

GANES Global Pillars for Nursing Education

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has called on the international community to transform, scale up, and strengthen the capacity and quality of nursing education in order to address a critical global need for well-qualified nurses (WHO, 2016b).

In response to this urgent call for action, the Global Alliance for Leadership in Nursing Education and Sciences (GANES) is developing global standards for nursing education programs.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of this initiative is to promote high-quality education for entry-level registered nurses globally by creating international standards that meet the following criteria:

- 1) reflect international best practices;
- 2) are adaptable to the sociocultural context; and
- 3) promote local relevance.

Background

Despite socio-economic progress, the global disease burden is increasing and becoming more complex (WHO, 2016b). People over 60 now outnumber children under five worldwide (WHO, 2014). Non-communicable diseases and long-term conditions are becoming more prevalent globally while communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis, malaria, Zika, and Ebola virus diseases continue to take a devastating toll on communities. Moreover, climate change, warfare, and population mobility are bringing significant new international health challenges.

Nurses are essential in strengthening a health system's response to current health challenges (Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, 2015). They provide care to the health needs of people of all ages, in all settings, across the continuum of care, and in multiple roles. They are often first responders in disease outbreaks and natural disasters, care for persons with long-term conditions, monitor and manage treatment of life-threatening conditions, provide palliative and end-of-life care, work with families and communities, promote health, and contribute to the prevention of illness and injury (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health, 2016).

Despite the value nurses bring to health services, far too often they are prevented or unable to work to their mandated scope of practice (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health, 2016). Moreover, they are underrepresented in decision making, health care planning, and policy roles, and they are often poorly positioned to influence transformations in health care (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2016).

Increasing the quality and relevance of health professional education strengthens health systems and improves health outcomes (WHO, 2016a). By responding to health care system requirements in a proactive and measured manner, studies demonstrate that health professional education is integral to positive transformations of health care (Frenk et al., 2010). Scaling up nursing education is a key mechanism to develop a nursing workforce with the competencies, leadership abilities, and motivation to improve the health of the populations they serve (da Conceição Bento, Cruz Mendes, Fernandes, Amaral, & Neto Leitao, 2015).

Methodology

The methodology for developing global standards for nursing education includes a comprehensive review of international and national guidelines for health professional education, a series of consultations of international stakeholders and experts, and an extensive international validation survey among nursing faculty.

Global Pillars Framework

The global pillars framework includes the assumptions underpinning the standards for nursing education, principles guiding their development, and three pillars of standards specifying expectations for graduates, expectations for the education program, and expectations for the institution.

Pillar 1. Learning Outcomes: Expectations for the graduate

Pillar 2. Education Program: Expectations for the program

Pillar 3. Educational Institution: Expectations for the educational organization

Assumptions

The following assumptions underpin the three pillars:

- 1) Entry-level education must be at the baccalaureate level to prepare nurses adequately for their mandated scope of practice.
- 2) Global standards must be adaptable to local contexts to ensure nursing education is aligned with population needs.

Guiding Principles

Ten principles for strengthening nursing education for transformative practice, drawn from the literature review, guided the development of the standards.

Nursing education needs to address the following:

- Target the continuum of care
- Promote inclusive, people-centred services and social accountability
- Integrate the social determinants of health in curricula
- Prepare globally competent but locally relevant graduates
- Integrate interprofessional collaboration and teamwork
- Prepare graduates for leadership
- Deliver the curriculum through well qualified faculty
- Continuously monitor and assess the education program
- Administer and govern the program in a manner that strengthens quality
- Provide resources required to produce competent graduates

Standards

Pillar 1: Learning Outcomes

The program prepares graduates to demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, and abilities.

1.1 Knowledge and Practice Skills

- 1.1.1 Apply nursing theory, the nursing process, relevant health sciences and psychosocial theories for practice across the lifespan and across the continuum of care
- 1.1.2 Master locally relevant entry-to-practice competencies that reflect international best practices to provide care to individuals, families, communities, and populations
- 1.1.3 Manage and monitor complex care of clients in stable and unstable contexts in diverse settings
- 1.1.4 Provide comfort care including pain and symptom management
- 1.1.5 Provide culturally safe, and patient/client centred care

1.1.6 Communication and Collaboration

- 1.1.7 Document care clearly, accurately, and appropriately
- 1.1.8 Communicate with empathy and respect when providing care to patients/clients and families
- 1.1.9 Counsel and provide information and health teaching to the patient/client, family, and community
- 1.1.10 Communicate effectively with members of the health care team
- 1.1.11 Collaborate interprofessionally and intersectorally in the best interest of the patient/client

1.3 Critical Thinking, Clinical Reasoning, and Clinical Judgement

- 1.3.1 Assess information and evidence critically
- 1.3.2 Translate knowledge and use evidence to inform practice, and participate in the development of research
- 1.3.3 Use clinical reasoning and problem solving to inform decision-making and caregiving in diverse practice settings
- 1.3.4 Recognize and respond to rapidly changing client conditions and contexts including disasters

1.4 Professionalism and Leadership

- 1.4.1 Practice within regulatory, legal, and ethical standards and contribute to a culture of patient safety
- 1.4.2 Demonstrate leadership in health care systems and the ability to influence policy
- 1.4.3 Respond professionally to the needs of the patient/client, family, and community

- 1.4.4 Lead and manage change in the workplace and in the health and well-being of people
- 1.4.5 Advocate for patients/clients to optimize their health and well being

Pillar 2: Nursing Education Program

The nursing education program meets the following expectations.

2.1 Curriculum

- 2.1.1 Faculty teaching and student learning are guided by a curriculum that is systematically developed and reviewed
- 2.1.2 The curriculum is responsive to the changing health care needs of the local population and the health care system
- 2.1.2 Key stakeholders including employers, faculty, and students are consulted and provide input into curriculum development and review
- 2.1.3 There is a systematic process for ongoing monitoring and improvement of the quality and relevance of the curriculum, and for updating the curriculum as health needs, knowledge, and technology change

2.2 Admissions

- 2.2.1 There is meaningful enrolment to meet anticipated health system needs
- 2.2.2 Admission standards are set in relation to academic and practice demands, are communicated clearly to applicants, and are respected
- 2.2.3 Admission standards are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet current needs

2.3 Learning Experiences

- 2.3.1 The education program includes practice experience through simulation and placements in diverse clinical settings
- 2.3.2 Practice experiences are organized sequentially to provide students with increasingly complex learning opportunities
- 2.3.2 Interprofessional education is integrated into the curriculum

Pillar 3: Educational Institution

The educational institution meets the following expectations.

3.1 Faculty/Instructors

- 3.1.1 Appropriately educated and experienced faculty and instructors ensure optimum delivery of the program in classroom, laboratory, and practice courses

3.1.2 The ratio of faculty and instructors to students in classroom, laboratory, and practice courses fosters optimum learning

3.2 Resources

3.2.1 Adequate library and internet resources support the development of evidence informed practice and critical thinking among students

3.2.2 Material and pedagogical resources support optimum learning outcomes

3.2.3 Financial resources are sufficient to allow for the continuity of the program

3.3 Leadership and Administration

3.3.1 The governance structure is clearly defined and the administration actively supports the delivery of high quality nursing education

3.3.2 A registered nurse with appropriate qualifications and experience is responsible for the nursing education program

3.3.2 The leadership and administration of the nursing education program collaborates with health services delivery

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