

# **PRACTICE STANDARDS**

## For Ophthalmic Nurses in Australia

A publication of the Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association National Council



# CONTENTS

<b>PREAMBLE</b>	<b>2</b>
Abbreviations	2
<b>THE STANDARDS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Domain 1: Thinks critically and analyses nursing practice</b>	<b>3</b>
Standard 1 — Acts to enhance the continual development of individual practice and that of the specialty	3
Standard 2 — Advancing the specialist body of knowledge in ophthalmic nursing	3
<b>Domain 2: Maintains the capability for practice</b>	<b>3</b>
Standard 3 — Demonstrates and maintains specialist knowledge in ophthalmic nursing	3
<b>Domain 3: Engages in therapeutic and professional relationships</b>	<b>4</b>
Standard 4 — Engages in legal and ethical nursing practice	4
Standard 5 — Engages in health promotion and education activities	4
<b>Domain 4: Provision and co-ordination of care</b>	<b>4</b>
Standard 6 — Manages individual patient ophthalmic health care	4
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FURTHER RESOURCES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS</b>	<b>6</b>



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### About AONANC

The Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association National Council is a partnership between not-for-profit peer professional ophthalmic nursing associations based in four States. Being: New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria (which encompasses sub-branches in South Australia and Tasmania). Each Association provides local clinical education, consultancy and support to the ophthalmic nursing communities in their jurisdiction.

# PREAMBLE

The Practice Standards for Ophthalmic Nurses (The Standards) have been developed by the Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association National Council (AONANC). They inform, guide and promote the consistent, competent and safe practice of nurses, when participating in eye health care in Australia.

These Standards define a combination of unique skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values for nurses providing ophthalmic health care, and builds upon the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) Practice Standards, which must be met in order to practice in Australia.

The Standards provide a significant step forward for the sector, highlighting the specialist knowledge, skills and expertise required by individual nurses working within the Australian ophthalmic health care setting, emphasising the role of the nurse within the ophthalmic health care team. On a National level The Standards support Australian blindness prevention and eye health strategies, designed to ensure services meet the needs of the Australian community today and in the future.

In Australia eye health care occurs in a variety of settings (day hospital, outpatients, public, private practice, operating room, emergency, and others). There are significant geographical and the resource differences between metropolitan, rural and remote settings. With this in mind, The Standards have been designed to be applied across the range of ophthalmic nursing practice and experience levels. The individual nurse, health care organisation, and education provider are encouraged to utilise and adapt The Standards to their scope of practice, health care environment and service provision.

## Abbreviations

**AONANC** Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association National Council

**NMBA** Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

**The Standards** Refers to this document. Practice Standards for Ophthalmic Nurses in Australia

# THE STANDARDS

There are 6 Standards, grouped under 4 Domains, that correspond with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's Registered Nurse Standards for Practice (NMBA, 2016).

These being:

**Domain 1:** Thinks critically and analyses nursing practice

**Domain 2:** Maintains the capability for practice

**Domain 3:** Engages in therapeutic and professional relationships

**Domain 4:** Provides and coordinates care

The Standards, in each Domain are followed by a clarifying Element Statement, and finally by several Performance Criteria that explain how the Standard might be met. These inform the individual practitioner and the health care organisations on how The Standard might be implemented.

## Domain 1: Thinks critically and analyses nursing practice

### Standard 1

*Acts to enhance the continual development of individual practice and that of the specialty*

#### Element 1.1

Engages in critical review/enhancement of individual practice and that of the ophthalmic specialty

#### Performance Criteria

- i. Contributes to the development of ophthalmic care and knowledge through reflection on practice
- ii. Engages in peer review/supervision
- iii. Participates in professional development and clinical leadership activities
- iv. Participates in - and initiates, the development of policy and guidelines to improve care in line with the latest available evidence
- v. Develops and maintains a professional portfolio
- vi. Participates in and supports quality improvement processes and incorporates outcomes into nursing practice
- vii. Promotes a supportive collegial and multidisciplinary environment
- viii. Responds to and evaluates issues identified through performance review activities

#### Element 1.2

Contributes to the enhancement and clinical leadership of the ophthalmic specialty

#### Performance Criteria

- i. Participates in the activities of professional organisations
- ii. Promotes ophthalmic nursing
- iii. Collaborates and networks with other health professionals/ service providers and organisations
- iv. Acts as a mentor

### Standard 2

*Advancing the specialist body of knowledge in ophthalmic nursing*

#### Element 2.1

Engages in research activities to advance ophthalmic nursing

#### Performance Criteria

- i. Identifies issues/problems in ophthalmic practice as the basis for review and research
- ii. Critically evaluates existing evidence for relevance to practice
- iii. Participates in the implementation and evaluation of changes to clinical practice based on the outcomes of the evidence, e.g. development of clinical guidelines
- iv. Disseminates the outcomes of research findings
- v. Seeks ethics approval when required

#### Element 2.2

Participates in the utilisation of Practice Standards for ophthalmic nursing

#### Performance Criteria

- i. Accesses practice standards to inform practice, professional development and as an educational resource
- ii. Accesses practice standards to develop specialty clinical skills assessment tools

## Domain 2: Maintains the capability for practice

### Standard 3

*Demonstrates and maintains specialist knowledge in ophthalmic nursing*

#### Element 3.1

Demonstrates specialist body of knowledge and clinical expertise in the provision of patient focused nursing care

**Performance Criteria**

- i. Demonstrates specialist body of knowledge and clinical expertise in the provision of care to a range of ophthalmic patients; including knowledge of:
  - a. ophthalmic anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology and pharmacology
  - b. systemic conditions that relate to and impact upon ocular health
  - c. signs, symptoms and management of common ophthalmic conditions
  - d. impact of vision loss on the individual, their significant others and the community
  - e. current technologies relevant to role
- ii. Demonstrates an understanding of visual function, including:
  - a. normal vision
  - b. vision loss and vision impairment
  - c. principles of quality of life assessment for visual impairment, including biopsychosocial aspects of vision

**Domain 3: Engages in therapeutic and professional relationships****Standard 4***Engages in legal and ethical nursing practice***Element 4.1**

Demonstrates specialist knowledge and understanding of legal and ethical principles in the provision of nursing care

**Performance Criteria**

- i. Applies knowledge of current legislation interfacing with ophthalmic practice, and in line with recognised jurisdictional standards, including:
  - a. documentation using internationally standardised ophthalmic terminology
  - b. consent processes
  - c. supply, administration and management of ophthalmic medications
- ii. Demonstrates knowledge of legal definitions of visual impairment and blindness
- iii. Promotes a safe environment for persons with vision impairment
- iv. Adheres to safety guidelines, regulations and infection control standards applicable to the area of practice

- v. Undertakes mandatory reporting of ophthalmic conditions
- vi. Considers a person's dignity, values, culture, beliefs and rights
- vii. Considers ethical principles in decision making

**Standard 5***Engages in health promotion and education activities***Element 5.1**

Provides education and health promotion activities in the ophthalmic setting

**Performance Criteria**

- i. Acts proactively as an educator and resource person
- ii. Assesses, plans, develops, implements and evaluates health promotion activities
- iii. Advocates for eye health
- iv. Facilitates care/support groups for individuals
- v. Participates collaboratively in education and health promotion activities
- vi. Answers inquiries about current practice in ophthalmic care

**Domain 4: Provision and co-ordination of care****Standard 6***Manages individual patient ophthalmic health care***Element 6.1**

Provides evidence based ophthalmic nursing care

**Performance Criteria**

- i. Assesses, plans, implements and evaluates holistic nursing care for ophthalmic patients
- ii. Utilises available resources to provide best possible care
- iii. Provides a rationale for clinical decision making
- iv. Applies knowledge of ophthalmic anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology and pharmacology in practice
- v. Demonstrates an ability to competently perform specific ophthalmic clinical skills relevant to role

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Competence** “The combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that underpin effective and/or superior performance in a profession”<sup>1</sup>. Competence “encompasses both confidence and capability”<sup>2</sup>

**Consumer** The term consumer may refer to either individuals, groups or communities such as patients, residents and/or their families/representatives/significant others “who work in partnership with nurses to plan and receive nursing care. The term client or patient is often used interchangeably with ‘consumer’<sup>2</sup>

**Evidence Based Practice** Evidence based practice is accessing and making judgements to translate the best available evidence, which includes the most current, valid, and available research findings into practice.<sup>1</sup>

**Nursing Assessment** The systematic collection of information by a nurse from a consumer to determine their current health status and care needs. This may include, but is not limited to consumer interviews, physical assessments and diagnostic tests.

**Scope of Practice** Is that in which nurses are educated, competent to perform and permitted by law. The actual scope of practice is influenced by the context in which the nurse practises, the health needs of people, the level of competence and confidence of the nurse and the policy requirements of the service provider.

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## STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This Practice Standards for Ophthalmic Nurses in Australia is the result of more than 10 years of work by many nurses and other stakeholders. It is the result of individual consultation and focus groups within and outside of the ophthalmic nursing workforce, driven by the Australian Ophthalmic Nurses Association organisations of New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria (which encompasses sub-branches in South Australia and Tasmania).

A number of resources were drawn upon in the development of The Standards, including the Practice Standards for the Registered Nurse<sup>1</sup>, the Enrolled Nurse<sup>7</sup> and the Nurse Practitioner<sup>8</sup> and Ophthalmic Nursing Competency Frameworks from other countries such as the United Kingdom’s Royal College of Nursing Competencies: Ophthalmic Nursing<sup>3</sup>.



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