

Critical Care Nurses' Section Position Statement (2010) on the Provision of Critical Care Nursing Education

The Critical Care Nurses' Section (CCNS) considers educational preparation is essential in developing qualified critical care nurses. A qualified critical care nurse demonstrates ability to: integrate comprehensive patient assessment and interpretative skills to achieve optimal patient care; manage therapeutic interventions and regimes; evaluate and respond effectively to rapidly changing situations; and manage a plan of care to achieve optimal patient outcome and consider implications for discharge (Aari, 2008; Bench, 2003).

Using the novice to expert framework (Benner, 1984), the New Zealand Standards in Critical Care Nursing Education (CCNS, 2010) develop the critical care nurse from competent to proficient level of practice within the critical care specialty (CCNS, 2010).

Following concerns related to poor clinical outcomes from some post graduate certificate level critical care education programmes, the national CCNS established an education working party firstly, to identify the depth of the problem and secondly, to recommend strategies to resolve this problem (CCNS, 2007; Pirret, 2007).

Although both critical care nursing and organisational standards outline the minimum numbers of qualified critical care nurses (Australian Council of Health Care Standards, 1997; Morley, 2005), there has been no definition of a qualified critical care nurse.

This position statement was developed following recommendations from the Education Working Party (CCNS, 2007) and consultation with CCNS members. Where possible these recommendations are based on best critical care nursing evidence. In areas where current research-based evidence is not available, these recommendations are based on the opinion of expert critical care nurses in New Zealand.

1. A qualified critical care nurse is defined as:

A nurse who has completed a specialty practice post registration programme that meets the New Zealand Standards for Critical Care Nursing Education (CCNS, 2010)

or

A nurse who has successfully completed another critical care nursing programme and is able to provide evidence of continued professional development reflecting

their theoretical knowledge and clinical expertise meets the standards outlined in the New Zealand Standards for Critical Care Nursing Education (CCNS, 2010).

2. All critical care specialty practice post registration programmes meet the *New Zealand Standards of Critical Care Nursing Education* (CCNS, 2010)
3. All critical care specialty practice post registration programmes are tertiary level 7 or level 8 programmes.
4. Post graduate critical care programmes with a focus on critical care nursing, whether it be post graduate certificate, diploma or masters, include the theoretical content as outlined in the *New Zealand Standards of Critical Care Nursing Education* (CCNS, 2010), and a practicum content with a focus on application of theory into practice and clinical competency assessment.
5. Nurses graduating from a critical care specialty post registration programmes demonstrate competencies of a qualified critical care nurse, thus reflecting proficient level of practice within the critical care specialty.
6. Nursing Council of New Zealand utilise appropriate critical care programme assessors that have been endorsed by the national CCNS to assess critical care programme compliance to the *New Zealand Standards of Critical Care Nursing Education* (CCNS, 2010).
7. Nurses exiting short courses with a focus on critical care are provided with a transcript outlining clinical hours and theoretical content.

References

- Aari, R., Tarja, S., Leino-Kilpi, H. (2008). Competence in intensive and critical care nursing: A literature review. *Intensive & Critical Care Nursing*, 24(2), 78-89.
- Australian Council of Healthcare Standards. (1997). *Guidelines for Intensive Care Units*. Sydney: Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.
- Bench, A., Crowe, D., Day, T., Jones, M., & Wilebore, S. (2003). Developing a competency framework for critical care to match patient need. *Intensive & Critical Care Nursing*, 19(3), 136-142.
- Benner, P. (1984). *From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Critical Care Nurses' Section (2010). *New Zealand Standards for Critical Care Nursing Education*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Nurses' Organisation.

Critical Care Nurses' Section (2007). *Discussion Document: Critical Care Nursing Education: Education Working Party*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Nurses' Organisation.

Critical Care Nurses' Section (2002). *New Zealand Philosophy and Standards for Nursing Practice in Critical Care*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Nurses' Organisation.

Morley, A. (2005). *Minimum Guidelines for Intensive Care Nurse Staffing in New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand. Critical Care Nurses' Section of NZNO.

Pirret, A. M. (2007) Master's level critical care nursing education: A time for review and debate. *Intensive and Critical Care Nursing*, 23, 183-186.