

Exemplary Practice Policy: 2009

PURPOSE

This policy is to provide direction to managers of nurses, eligible nurses and others who are involved in the process of managing, supervising, supporting or applying for Exemplary Practice (EP) status in nursing and midwifery.

POLICY STATEMENT

Exemplary Practice (EP) is a status awarded by the Department of Health and Families (DHF), to eligible nurses and midwives for sustained performance in the clinical setting. Awarding this status is an incentive for DHF to retain nurses and midwives in the actual delivery of patient care and in the achievement of quality patient outcomes.

Enrolled Nurses and Enrolled Nurses: Advanced Practice (Nurse 1), Registered Nurses and Midwives (Nurse 2) who hold non-promotional positions can apply for EP status provided they meet the eligibility criteria. There is one level of EP for Enrolled Nurses (EN) and two levels of EP for Registered Nurses (RN/RM). Achieving EP status provides increased remuneration and prestige to nurses and midwives within the clinical work environment.

LEGISLATIVE BASIS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Northern Territory Public Sector Nurses 2008-2011, Union Collective Agreement
- Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2007
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Standards for Nursing Practice
- NTPS Merit Selection Guide
- DHF Exemplary Practice Guidelines
- DHF Managing Performance Policies and Guidelines

DEFINITIONS

Scope of Practice is defined as the activities within a designated role for which one is educated, competent and authorised to perform. These activities are established through legislated definition of 'nursing practice'; and complemented by relevant standards, limits and conditions as defined by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Competency Standards for the respective designation. In order to practice an enrolled nurse, nurse or midwife must be able to demonstrate competency according to the respective standard.

Exemplary Practice is defined as clinical practice, which develops through participation in self-education activities and ongoing commitment to professional development in conjunction with experience and skill development that allows a nurse and midwife to work within an expanded scope of practice within a designated role.

PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

The principles and aims of the EP assessment process are:

- to recognise that EP nurses and midwives function above and beyond the norm of a competent nurse and midwife within their scope of practice;
- to provide an opportunity to reward DHF nurses and midwives who wish to remain within the clinical work environment and who consistently work at an exemplary level;
- to encourage and provide an opportunity for nurses and midwives to contribute to the professional development of self and colleagues;
- to recognise nurses and midwives who contribute to the establishment and maintenance of their own professional knowledge and skills;
- to ensure that assessment is carried out by appropriately competent personnel;
- to ensure assessment is undertaken in accordance with the Public Sector Employment & Management Act, Merit Selection process, using the approved assessment tool; and
- to give equal regard to all clinical areas within DHF.

OBJECTIVES

The Primary Objective of EP is to recognise and reward nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses for sustained exemplary nursing performance within their recognised scope of practice and who significantly contribute to their clinical work unit.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal Nursing Advisor (PNA) is responsible for over sighting, implementing and reviewing the EP Policy and Guidelines, managing the database, audit processes and for reporting agency performance and issues that arise in respect of EP.

Executive Nursing Directors/Nursing Directors are responsible for promoting the award of EP status, the approval of EP applications and ensuring staff adherence to the EP Policy directions, procedures and processes defined in the EP Guidelines.

The specific roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the EP process are as defined in the EP Guidelines.

LIMITATIONS

There is no limitation on the number of EP nurses. EP status is determined by merit and is not subject to quotas.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Full-time and part-time nurses and those on temporary contracts for greater than 6 months, are eligible to apply for EP status, provided they have completed DHF Orientation, Work Unit Induction, a Cultural Safety or equivalent Program, Mandatory Training requirements and meet the criteria relevant to their respective designation as follows:

- EN applicants for EP assessment should have a minimum of three (3) years post-basic registration experience in a clinical setting. EN: Advanced Practice (has a Diploma of Nursing [Certificate V], Advanced Diploma [Certificate VI] with six (6) years full time equivalent post enrolment experience including three (6) years full time equivalent in relevant clinical area and endorsed to administer medications) can also apply for EP. An earlier assessment may commence with a direct recommendation from the Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM)/Nursing Director (ND) to the Executive Director of Nursing (EDON)/Nursing Director (ND)/Community Health Manager (CHM).
- RN/RM applicants for EP1 assessment should have relevant post-basic qualifications followed by one (1) year of experience within the speciality area, **or** a minimum of three (3) years post basic registration experience with at least one (1) year of that period having been spent in the specialist area. An earlier assessment may commence with a direct recommendation from the CNM/ND to the EDON/ND/CHM.
- RN/RM applicants with EP1 status applying for EP2 status must have held EP1 status for at least (1) year prior to applying for assessment at the higher level. Where an application is made in the third year of EP1 status and unsuccessful, at the EP2 level, it will be reassessed for continuation of the EP1 Allowance for a further three (3) years from the date of the latest assessment. This is to negate the necessity of the applicant having to submit a separate application for continued recognition of the allowance at the end of the three (3) year period.
- RN/RM applicants applying for direct entry to EP2 must have at least four (4) years post registration experience, with a minimum of two (2) years having been spent in the speciality area; **or** have held a promotional position (Nurse 3 Clinical Nurse Specialist or equivalent) in a like clinical speciality area for at least one (1) year within the past 3 years of professional employment.

EP ASSESSMENT PANEL

The respective EDON / ND / CHM will nominate a chairperson and approve the composition of the EP Assessment Panel, similar to that for the recruitment to a promotional position. It is recommended in the interests of impartiality and bias that panel members be selected from outside the work unit of the applicant.

Under normal circumstances panel members will be established as follows:

- Chairperson – EDON, ND or an appropriate senior nursing / midwifery delegate;
- Member – Clinical Nurse Manager, selected by the chairperson and the EDON/ND; and
- Member – an EP nurse or Nurse 3, selected by the chairperson and the EDON/ND.

APPEAL

An EP applicant may lodge an Appeal in writing against the selection process and/or decision of the outcome of their application to the PNA within 14 days of notification.

The appeal process will be managed by the PNA. The PNA will appoint an independent trained panel, which will include a delegate of the Australian Nursing Federation, to reassess the application and review the previous selection documentation. The Panel will make a recommendation to the PNA based on their independent assessment and findings.

The PNA will review and endorse the decision of the independent panel and advise the applicant and the EDON/ND/CHM of the outcome of the appeal.

GRIEVANCE

Under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act Section 59(b)* an employee may, in any case where the employee is aggrieved by their treatment in employment in the Public Sector – within three (3) months after the action or decision by which they are aggrieved, request the Commissioner to review the action, intended action or decision complained of. The Commissioner of Public Employment Decision under this process is final.

CONDITIONS OF EXEMPLARY PRACTICE

Exemplary Practice Tenure

EP endorsement will be maintained for three (3) years, unless the EP Nurse / Midwife:

- successfully applies for higher EP status;
- undertakes a temporary promotion or is successful in gaining a permanent promotion;
- transfers to a different specialty; or
- through the WPP process, is identified as not continuing to meet the EP criteria

The nurse or midwife may relinquish EP status at any time. This advice must be provided in writing to the EDON/ND/CHM, through the CNM.

EP status is automatically relinquished when a nurse:

- applies for and is successful in gaining a substantive promotion position; or
- resigns.

The receipt of shift responsibility allowance **does not** influence EP Allowance.

EP Nurses Seeking Temporary Promotion or Gaining Permanent Promotion

EP nurses may act temporarily in a promotional position for up to five (5) consecutive days without relinquishing EP status. The EP Allowance will be temporarily ceased whilst working in the promotional position for periods greater than five (5) consecutive days. The promotional position does not include receiving the Shift Responsibility Allowance. Upon permanent appointment to a promotional position, the EP Nurse will automatically relinquish the EP allowance.

EP Nurses Seeking a Temporary Transfer

When temporarily transferring from one clinical speciality to a different clinical speciality, the EP status and allowance will continue for five (5) consecutive days.

Continuation of the allowance for the total period of the temporary transfer must be negotiated by the applicant, supported by the current CNM, recommended by the new CNM and approved by the EDON/ND/CHM.

EP Nurses Seeking a Permanent Transfer

When permanently transferring:

- from one ward/unit to another ward/unit but within the same or similar clinical speciality, the EP allowance may be continued if recommended by the CNM and approved by the EDON/ND/CHM. If approved the EP nurse or midwife must participate in a new WPP meeting with the CNM to ensure that the WPP and relevant specific goals are included to reflect the needs of the new work unit. If this is not approved the EP Allowance will be ceased and the Nurse must reapply; and
- from one clinical specialty to a different clinical specialty. To maintain their EP status and allowance after a permanent transfer, the nurse/midwife must re-apply for the continuation or reinstatement of EP status using the standard application process and any supporting evidence. If no application for EP status is received the allowance will cease from COB on the day before the permanent transfer takes effect.

TARGET

All Department of Health and Families employees involved in the Exemplary Practice Process.

David Ashbridge:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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Developed by: Office of the Principal Nursing Advisor