

Status of Advanced Practice Nursing in South Africa

AUTHOR – NP Debbie Leach (née Carroll), Dec 2017

POPULATION:	55,91 million (mid-year 2016)
GDP 2016:	Q4 = -0,3% q/q
Unemployment 2016:	Q4 = 26,5% (Statistics South Africa, 2017)

ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING

South African Nursing Council's (SANC's) POSITION PAPER / STATEMENT

BACKGROUND IN CONTEXT

In March 2012, at a meeting within the South African Nursing Council (SANC) and Under the provisions of the Nursing Act of 2005, the SANC approved the "*position paper*" on Advanced Practice Nursing (South African Nursing Council [SANC], 2017).

Registered Nurses with the SANC who have gained higher qualifications or attained specialised disciplines, are currently undistinguished regardless of whether they have obtained their additional nursing qualification through a master's degree programme or an advanced diploma qualification.

The SANC recognises that this has given rise to vagueness about the advanced practice nurses status and classification, resulting in on-going implications such as having an impact on their clinical career pathways and remuneration of these advanced practice nurses (SANC, 2017).

The "position statement" evolved after group discussions with stakeholders; and national and international research. The position statement is aimed to shed some light in addressing not only the vagueness around advance practice nurse status in South Africa, but also to modify nursing and higher education legislation and; request clarification from nurses working at an advanced-level in South Africa (SANC, 2017).

Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)

Regarding nurse categories, the SANC recognises the view of the International Council for Nurses (ICN) in that each individual country should consider its own context, health care system and resources available to enable the country to model its own level/s of specialisation accordingly (SANC, 2017).

SANC also acknowledges the need for the Advanced Practice Nurse role. There are two advanced practice nursing levels:

Nurse specialist: This level requires **in-depth knowledge and expertise** in a specific practice area such as paediatric nursing. To become a nurse specialist would require a post-graduate diploma (PGD) in the specific specialisation. This qualification will yield a professional registration with the Council as a nurse specialist (e.g. nurse specialist: paediatric nursing).

Advanced Nurse Specialist: This level requires registration with the Council as nurse specialist as an entry requirement. The Advanced Nurse Specialist, in addition to in-depth clinical specialisation knowledge should acquire **broader field dynamics** at master's level e.g. strategic leadership, health service management, research and policy making. The qualification will yield no professional registration but can be logged as an additional qualification with the Council" (SANC, 2017).

APN Definition

Advanced Nurse or Midwife Specialist:

"An advanced nurse/midwife specialist (ANS or AMS) is a specialist clinician with a broad autonomous practice managing a specific case load. This advanced nurse/midwife specialist may function as first entry-point and needs the knowledge and expertise to be able accurately to assess, diagnose and manage the patient population in the speciality area. This may include being able to make a "medical diagnosis" and prescribe treatment. This usually requires expertise in diagnostic testing and treatment beyond the normal practice of the nurse/midwife. In South Africa she/he may practise as a private practitioner, but this is not exclusive to this category" (SANC, 2017).

SANC Competencies for APN

The SANC developed competencies for APN under provisions of the Nursing Act (2005) – see the Generic Competency Framework for Advanced Nurse Practitioners - Link below:

<http://www.sanc.co.za/pdf/Competencies/SANC%20Competencies-Generic%20Framework%20for%20Advanced%20Nurse%20Practitioners%202014-05.pdf>

The SANC has developed the following Competency Documents for Advanced Practice Nurses for Critical Nurse Specialist (Adult), Forensic Nurse, Midwife Specialist, Nephrology Nurse Specialist, Occupational Health Nurse Specialist, Ophthalmic Nurse Specialist, Orthopaedic Nurse Specialist, Paediatric Nurse Specialist and Primary Health Care Nurse Specialist.

Reading

Strategic Plan for Nurse Education, Training and Practice 2012/13 – 2016/17

http://www.sanc.co.za/archive/archive2013/linked_files/Strategic_Plan_for_Nurse_Education_Training_and_Practice.pdf

The Relationship Between the Scopes Of Practice, Practice Standards and Competencies

<http://www.sanc.co.za/pdf/Competencies/SANC%20Relationship%20between%20SOPs,%20Practice%20Standards%20and%20Competencies.pdf>

Code of Ethics for Nursing Practitioners in South Africa

<http://www.sanc.co.za/pdf/Learner%20docs/SANC%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20for%20Nursing%20in%20South%20Africa.pdf>

References

South African Nursing Council. (2017). *Advanced Practice Nursing*. Retrieved from http://www.sanc.co.za/position_advanced_practice_nursing.htm

Statistics South Africa. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.statssa.gov.za/>