5 year plan (2006/07-2010/11), which aims to assist health care consumers and staff to participate in assuring the highest levels of safety and quality for the care and services delivered now and into the future.
- The ACSQHC has identified ‘Accreditation, Registration and Credentialing’ as a national priority area, as does the South Australian Safety and Quality Framework and Strategy under section 3.2 ‘Workforce Competence and Development’.
- The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010 attributes responsibility to the Nursing and Midwifery Board (the Board) for the registration and endorsement of Nurses and Midwives.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) has legislative responsibility for the registration and regulation of all nurses and midwives. Nurse Practitioner is currently the only nursing practice role for which endorsement by the NMBA authenticates and defines a specific advanced scope of nursing practice.

2. **Scope**

This Directive applies to all SA Health Services in relation to the employment and ongoing appointment of Nurse Practitioner.

3. **Directive Principles**

SA Health is committed to ensuring that all Nurse Practitioners have the appropriate and recognised endorsement which includes qualifications and
clinical experience to provide services relevant to their area of professional responsibility and scope of practice. SA Health services are responsible for establishing mechanisms that ensure a clinical practitioner works within their agreed scope of practice as defined in the job and person specification for the position. This is an essential platform for the safety and best care for the South Australian community.

Systems for authenticating credentials within SA Health will comply with the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care: Standard for Credentialing and Defining the Scope of Clinical Practice (2004) and referenced in the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care (2004): Credentialing and Defining the Scope of Clinical Practice Handbook (2005). Whilst these documents are written in relation to credentialing and defining the scope of clinical practice of medical practitioners, the underlying principles in the standard are equally valid for the use in authenticating credentials of Nurse Practitioners.

The principles within the Standard are:

- Organisational governance must maintain and improve the safety and quality of health care services
- Professional registration requirements and individual professional responsibilities help to protect the community
- Effective processes benefit patients, communities, health care organisations and professionals
- Credentialing and defining the scope of professional practice are essential components for a system of organisational management of relationships with professionals
- Reviewing the credentials should be a non-punitive process
- Strong partnerships should exist between health care organisations and professional colleges, associations and societies
- Processes must be fair, transparent and legally robust.

To comply with the above principles, systems for authenticating credentials within the SA Health Local Health Networks and /or Health Services will ensure that:

- Patients/consumers are treated by competent professionals
- Professionals have their credentials authenticated as a prerequisite to employment/appointment.
- Credentials can be reviewed on an annual basis by supervisors/managers and associated professionals in accordance with the national standards and guidelines and at any time at the request of the organisation or the professional
- A system to monitor and evaluate the authenticating of credentials process is in place.

4. Directive Detail

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia Registration Standards for Endorsement of Nurse Practitioner provides the credentialing requirements of these roles. On approval by the NMBA of an application for endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner this status is recorded on the AHPRA Registers of Practitioners.
4.1 Scope of Practice

Nurse Practitioner

The scope of practice of Nurse Practitioners is within a defined area of nursing practice which is evidenced by educational preparation and experiential clinical learning. Endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner indicates that the individual is qualified to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role in a defined area of nursing practice. The role includes assessment and management using nursing knowledge and skills. The role may include, but is not limited to, the direct referral of patients to other healthcare professionals, prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic investigations.

4.2 The Authentication of Credentials

Each Local Health Network and/or Health Service will ensure credentials for the scope of practice are authenticated for Nurse Practitioners as a prerequisite to employment and appointment. Authentication is also required on an annual basis at the renewal of registration. This will be achieved by:

  - Verification of individual Nurse Practitioner’s specific context of advanced practice to be sought via the Manager for Nursing and Midwifery Registration, AHPRA SA Office Phone (08) 7071 5517
  - Verification of the scope of advanced practice for Nurse Practitioners through the sighting of post graduate qualifications, academic transcripts and evidence of employment experience i.e. Curriculum Vitae (CV).

For details of the process for the Authentication of Credentials refer to the checklist – Attachment 1.

4.3 Evidence of Authentication of Credentials

Initial authentication of credentials and re-authentication of credentials status is to be documented on the relevant SA Health database.

5. Responsibility

5.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. As far as is reasonably practicable, the Chief Executive must ensure that:

- all levels of management are aware of their responsibilities in relation to this policy
- all employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to this policy
- adequate resources are made available to implement this policy.

5.2 Directors, Managers and Supervisors

Directors, managers and supervisors have direct responsibility for:
implementing the policy’s strategies including:
  - annual performance and development review to include an 
    assessment of the consistency of scope of practice of the 
    role with the job and person specification for the position 
  - authenticating processes 
  - monitoring and the recording the information on relevant 
    database 
  - provision of appropriate training and staff support 
  - adequately informing staff about the policy and the consequences of 
    non-compliance.

5.3 Employees
Employees are responsible for:
  - participating in the implementation of this policy 
  - complying with this policy and local procedures 
  - complying with Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia professional 
    regulatory requirements.

6. Definitions

Appointment means the employment or engagement of a professional to 
provide services within an organisation according to conditions defined by 
general law and supplemented by contract;

Authenticating credentials means the formal process used to verify the 
qualifications, experience, professional standing and other relevant 
professional attributes of professionals for the purpose of forming a view 
about their competence, performance and professional suitability to provide 
safe, high quality health care services within specific organisational 
environments

Wherever possible the following primary sources should be contacted to 
verify original documentation at time of appointment;
  - University graduation records office
  - Registration Board website;

Competence means the demonstrated ability to provide health care services 
at an expected level of safety and quality;

Credentials means the qualifications, professional training, professional 
experience, and training in professional practice, leadership, research, 
education, communication and teamwork that contribute to a Nurse 
Practitioner’s competence, performance and professional suitability to provide 
safe, high quality health care services.

For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures, a professional’s 
history of and current status with respect to professional registration, 
endorsement for an advance scope of practice, disciplinary actions, indemnity 
insurance and criminal record are also regarded as relevant to their 
credentials.
Credentials may include documentation such as university degrees, fellowships/memberships of professional colleges or associations, registration by the relevant registration board, agency or association of South Australia or Australia, certificates of service, certificates of completion of special courses, periods of verifiable formal instructions or supervised training, validated competence, information contained in confidential professional referees reports, evidence of continuing professional development, professional indemnity history and status;

**Nurse Practitioner** means a nurse who has been educated to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role and whose registration has been endorsed by the Board as a nurse practitioner under Section 95 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010. The role includes assessment and management using nursing knowledge and skills. The role may include, but is not limited to, the direct referral of patients to other healthcare professionals, prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic investigations. The role is grounded in the nursing profession’s values, knowledge, theories and practice, and provides innovative and flexible health care delivery that complements other health care providers;

**Professional Practice** means the professional activity undertaken by professionals for the purposes of investigating patient/client symptoms and preventing and/or managing illness, together with associated professional activities related to patient/client care;

7. **Evaluation**

Processes are established to authenticate the credentials of SA Health employees. Health services will evidence that processes are in place to record and report Nurse Practitioner credentials on relevant SA Health database.

8. **Risks**

Non compliance with this directive has the potential following risks:

**Professional**
If a minimum system for authenticating credentials is not in place there is a potential risk to the safety and quality of care provided to the South Australian community.

**Legal**
In the case of an adverse event, legal ramifications against SA Health, SA Health representatives or employees are likely if the professional involved did not hold the appropriate credentials for the services provided.

**Political**
There is a risk of poor political relationships, public image, reputation, and media attention in the case of an adverse event if the professional involved did not hold the appropriate credentials for the services provided.
9. Associated Directives or Guidelines

The NMBA:
- Code of Ethics for Nurses and Midwives
- Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses and Midwives
- Guidelines for Endorsement as Nurse Practitioner

Department of Health Criminal History Report Procedures

10. References

Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) Corporate EQuIP 3rd Edition Criteria and EQuIP 5: Corporate 3.1.3: Processes for credentialing and defining the scope of professional practice support safe, quality health care


Nursing and Midwifery Endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner Registration Standard (NMBA)

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010
## Authentication of Credentials Checklist

Check Registers of Practitioners for endorsement notation:
including any Notations, Suspensions Conditions, Undertakings or Reprimands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sighting of the evidence for scope of practice endorsement including:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Academic qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evidence of relevant recent advanced clinical experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as per NMBA CPD Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provides written confirmation of approval of Prescribing from the Health Service NPPFASC*(NP only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 5. The scope of practice of the Nurse Practitioner is consistent with the Job and Person Specification for the advanced practice position |

Criminal History Check (as per Department of Health Criminal History Reports Procedures)

Verifying the individual Nurse Practitioner’s specific context of advanced practice to be sought via the Manager for Nursing and Midwifery Registration, AHPRA SA Office Phone (08) 7071 5517

| Name of Nurse Practitioner: ________________________________ |
| Credentials authenticated by: ________________________________ |
| Name: ________________________________ |
| Signature: ________________________________ date: __/__/__ |
| Witnessed by: ________________________________ |
| Name: ________________________________ |
| Signature: ________________________________ date: __/__/__ |