



Nursing specialty

Generalist practice encompasses a comprehensive spectrum of activities. It is directed towards a diversity of people with different health needs, it takes place in a wide range of health care settings and it is reflective of a broad range of knowledge and skills. Generalist practice may occur at any point on a continuum from beginning to advanced.¹

Specialty practice follows and builds on a base of generalist preparation. Specialist practice focuses on a specific area of nursing. It is directed towards a defined population or a defined area of activity and it is reflective of depth of knowledge and relevant skills. Specialist practice may occur at any point on a continuum from beginning to advanced.²

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation that:

The ANMF endorses the following criteria as defining specialty in nursing in Australia:

- The specialty defines itself as nursing and subscribes to the overall purposes, functions and ethical standards of nursing.
- The specialty is a defined area of nursing practice which requires application of specified knowledge and skills.
- There is both a need and a demand for the specialty area.
- The focus of the specialty is a defined population or a defined area of activity which provides a major support service within the discipline and practice of nursing.
- The specialty is based on a core body of nursing knowledge which is being continually expanded and refined by research. Mechanisms exist for supporting, reviewing and disseminating research.
- The specialty subscribes to, or has established, practice standards commensurate with those of the nursing profession.
- Specialty expertise is gained through various combinations of formal education programs, experience in the practice area and continuing professional development. Educational programs should be framed by the practice standards of the specialty and the preparation and administration of the programs must be undertaken by the nursing professions.

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Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2010

Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2013

Reviewed and re-endorsed August 2016

References

1. National Nursing Organisations. 2004. Glossary of Terms - Criteria for Specialties in Nursing | Principles of Credentialling for Nurses. Available at http://www.connmo.org.au/images/PDF/NNO_Glossary_of_Terms.pdf
2. Ibid.