



NEW ZEALAND
NURSES
ORGANISATION



*New Zealand **Flight** Nurse Skills
and Competency Framework*

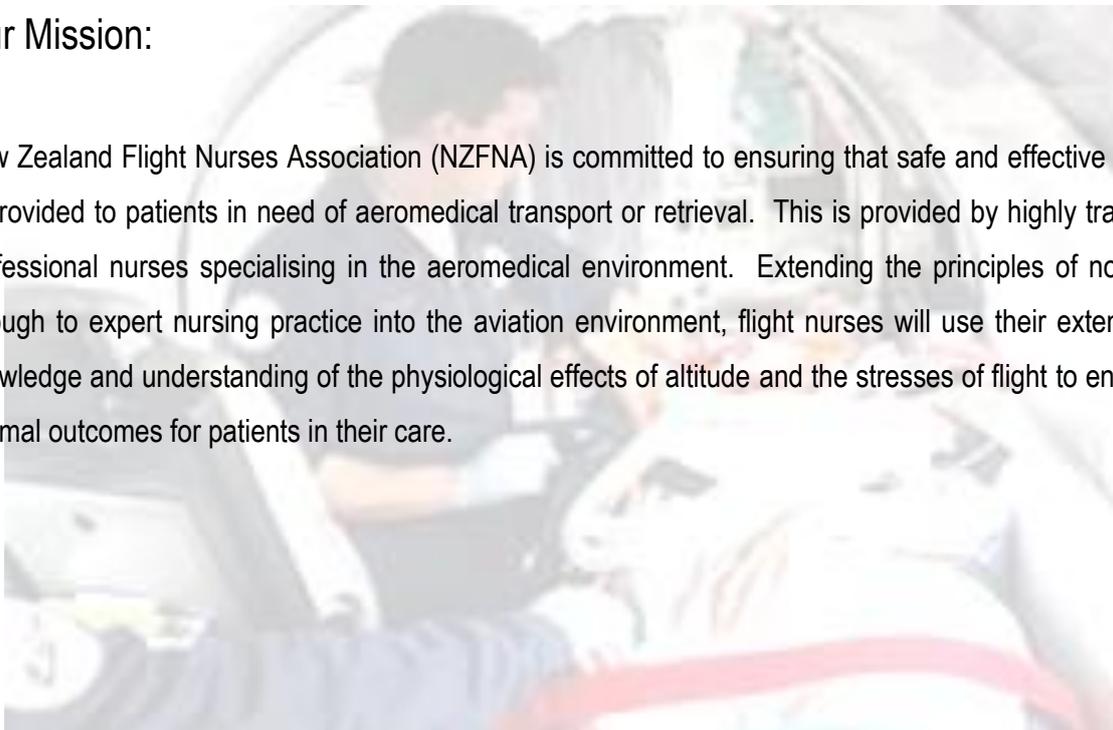


Our Vision:

Leading in Care, Soaring in Practice

Our Mission:

New Zealand Flight Nurses Association (NZFNA) is committed to ensuring that safe and effective care is provided to patients in need of aeromedical transport or retrieval. This is provided by highly trained professional nurses specialising in the aeromedical environment. Extending the principles of novice through to expert nursing practice into the aviation environment, flight nurses will use their extended knowledge and understanding of the physiological effects of altitude and the stresses of flight to ensure optimal outcomes for patients in their care.



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Introduction

Flight Nursing in New Zealand is a relatively new specialty within the profession of nursing. It is a complex role, practised in a high risk environment, often in isolation and carries a high level of clinical skills knowledge and responsibility. It is best defined within the position statement “What is a flight nurse”, developed by the NZFNA committee in 2012.

Rationale and Approach

There are now over 300 nurses listed with NZFNA who represent many varied specialist areas such as adult medical and surgical, paediatric & neonatal intensive care, cardiac and emergency care. These nurses transfer patients both nationally and internationally in a variety of modes including fixed and rotary winged aircraft, pressurised and non-pressurised, and road transport. This diversity of nursing skills and knowledge ensures that the development of a generic framework to meet all requirements would be complex and time-consuming.

In 2008 NZNO Board of Directors introduced a concept paper of moving toward a structured college and faculty structure over the following decade. In 2010 NZFNA held individual identity and received approval to begin the transition toward achieving college status.

Unlike Australia and other countries globally, New Zealand does not offer many opportunities to work in flight nursing full time. Most nurses are employed within a DHB clinical area and work either part-time or on-call to cover the aeromedical service. While this approach ensures skill base requirements such as airway management, cardiac acuity and assessment are practised and consolidated on a daily basis, the opportunity for full immersion in the aeromedical environment remains limited. Most NZ frontline search and rescue is operated under emergency response services and is crewed by Paramedical Staff.

There has been little cooperation to date between these two services to cover or assist in either field, unless an in-patient team are free and capable of responding to a high acuity call and are deployed accordingly. Future pathways may find closer cooperation occurring between these two codes.

In order to establish equitability and national application, closer working links were established with the National Ambulance Standards Organisation NZ (NASO), Aeromedical Society of Australasia (ASA)

and Flight Nurses Australia (FNA). This ensures that all flight nurses throughout NZ receive a model that incorporates latest standards, Nursing Council New Zealand (NCNZ) requirements and includes all facets of the aeromedical industry as well as ensuring patient care is not compromised

The NCNZ is the regulatory authority responsible for the registration of nurses. Its primary function is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring that nurses are competent and fit to practise. The NCNZ's role and responsibilities are outlined in the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance (HPCA) Act 2003. It is the responsibility of every Registered Nurse to demonstrate and maintain the requirements of the HPCA Act 2003 and NCNZ competencies.

Specialty knowledge of the aeromedical environment and the physiological effects on patients and crew members remain paramount in ensuring safe patient transport and retrieval. This knowledge and understanding of the environment ensures that a nurse remains within their scope of practice while delivering safe care to those patients in their charge.

As part of the college progression pathway together with NZFNA commitment to continued development, the decision was initially made in late 2010 to develop a flight nursing skills and competency framework. Concerns had been raised in various forums over the years as to the clinical skills required and also the necessary training and assessment processes that would determine an experienced flight nurse. A framework may also help to provide a structured and well-defined career flight path for nurses entering flight nursing by identifying those essential competencies that define the specialty. Full commitment to and work on this document commenced in 2012.

The matrix offers several core competencies to be used in conjunction with the NCNZ four domains of practice to allow nurses and managers to confidently ensure application of the correct level for individual nurses on the framework. This includes application of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi /Te Tiriti O Waitangi to ensure the delivery of culturally safe practice and care across all domains.

Responsibilities

Flight Nurse

Each nurse will be required to gather the evidence for each competency to demonstrate achievement.

Forms of evidence may include but are not limited to:

- Self appraisal through reflective documentation
- 360° feedback
- Verification of practice and structured observation of practice
- Log books (Mission details)
- Feedback forms
- Policy and procedure development
- Quality initiatives
- Published articles
- Evidence of tertiary study and qualifications e.g. NZRC Level 6, NZFNA Flight Course, Otago and AUT aviation papers
- Other training e.g. HUET
- Audits
- Presentations
- Incident reporting
- Evaluate and research nursing practice

Manager:

The manager must provide an orientation pathway for the flight nurse prior to going solo in the form of a formal orientation to the work place, covering, but not limited to, those listed on the Air Ambulance standards, such as aviation physiology in relation to the patient and crew, safety and survival, stressors of flight and Crew Resource Management.

Flight nurse managers will work with individual flight nurses to ensure support and opportunities are in place so that all flight nurses are able to work safely and effectively within the defined competency matrix and gain progression steps in a supportive and timely manner:

- By ensuring training opportunities are supported
- Forums are provided to facilitate feedback opportunities
- Regular audits of documentation are undertaken

- Recognition of individual and team achievements is provided
- Forums for reflective practice are encouraged
- Supportive environment and support are provided to overcome shortfalls

This framework can subsequently be used as a stand alone competency assessment tool or in conjunction with a flight services approved Professional Development Recognition Programme (PDRP).

Objectives

- To ensure safety for both nurses and patients in the aeromedical environment
- To develop minimum standards of patient care for flight nurses
- To enhance and assist in the quality and standards of aeromedical care throughout New Zealand
- To assist in the application of minimum training standards for flight nurses
- To identify gaps in knowledge, skills and competence and therefore be able to identify specific training, education and development needs
- To provide guidance and a basis for assessing competence for all flight nurses
- To ensure the development and delivery of education and training for Flight Nurses around the country
- To provide a validated framework for career progression for flight nurses

Nursing Council New Zealand, as the regulating body of nursing practice, is assigned under the HPCA Act 2003 to protect public safety and ensure nurses are competent to practice. The flight nurse Knowledge and Skills Framework has been developed using established NCNZ competency framework by using the four domains as a guide to meeting the flight competency levels.

The Novice to Expert nursing theory model as described by Benner, (1984) was used to define the three different levels of flight nurse. Novice and advanced beginner level were omitted from the framework for flight nurses as the intention to become a flight nurse requires nurses to have completed a minimum of two years post-graduate experience and be working in a high acuity or specialty work area before being considered for a flight nurse role.

A nurse should be competent in their current area of practice prior to commencing as a flight nurse. This is articulated in the following three definitions from Benner's model.

1. **Competent**

- Typically a nurse with 2-3 years experience in practice in the same area or in similar day-to-day situations (for flight nurses this may be Intensive Care, Emergency Department, Coronary Care or other acute care settings)
- Aware of long-term goals
- Gains perspective from planning own actions based on conscious, abstract, and analytical thinking and helps to achieve greater efficiency and organisation within their scope of practice

Competency: Under minimal guidance and supervision of an expert nurse

2. **Proficient**

- Perceives and understands situations as a whole
- Has a more holistic understanding to improve decision making
- Anticipates situations and modifies plans, learning from past experiences

Proficient: Without guidance or supervision and needing minimal support from an expert nurse

3. **Expert**

- No longer relies on principles, rules or guidelines to connect situations and determine actions
- Comprehensive background of experience
- Has intuitive grasp of clinical situations
- Performance is now fluid, flexible and highly proficient

Expert: Without guidance or supervision or acting in a lead or coordination role

Nursing Council NZ – Domains of Practice (2007) Registered Nurse

Domain One: Professional Responsibility: Contains competencies that relate to professional, legal and ethical responsibilities and cultural safety. These include being able to demonstrate knowledge and judgement and being accountable for own actions and decisions, while promoting an environment that maximises patient safety, independence, quality of life and health.

- 1.1 Accepts responsibility for ensuring that his/her nursing practice and conduct meet the standards of the professional, ethical and legislated requirements
- 1.2 Demonstrates the ability to apply the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi to nursing practice
- 1.3 Demonstrates accountability for directing, monitoring and evaluating nursing care provided by nurse assistants, enrolled nurses and others
- 1.4 Promotes an environment that enables client safety, independence, quality of life and health
- 1.5 Practices in a manner that the client determines as culturally safe

Domain Two: Management of Nursing Care: This domain contains competencies related to client assessment and managing client care, which is responsive to the client/clients needs and which is supported by nursing knowledge and evidences based research

- 2.1 Provides planned nursing care to achieve identified outcomes
- 2.2 Undertakes a comprehensive and accurate nursing assessment of clients in a variety of settings.
- 2.3 Ensures documentation is accurate and maintains confidentiality of information
- 2.4 Ensures the client has adequate explanation of the effects, consequences and alternatives of the proposed treatment options
- 2.5 Acts appropriately to protect oneself and others when faced with unexpected client responses, confrontation, personal threat or other crisis situations
- 2.6 Evaluates client's progress toward expected outcomes in partnership with clients
- 2.7 Provides health education appropriate to the needs of the client within a nursing framework
- 2.8 Reflects upon and evaluates with peers and experienced nurses, the effectiveness of nursing care
- 2.9 Maintains professional development

Domain Three: Interpersonal Relationships: This domain contains competencies related to interpersonal and therapeutic communication with clients, other nursing staff and inter-professional communication and documentation.

- 3.1 Establishes, maintains and concludes therapeutic interpersonal interactions with others
- 3.2 Practises nursing in a negotiated partnership with the client where and when possible
- 3.3 Communicates effectively with clients and members of the health team

Domain Four: Inter-professional Healthcare and Quality Improvement: This domain contains competencies related to interpersonal therapeutic communication with clients, other nursing staff and inter-professional communication and documentation.

- 4.1 Collaborates and participates with colleagues and members of the health care team to facilitate and coordinate care
- 4.2 Recognises and values the roles and skills of the health care team in the delivery of care, Crew Resource Management, team component and skill mix
- 4.3 Participates in quality improvement activities to monitor and improve standards of nursing

« He kete korero nau te rourou, naku te rourou ka ora ai tatou. »

With your basket of knowledge and my basket of knowledge, we will ALL benefit (proverb)

Knowledge and Skills Framework

The term 'transport' includes all modes of transport e.g. air, road, rail, sea.

Competent: under minimal guidance and supervision of an expert nurse

Proficient: without guidance or support from an expert nurse

Expert: without guidance or supervision or acting in a lead or coordination role

Skills and Competency related to Domain 1

Domain One: Professional Responsibility: Contains competencies that relate to professional, legal and ethical responsibilities and cultural safety. These include being able to demonstrate knowledge and judgement and being accountable for own actions and decisions, while promoting an environment that maximises patient safety, independence, quality of life and health.

Competent: reactive	Proficient: proactive	Expert: interpretive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands and demonstrates practical skills in the logistics from pre through to post transport Demonstrates an understanding of the aviation environment and stressors of flight as they affect/ relate to clinical conditions Understands and complies with Air Ambulance New Zealand Standards (AANZS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates the ability to risk assess transfers and recommend alternatives based on robust evidence and clinical parameters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates and ensures all team members are appropriately skilled Develops, implements and audits evidence-based protocols focusing on care appropriate and accountable for the mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands and adheres to written protocols and policies relevant to transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures policies and procedures are followed to maintain patient care and safety in the transport environment Assists in the development and review of existing and new transport polices/procedures. Assists in the collation and development of transport audits, focusing on clinical practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops and implements evidenced-based policies and transport procedures with regard to patient care and safety appropriate to the transport environment Undertakes clinical audits of transport practices and acts on findings to develop and improve standards of care Benchmarks care against national or international indicators and standards and uses findings to enhance care Demonstrates and shares with colleagues, specialist knowledge of the whole range of the logistics of transport Demonstrates application of this knowledge to complex clinical situations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses, prioritises and plans care for the patient transport prior to repatriation or transfer Ensures that care is appropriate to individuals and clinical needs, recognising actual and potential problems Ensure that care is culturally safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts an assessment of the patient's treatment and undertakes a physical/mental health examination (as appropriate) Interprets findings to an enhanced level and utilises resources to problem solve Demonstrates ability to initiate specific treatment prior to transfer Demonstrates accountability (unsupervised lead in certain areas) for all areas of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses, prioritises, plans, treats and safely discharges patients presenting for transport repatriation or transfer by evaluating clinical data to select and implement appropriate care Acts in an advisory capacity relating to suitability of patients and relatives to be transported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews own work through reflective practice and debriefs as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports less experienced nurses in managing complex patients and situations by sharing advanced knowledge Demonstrates awareness of the advisory resources that are available Demonstrates the ability to critically assess the medico-legal aspects of own practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches and supports the development of team members' knowledge and skills to ensure effective, evidence-based care is provided that reflects up-to-date practice relevant to transport nurses Ensures others work within their own scope of practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures self-assessment pre-transport including own health and scope of practice i.e. knowledge base, expertise, physical skills, legal requirements, rest, shift commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures self-assessment pre-transport including own health, scope of practice i.e. knowledge base, expertise, physical skills, legal requirements, rest, shift commitments, etc (shouldn't this be across all levels?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures self-assessment pre-transport – including health, scope of practise i.e: knowledge base, expertise, physical skills, legal requirements, rest, shift commitments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains patient confidentiality within all services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures patient confidentiality is maintained within all services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads and educates colleagues in maintaining patient confidentiality, including the risks involved with social media

Skills and Competency related to Domain 2

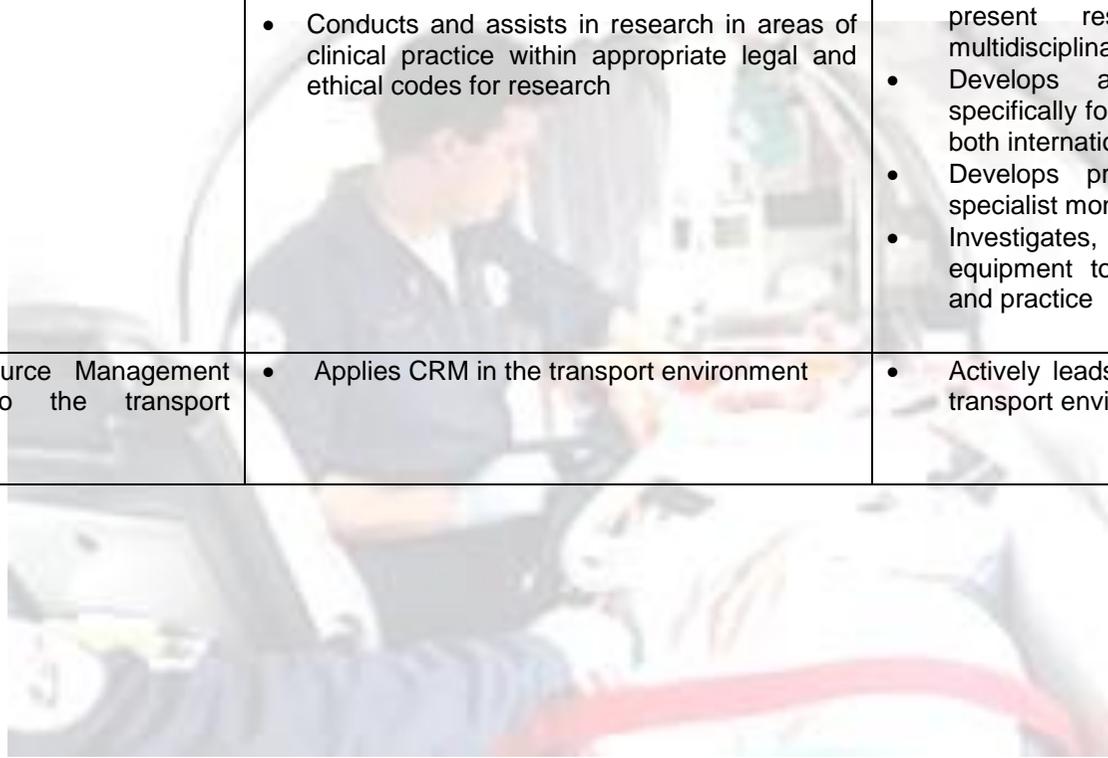
Domain Two: Management of Nursing Care: This domain contains competencies related to client assessment and managing patient care, which is responsive to the client/clients needs' and which is supported by nursing knowledge and evidence based research.

Competent: reactive	Proficient: proactive	Expert: interpretive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans, implements, monitors and evaluates patient care using evidence-based practice Adjusts nursing care and therapeutic interventions within own skill and competency level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates comprehensive assessment, monitoring skills and the ability to relate them to aviation medicine principles, gas laws and stressors of flight Challenges and suggests care practices if appropriate and determines care priorities Integrates research evidence base into the continued development of their own clinical practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses priorities, plan, treat and safely discharge patients presenting for repatriation or transfer Coordinates and allocates transfers/retrievals to nurses according to assessment, qualifications, expertise, skill and personal strengths Advocates to ensure that proposed interventions, planned transport and treatment plans are in the patients' optimal interest Uses evidence-based research to develop and implement policy and protocols relating to transport procedures Audits and actively leads research activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive handover, written and verbal to the appropriate receiving team including all medical documentation, transport record and history, investigations written and verbal, etc Provides patient and whanau with a full explanation that outlines the proposed plan, procedures and outcomes for the proposed transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports other team members in appropriate document management relating to critical appraisal and support of record keeping within local policies and procedures Applies policies and procedures in practice to ensure that all care provided is patient-centred Interprets care practices and processes in the care setting and evaluates them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audits documentation of transport records and treatment plans to meet professional and legal requirements Organises all aspects of nursing care during patient transport Receives and communicates highly complex information to all members of the Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertakes and achieves advanced life support training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains advanced life support training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audits the maintenance of advanced life support training for the transport team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates awareness of health and safety legislation around patient transport and makes appropriate risk assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrates evidence-base research into the continued development of their own clinical practice Works within level of clinical competency to ensure clinical standards are maintained Assists with audits in the clinical setting to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops policies and protocols for specialised transport care Evaluates, critically appraises, guides and supports others providing patient care

	enhance transport practices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the gas laws, the effects of altitude and travel and the principles of aviation medicine in day-to-day practice • Anticipates the effects on individuals of in-flight environment including time zones, stress and long haul flights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an enhanced knowledge of gas laws and applies this to aviation medicine principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses expert knowledge to anticipate the likely effects of flight and acts appropriately to limit risk to patients and colleagues
<p>Skills and Competency related to Domain 3</p> <p>Domain Three: Interpersonal Relationships: This domain contains competencies related to interpersonal and therapeutic communication with patients, nursing staff, and aeromedical services.</p>		
Competent: reactive	Proficient: proactive	Expert: interpretive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is aware of Crew Resource Management (CRM) in relation to the aviation environment and is able to demonstrate/articulate the aspects outlined in the Air Ambulance standards 2013 (Must have completed CRM training) • Demonstrates communication and coordination inside and outside the cockpit • Has a knowledge of human error and reliability, error chain, error prevention and detection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to practice skills taught in CRM training • Describes communication and coordination inside and outside the cockpit • Monitors own stress, stress management, fatigue and vigilance; communicates and responds to findings appropriately • Disseminates information and processes it • Demonstrates situational awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates leadership, team behaviour and synergy, encouraging a culture of safety • Coordinates and makes judgement decisions relating to facilitation / relationships with other providers • Manages conflicting views where decisions affect safety in the transport environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands company safety culture, Standard Operation Procedures and organisational factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an awareness of the responsibility to report any changes with known cultural and legislative implications to nurses, while balancing the confidentiality issues of care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to build on existing competencies and experiences and shares knowledge through networking and communicates directly with all staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to establish a rapid rapport with patients for the duration of time spent with them. • Understands how to negotiate in partnership with patient/whanau and the MDT during transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates and models therapeutic relationships and boundaries guided by professional and organisational codes • Encourages development of less experienced transport nurses through peer group support • Demonstrates the ability to build on existing competencies and experience and share knowledge through networking and communicates directly with all staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors staff and offers guidance to ensure therapeutic relationships and conclusions are met according to organisational codes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gains knowledge of other service providers involved in aeromedical transport e.g. air ambulance providers, road ambulance. • Knows how to access relevant information regarding a patient and the appropriateness of communication of that information to other parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to coordinate retrieval/transfer requests, liaising with all service providers involved in the transport to undertake transfer with the most appropriate team available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the coordination process, including management and fiscal responsibilities and risks involved in the coordination of transfers
<p>Skills and Competency related to Domain 4</p> <p>Domain Four: Inter-professional Healthcare and Quality Improvement: This domain contains competencies related to interpersonal therapeutic communication with patients, other nursing staff and inter-professional communication and documentation.</p> <p>Collaborates and participates with colleagues and members of the health care team to facilitate and coordinate care.</p>		
Competent: reactive	Proficient: proactive	Expert: interpretive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows protocols for patient assessment and develops skills and knowledge specific to transport nursing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training and preceptorship to enhance and support competent nurse assessment skills and knowledge of the effects of altitude and principles of aviation medicine • Assists in the development of care pathways relevant to transport nursing • Supports the development and appropriate use of drug protocols for patient transports • Contributes toward development and appropriate use of transport documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops service policies and protocols for specialised care in the transport environment • Contributes to development of national rules and standards where possible • Develops and implements clinical and competency training and identifies professional development opportunities for staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the importance of research evidence and application to the role of transport nursing • Recognises and communicates research findings to all team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the knowledge base of transport nursing by applying and critiquing research/innovations to practice • Has the ability to analyse research base for the continued development of both transport nursing and multidisciplinary practice • Instigates change to practice as a result of research • Conducts and assists in research in areas of clinical practice within appropriate legal and ethical codes for research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies, undertakes and disseminates research findings relevant to the transport environment • Audits and evaluates documentation to ensure appropriate standards are maintained and appraises and supports team members as required • Develops educational tools and packages to present research evidence to the multidisciplinary team • Develops and appraises audit tools specifically for transport nursing which reflect both international and national standards • Develops protocols and procedures for specialist monitoring in aviation/transport • Investigates, presents and recommends equipment to support transport monitoring and practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands Crew Resource Management and its application to the transport environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies CRM in the transport environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively leads and role models CRM in the transport environment



Glossary

Definitions within the context of this document

Transport: conveyance of a patient/s to an appropriate receiving facility for further care

Retrieval: to collect a patient/s from an the initial health provision facility back to facility of origin for further care

Aeromedical environment: the environment within the aircraft during flight

Aviation medicine: the special field of medicine which is related to the biological and psychological problems of flight



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