



Role of assistants in nursing position statement

1. Purpose

This position statement aims to clarify the role of assistants in nursing and to guide registered nurses and employers in their decision making about assistants in nursing, including decisions about their employment, supervision, responsibility and accountability when an aspect of nursing care is delegated to them. It should be read with the ANMF position statements: *Regulation and registration of assistants in nursing*; *Delegation by nurses and midwives*; and *Employment of undergraduate students of nursing or midwifery* where relevant.

2. Definitions

Assistants in nursing refers to people employed to provide direct care and aspects of nursing care to people who are aged or frail and people living with disability or illness. These workers currently have various titles including assistants in nursing; health assistants in nursing; personal care assistants or workers; and personal carers. They usually work in community and residential settings but they can also be employed in acute, sub-acute and primary healthcare settings.

3. Context

Assistants in nursing play an important role in the delivery of nursing care, particularly in aged and disability care, but they remain unregulated and unregistered. To protect the community and uphold standards of care, all assistants in nursing must work under the direction and supervision of a registered nurse and should only provide aspects of nursing care at the delegation of the registered nurse.

4. Position

Assistants in nursing

It is the position of the ANMF that:

1. Assistants in nursing may assist registered and enrolled nurses by performing aspects of nursing care that have been delegated to them by a registered nurse when that registered nurse deems it clinically appropriate to do so.
2. All aspects of nursing care undertaken by assistants in nursing must be determined, delegated and supervised by a registered nurse. Supervision may be direct or indirect.¹
3. In accordance with the NMBA *Enrolled nurse standards for practice*, enrolled nurses may – under the guidance of a registered nurse – provide support and supervision to an assistant in nursing to ensure the care is provided as required by the nursing care plan and in line with the workplace policies, protocols and guidelines.²
4. At all times:
 - assistants in nursing must work within the nursing care plan developed by the registered nurse
 - are accountable to the registered nurse for all delegated aspects of care.

¹ Direct supervision occurs when the clinical supervisor is directly observing practice either in person or via telehealth. Indirect supervision occurs when the clinical supervisor is available but not present or observing.

² Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). 2016. Enrolled nurse standards for practice. Available at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards/enrolled-nurse-standards-for-practice.aspx>.



Registered nurses

It is the position of the ANMF that:

5. Registered nurses are responsible for the ongoing assessment of nursing care needs and the delegation of all nursing activities. This includes assessing and meeting the nursing care needs of any person who needs help to manage their own care needs.
6. Registered nurses plan all nursing care and deliver or delegate aspects of that care, with input from other registered nurses, enrolled nurses, assistants in nursing, and the people requiring care and their families.
7. Before delegating an aspect of nursing care to an assistant in nursing, the registered nurse must consider:
 - the professional standards and other legislative requirements
 - the person's health status (acuity, stability and complexity)
 - the assistant in nursing's educational preparation, knowledge, confidence, skill, and experience
 - the demonstrated competence of the assistant in nursing in the care to be delegated
 - the complexity of the delegated activity and the context in which it is to be performed
 - the level of supervision and support needed by, and available to, the assistant in nursing
 - the expected outcomes of the delegated nursing activity and how they will be assessed.

Employers

It is the position of the ANMF that employers must:

8. ensure all employees, including assistants in nursing, are safe and competent to practice in the role and scope of practice for which they have been employed
9. ensure all care is carried out within the parameters of the relevant legislation and regulation
10. support assistants in nursing by:
 - having appropriate policies in place to underpin the scope of practice for their role
 - providing resources for their continuing professional development
11. ensure registered nurses are supported to be involved in the formal and informal development of assistants in nursing and receive appropriate education to undertake clinical assessments.

5. Position statement management

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