Aligning Nursing Skills – Guidelines
An All Wales Governance Framework 2014
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## Membership

### Framework

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<th>Position and Affiliation</th>
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Membership

Portfolio

Key to this work were –

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Forewords

Professor Jean White  
Chief Nursing Officer for Wales

The healthcare needs of the people of Wales are complex and varied. NHS Wales requires staff with the relevant knowledge and skills to meet the challenges that this brings. It is therefore essential that nursing and midwifery practice is based on the most recent evidence and meets the current needs of patients/clients, their families and carers. In support of this, from December 2015 the Nursing & Midwifery Council will require nurses and midwives to provide evidence of their up-to-date practice in order to revalidate their registration.

The future direction for NHS Wales is set out in the five year vision ‘Together for Health’. One of the core areas of focus for achieving the vision includes development of NHS staff. To help achieve this, there is a need to provide clinical staff with the tools they need to lead change and deliver high quality care. Nurses and midwives are at the frontline of delivering services and care. It therefore gives me great pleasure to endorse this essential enabling tool to support current and future role development. I want this framework to be used by practitioners to enhance their professional development and to allow them to provide evidence of their up-to-date, effective and safe nursing and midwifery practice, wherever they are giving care.

Dr Nicola Ryley  
Chair of the CNO’s Aligning Nursing Skills Group

The Governance Framework for Nurses in Wales has been developed as part of the work of the CNO’s Aligning Nursing Skills Group. It is the result of collaboration between nurses, NHS Wales Health Boards and Trusts, educational providers, staff associations and Welsh Government. It provides an invaluable framework to support organisations teams and individual nurses in developing and evidencing that both they and we as a profession have the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to people’s evolving healthcare needs.

I would like to thank all those who gave of their time and shared their expertise, experience and insight in developing a framework that is designed to benefit nurses, patients and carers.
Introduction

These Guidelines arose from the work of the Aligning Nursing Skills Task & Finish Group that in 2012 was charged by the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales to explore the current and future generic skill and educational needs of the nurses working in NHS Wales. The primary intention of this group was to ensure that this establishment was fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world, both now and in the future, and with particular regard to potential skills deficits. From the outset it was acknowledged that topical, developing and specific health demographics, exemplified by Diabetes, Cancer, Mental Health, Dementia, and the Acutely Deteriorating Patient, were presenting new skills challenges for nurses.

The future vision for NHS Wales is set out in the five year Service, Workforce and Financial Strategic Framework for NHS Wales. One of the core areas of focus for achieving the vision includes empowering front line staff by providing clinical staff with the tools they need to lead change and deliver high quality care.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requires that all registered nurses keep themselves updated to maintain their registration (Post Registration Education and Practice – PREP). That assurance takes the form of a declaration that they have completed 450 hours of registered practice in the previous three years and 35 hours of learning activity (Continuing Professional Development – CPD) in the previous three years. However, to be effective the PREP principles must be supported by governance principles that enable practitioners and employers to realise that outcome in a strategic and planned way.

The Problem

• There was a strategic need for the constituent organisations of the Welsh NHS to be able to identify the general and specific skills base and CPD needs of the nursing establishment. No such framework currently existed.

• There is a professional requirement for registered nurses to keep themselves professionally updated, fit for practice and able to evidence this. There was currently no mechanism for assuring that outcome.

The Solution

To: Implement an all Wales ‘Aligning Nursing Skills’ Governance Framework for all registered nurses in Wales. This will be structured on a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) cycle that enables strategic planning, and that identifies personal transferable skills needs.

To: Utilise, extend and adapt the proven All Wales Advanced Practice Portfolio (NLIAH 2012) so it can be used by all nurses with all their varied roles and responsibilities.

To: Describe a portfolio that would be a requirement used to support the annual Personal Development Review (PDR). The PDR would highlight any skills deficits that would need to be addressed and would feed upwards to management and Board level to enable the organisation to respond to wider deficits or future needs.
The structured personal portfolio should be reviewed on an annual basis by the internal reviewer (line manager) against agreed set (but tailored) criteria. In addition, a system should be in place that enables a sample of portfolios to be selected and assessed by other professional, managerial and academic reviewers.

Thus, it would be the employees’ responsibility to demonstrate and evidence their core skills and to keep them updated via a diverse range of appropriate learning methods (Welsh Government 2009). This would not be optional but compulsory. In contrast, it would be the employer’s responsibility to ensure an effective iterative PDR cycle that responds in a planned and positive way in identifying nursing staff CPD needs. This would form the foundation of the All Wales Aligning Nursing Skills Governance Framework.

The All Wales Aligning Nursing Skills Governance Framework

Overarching Principles
All constituent organisations of the Wales NHS must implement and support a structured Governance Framework that sets out a clear process of PDR founded on individual registered nurses portfolios of evidence based practice and consequent CPD outcomes.

This Governance cycle will assure the skills of the Wales NHS nursing establishment and feed into the strategic planning cycle for CPD. It is also to be recommended to other nurses working in Wales outside of the NHS.

• The Post Registration Career Framework
The Welsh Government Post Registration Career Framework for Nurses in Wales (2009) stated the following: “The development of a modern nursing workforce and the processes needed to ensure career development and competency within roles must be undertaken primarily to improve service delivery to patients / clients and their families. Shaping future nursing careers therefore, goes hand in hand with service modernisation and the drive to provide high standards of compassionate nursing care. The principles outlined in the Fundamentals of Care (WAG 2003) must be evident in the clinical practice of all nurses irrespective of their level of practice.” (The Post Registration Career Framework for Nurses in Wales 2009 p.2)

It is intended that the All Wales Governance Aligning Nursing Skills Framework will enable the guiding principles laid out in the Post Registration Career Framework.

“Doing Well, Doing Better: Standards for Health Services in Wales (2010) sets out the responsibilities of NHS employer organisations. Standard 26 states:

Organisations and services ensure that their workforce is provided with appropriate support to enable them to:

a) maintain and develop competencies in order to be developed to their full potential;
b) participate in induction and mandatory training programmes;
c) have an annual personal appraisal and a personal development plan enabling them to develop their role;
d) demonstrate continuing professional and occupational development;
e) access opportunities to develop collaborative practice and team working.

For NHS employers there is a requirement to ensure workers have annual performance reviews and have personal development plans in place that form part of this review process. In respect of nurses, registrants are responsible for meeting the PREP standards for re-registration. However, it is expected that employers will support them in meeting their CPD needs.” (The Post Registration Career Framework for Nurses in Wales 2009 p.3)

This guidance document draws heavily on the principles and foundations set in the Post Registration Career Framework (2009).

**The Pre-registration link – a lifelong career**
The Pre-Registration Undergraduate Nursing programmes in Wales and across the UK have all undergone revalidation following the introduction of the new NMC Standards and Competencies. It is intended that these guidelines should, where possible, forge links with the Pre-Registration education programmes, and enable newly qualified nurses to build on their student portfolios. The All Wales approach to this development has brought consistency in the documentation that is used by all student nurses in Wales. Students undergo an exhaustive education programme consisting of 50% Practice and 50% Theoretical education over three years, and are required to achieve wide ranging generalist and field competencies. That portfolio of competence is with them at the point of successful registration. New Registrants can use that portfolio to form the foundation of their ongoing All Wales Aligning Nursing Skills Portfolio. Indeed the notion of maintaining a portfolio of professional evidence throughout a nurse’s career needs to become the professional cultural norm.

**The CPD / PDR Cycle**
The All Wales Governance Framework sets out to give material structure and guidance on the cyclical process of Continuing Professional Development and the annual Professional Development Review. This has already been articulated by the embracing Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and the portfolio should enable competency evidence. The KSF (DoH 2004) details the specifics of the review as a partnership process between an individual and reviewer (usually the line manager or delegated to another competent person).

The KSF (DoH 2004 p.13) links the process to the principle of lifelong learning and the place it plays in preparing the health workforce as fit for purpose:

“The NHS KSF and the related development review process are essentially about lifelong learning. The National Agreement includes a commitment to annual development reviews for all staff and a commitment to the development of all staff. Everyone will have their own personal development plan – developed jointly in discussion with their reviewer. Everyone is expected to progress and develop throughout their time working in the NHS.”

The intention of the All Wales Aligning Nursing Skills Governance Framework is to structure the portfolio of evidence by providing clear guidelines and examples
that the practitioner may use. It expects staff to adhere to the guiding principles of the KSF, utilising this framework to inform and identify the knowledge and skills that underpins practice. However, we acknowledge the difficulties that individual practitioners have in describing ‘evidence’.

**Collecting the Evidence – The Pillars (Domains) of Practice and Evidence Themes**

**EVIDENCE THEMES:**
- Professional Practice
- The Acutely Deteriorating Patient
- Learning Disability
- Dementia

**The Chief Nursing Officer (Wales)**

**ANNUAL PRIORITIES**

The All Wales Guidance Framework promotes the Pillars (Domains) of Practice (NLIAH 2010) as a means of structuring evidence collection. Practitioners can utilise this to section their portfolio, and this will make it easier for the reviewer to assess this. This is detailed further in the later detailed explanation of the Portfolio.
• **Collecting the Evidence – The CNO Annual Themes**
The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for Wales identifies key annual objectives and themes. The All Wales Guidance Framework sees these as key areas of focus that practitioners can plan their professional development and provide evidence of updating.

• **Principles of Assessment / Fitness for Practice / Portfolio Sampling**
In the wider context it will be important that the All Wales Guidance Framework be equitable, measurable and fair. The Governance Framework will require all registered nurses to keep a Portfolio, and that they should have an annual PDR with an appropriate assessor.

It may be expected that assessment will reveal a spectrum of competence. Where practitioners are deemed to be under performing in terms of professional updating, local protocols and work plans action should be enacted to remedy this.

The All Wales Guidance Framework expects that organisations will make arrangements to sample portfolios for review by other assessors, ideally some to be reviewed by independent assessors. This may be facilitated by the development of a core team of assessors who can provide objective comment to the review by the line manager.
References


http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/healthsocialcare/framework/?lang=en


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Introduction
The portfolio aims to assist registered nurses in Wales working across all settings in research, education, management/leadership and clinical roles in the development of a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate working at a level of practice required for the role in which they are employed, as outlined in the Post Registration Career Framework (WG 2009).

This nursing portfolio provides documented/recorded evidence of previous experience, educational qualifications, training and updating of skills and competencies and presents a dynamic record of development and professional learning over time.

This portfolio is also an account of learning based on practice and critical reflection: “A portfolio is a... cohesive account of work based learning that contains relevant evidence from practice and critical reflection on this evidence. Its primary purpose is to ‘display achievement of professional competence or learning outcomes and knowledge development.” (Timmins 2011)

The portfolio can be used as a medium for integrating practice, supervision, mentorship, peer review, reflection and performance review.

The Aligning Nursing Skills Portfolio aims to support your development within your field of practice and in the post you currently hold. It also supports your career progression and development of services that better meet the needs of patients and the public.
Purpose
The portfolio will support nurses working within the NHS in Wales to steer education and development whilst supporting personal development planning.

Education, development & training makes an essential contribution to the development and performance of a professional nursing & therapy workforce. Nursing staff can and often do move within organisations and care sectors throughout their careers and the portfolio will guide and support nurses in identifying learning and development needs.

To ensure safe, effective, high quality care it is essential that staff have the appropriate education and training to equip them to undertake the role which they are employed to perform. When employed into a new role staff can transfer from one organisation to another. The Manager should assess the individual’s training records and record of competence against the requirements of the role (the Education & Development lead nurse is well placed to support / validate / check any evidence as requested by manager). In addition, the Manager must also be satisfied that the individual is competent. This may require the manager / employer to observe the individual perform the intervention under supervision prior to undertaking future unsupervised practice. This will reduce the need for staff that are occupationally competent to undergo repeated and often unnecessary training and maximise use of existing skills and competences of the individual from the beginning, thus improving productivity, reducing training costs and maintaining patient care.
Section 1

Personal Details
This section captures the following types of information:

- Contact details (name, address, place of work, phone numbers and email address)
- Qualifications (professional and academic). The practitioner may wish to include relevant and current course documents
- Continuing Professional Development undertaken
- Curriculum Vitae
- Narrative context i.e. personal context and observation context
- Current Personal Development Plan and future plans for role / service

Section 2

This section should contain an up-to-date copy of your Job Description, Person Specification and Knowledge and Skills Framework post outline for your role. It is essential for you to familiarise yourself with both your Job Description and Knowledge and Skills Framework post outline documents for your role as part of your preparation for your annual review process. Both these documents should be reviewed in accordance with your local Governance arrangements; you may have several reviewers and these could include the identified lead assessor, another professional lead, a clinical lead, and the line manager.

You need to ensure that your portfolio reflects all the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil the requirements of the Job Description and Knowledge and Skills Framework outline.

Section 3

Evidence to support the self-assessment process
This section supports you in collecting robust evidence.

Certificates are usually included within the portfolio with an accompanying piece of text on why the study was undertaken, what was learned and how it has been of benefit to you. All experiential learning may be recorded in the same way.

A 360 degree review of your activity should include feedback from peers, managers, other professionals and from patients and clients. Attending lectures, going to the library to conduct study or a literature search or spending time with a particular specialist to learn about other areas of practice are all of use. Critically examining information such as articles and clinical trials helps to inform and improve clinical practice. Any experiences that relate to your professional practice may be relevant.

Keeping a portfolio is useful for future interviews, as entry into further educational courses is intended to be used as evidence to support the annual performance reviews. Learning opportunities undertaken should reflect organisational priorities for your role in addition to PDPs.

When collating evidence for assessment and review, you should be mindful of the following, so that the portfolio is not seen as a paper storing exercise.

- Evidence can be presented in a number of different ways. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality e.g. patient names and any details that might identify a patient must not appear in the portfolio.
• Evidence should be entered into the portfolio to support each of the relevant criteria.
• The evidence presented needs to be verifiable (e.g. documents, testimonials, comments signed and dated).

Your evidence should be measurable against the following criteria:

• A few robust examples of evidence and performance are better than many trivial examples.
• Make good judgements about how much evidence is needed. There are no benefits in the over collection of information.

Reviewers need to be satisfied that the examples are drawn from a suitably wide range of applications of knowledge and skills and not duplication of the same activity. Self-reporting of competence needs to be tested. Reviewers need to make sure that the (self) assertions of competence match evidence drawn from other sources, such as their own observations or witness statements.

Evidence has a shelf-life. Fresh, current exemplars are always better. Usually, examples of competence or knowledge acquisition that are more than two years old need to be re-tested.

Evidence can be presented utilising the four pillars / domains of practice as outlined within the Post Registration Career Development Framework (WG 2009) and promoted within the All Wales Framework for Advanced Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Practice in Wales (NLIAH 2010) whilst also considering the KSF six core domains which identify broad functions for evidence. The pillars and some identified characteristics are outlined opposite.
Pillar 1
Clinical / Professional Practice

- Decision making / clinical judgement and problem solving
- Critical thinking and analytical skills incorporating critical reflection
- Specific skills required e.g.: central line care & management
- Clinical governance
- Equality & diversity
- Ethical decision-making
- Assessment, diagnosis, referral, discharge
- Assessing and managing risk

Pillar 2
Facilitated Learning & Development (either within clinical practice or education sector)

- Principles of teaching and learning
- Supporting others to develop knowledge and skills
- Promotion of learning / creation of learning environment
- Service user / carer teaching and information giving
- Developing service user / carer education materials
- Teaching, mentorship and coaching

Pillar 3
Research & Audit

- Ability to access research / use information systems
- Critical appraisal / evaluation skills
- Involvement in audit and service evaluation
- Support implementation of research findings into practice – including use of and development of policies / protocols and guidelines
- Conference presentations & work towards publications

Pillar 4
Leadership & Management

- Identifying need for change, supporting innovation and change including service development
- Negotiation and influencing skills
- Networking
- Team development

Communication
- Personal and people development
- Health, safety and security
- Service improvement
- Quality
- Equality and diversity
Section 4

Clinical Learning Logs
During new clinical activities staff may be required to complete a Clinical Learning Log (CLL). The CLL is an experiential learning file, demonstrating the staff’s personal, professional, theoretical and clinical development and integration of these skills. A diary section should objectively record the content of the placement and will be used for recording the amount and nature of the clinical experience you receive.

The CLL should be available for the review. You should use the CLL to ensure that professionals have a record and have demonstrated their developing competencies in relation to both the activity and individual learning objectives.

You will be required to constructively review and critique the CLLs, identifying good practice in relation to:

• Links between relevant theories of learning and reflective practice within clinical experiences.
• Reference to learning experiences (placement and college based) and evidence of the development of professional knowledge, skills and competencies.

(Parrott, L. and Upston. V., 2005)

Clinical Learning Log

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Undertaking</td>
<td>Hours in Practice</td>
<td>Verification of Assessor</td>
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Section 5

Reflective practice
Reflecting on practice is the sign of a practitioner who acts in a considered way and learns from their experiences – hence why reflecting is imperative.

Each main section should be preceded by an overall summary and reflection regarding the evidence presented. This reflective section is important as it demonstrates the thinking processes of the advanced practitioner. It allows the reader or assessor of the portfolio to form a judgment as to the level of thinking the practitioner brings to practice. The reflective summary should also highlight how the key principles of advanced practice are applied to the practice of the individual practitioner. There are many reflective models and frameworks that can be used within nursing, one example is Gibbs Cycle.

![GIBBS REFLECTIVE CYCLE (1988)]

- **Description**
  - What happened?
- **Feelings**
  - What were you thinking and feeling?
- **Action plan**
  - If it arose again, what would you do?
- **Evaluation**
  - What was good and bad about the experience?
- **Conclusion**
  - What else could you have done?
- **Analysis**
  - What sense can you make of the situation?
Section 6

Learning & Development Plan
What is a Personal Development Plan (PDP)?

Personal: Individual, own, unique, special
Development: Learning, growth, advancement
Planning: Getting it on paper, preparation, structure, measurement

A Personal Development Plan provides a process to incorporate your needs with the needs of your organisation.

• It provides opportunities to think in the mid term.
• It allows a thoughtful and structured approach to organising development experiences.
• It is a useful tool for project managing staff development.

It is a continuing cycle of planning, implementation and reviewing that is mutually beneficial to you and your organisation. It is your responsibility to ensure that all information is correct and up to date.

Continuing professional development may take a number of forms including:

• Courses/programmes
• E-learning
• Journals
• Prescribing forums
• Shadowing
• Reflecting
• Individual study
• Work based learning
• Formal CPD study days
• Action Learning Sets
• Coaching

This list is not exhaustive

Credit can often be formally given to obtain ‘time off’ for longer periods of study / courses if evidence of prior learning is demonstrated.
References


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