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**National Authority for Quality Assurance
and Accreditation of Education**



National Academic Reference Standards (NARS)

Nursing Education

٢nd Edition

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Foreword

In line with NAQAAE's legal mandate as the authority responsible for quality assurance of education in Egypt, and out of its commitment to be a promoter of quality and an agent for change; NAQAAE has developed the 2nd edition of the National Academic Reference Standards (NARS) -Nursing (2017) to replace the previous 1st edition NARS -Nursing (2009). These standards represent the minimum academic quality requirements, which NAQAAE and the relevant stakeholders regard as necessary and appropriate to protect the interests of the students and of the community at large.

It has always been NAQAAE's conviction that quality is primarily the responsibility of the institution itself, and that the academic standards adopted by any institution should support the achievement of its mission; therefore, it is crucial to emphasize that the NARS are meant to be used as reference points that provide guidance in the design, delivery and review of academic programs, and are not intended by any means to represent a national curriculum in the subject. Instead, NAQAAE was keen to ensure that the NARS allows for flexibility and innovation in program design and teaching strategies, within a framework agreed by the subject community.

NAQAAE has always supported the autonomy and academic freedom of educational institutions and acknowledged -and assimilated- the diversity of their missions, hence, institutions are invited to consider adopting other reference points that better reflect their mission if they need to, provided that these adopted academic standards are equal to or higher than the NARS.

Finally, it should be noted that the 2nd edition of NARS-Nursing will be effective starting the academic year 2018/19.

Youhansen Eid
Chairman of the Board

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Introduction to Nursing Education

According to WHO, Nursing profession comprises independent and cooperative care of people of all ages, families, groups and communities, ill or well and in all health facilities. It covers promotion of health, prevention of disease, and the care of ill, debilitated and terminal case patients. The International Council of Nursing (ICN) indicated that the nurse should collaborate with the members of the health care team and other public sectors to plan, implement and evaluate health care services. This ensures sufficiency of health system in health promotion, illness prevention and control, and providing health care services for patients and disabled people.

Patients' needs and expectations are now more convoluted. To fulfill such needs, the nurse should apply the necessary skills in evidence-based practice, team and independent working, cooperativity, research, education and leadership. The scope of nursing practice has now extended to proper handling and/or application of modern tools and information management systems. Accordingly, nursing education has advanced to empower the nurse to work in a complex and continuously developing profession. The American National League of Nursing indicated that a proper education program should consider the seven core values of nursing profession which include: caring, diversity, ethics, excellence, holism, integrity and patient-centeredness.

To cope with such advancements and to maintain the core values of nursing profession, a competency-based educational program has become inevitable in which the graduate attributes are defined based on the recent job descriptions of nurse worldwide, considering the expectations and diversity of jobs in the Egyptian market while complying with international standards. The need for competency-based standards has arisen for several reasons: the increasing complexities in health care provision, the increasing number of health professionals at different levels, and the need to assure a more equitable access to health care. Those standards are intended to serve as a benchmark for moving education and learning systems forward to produce common competency-based outcomes. The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education "NAQAAE" takes the initiative to shift the national education standards into the competency-based ones.

Methodology for Development of NARS-Nursing

NAQAAE invited the faculties of nursing nationwide, representatives of the Egyptian Nursing Syndicate and the Committee of Nursing Studies Sector of the Supreme Council of Universities, which comprises the deans of faculties of nursing, to revise the existing National Academic Reference Standards for Nursing Education (NARS-Nursing, 1st edition, January 2009). The NARS was then developed through the following process:

1. Establishing the committee for developing the NARS for nursing education (NARS–Nursing, 2nd edition) that constitutes experts representing various specialties of nursing education and having expertise in quality assurance of education.
2. Studying the National Qualifications Framework (NQF–Egypt) under development to identify the descriptors of the Bachelor degree level.
3. Reviewing the NARS-Nursing (1st Edition) and the analysis of the feedback from faculties of nursing nationwide on this NARS.
4. Reviewing literature regarding the International Academic Standards and subject benchmarks for nursing education.
5. Running brain storming sessions to identify and fill the gaps between the NARS and the recognized International Academic Standards and the requirements and expectations of nursing profession in Egypt.
6. Developing a new competency-based NARS-Nursing that corresponds to national and international changes and development in nursing profession.
7. Preparing a draft of the new version of NARS–Nursing that defines the graduate attributes and competencies.
8. Getting feedback on the developed NARS from different stakeholders and conducting a workshop to present, discuss and get feedback on the developed competency-based NARS.
9. Preparing the final draft of NARS–Nursing incorporating the feedback of the revision cycles.
10. Approving the NARS-Nursing (2nd Edition) from the board of NAQAAE (April 2017).

National Academic Reference Standards (NARS)

Attributes of the Nursing Graduates

As nurses play a pivotal role in the promotion, maintenance and restoration of health, it is imperative to develop competent nurses who are able to take up expanded roles in the delivery of care. Thus, apart from the roles of a caregiver, the nurse needs to develop competencies to take up the roles of a health promoter, educator, counselor, care coordinator, case manager, researcher as well as that of a client advocate. Hence, education programs for preparing nurses must ensure that the graduates acquired the essential competencies that enable them to fulfill these roles competently and ethically.

Nurse graduates must be able to:

1. Embody ethical and professional disposition committed to excellence, equity and sustainability.
2. Engage in person-centered care sensitive to the needs of individuals, families and communities.
3. Demonstrate integration of knowledge, skills and professional attitudes utilizing clinical evidences to provide safe and holistic patient care.
4. Display cognitive flexibility and reflective functioning when working with individuals, families and communities.
5. Advocate for and engage with individuals, families and communities to ensure health equity and promote social justice.
6. Exhibit creative and adaptive thinking within a changeable scientific social and technological environment.
7. Demonstrate effective communication, collaboration and leadership valuing the diversity of people and communities
8. Identify threats to safety and develop strategies to minimize risk of harm to individuals, families and communities.

Competencies of the Nurse Graduates

Five **Competence-Domains** are included in these competence-based National Academic Reference Standards for Nursing Education. These domains are representing the role of nurses in the health care field. Each domain should be achieved through a number of **Competencies** ranging from one to three, with a total of nine competencies for all domains. These competencies are overall broad statements that cover various areas of the graduate performance. A number of **Key Elements** ranging from three to six are included in each competency, with a total of thirty-nine key elements for all competencies. These key elements demonstrate how nurse graduate will reflect each competency in practice and provide an indication of whether the competency has been met. The competency-domains are the followings:

Domain 1: Professional and Ethical Practice

Domain 2: Holistic Patient-Centered Care

Domain 3: Managing People, Work Environment, and Quality

Domain 4: Informatics and Technology

Domain 5: Inter-professional Communication

DOMAIN 1 - PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

1-1 - COMPETENCY

Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, responsibility and accountability of the legal obligations for ethical nursing practice.

KEY ELEMENTS

- 1.1.1 Demonstrate understanding of the legislative framework and the role of the nurse and its regulatory functions.
- 1.1.2 Apply value statements in nurses' code of ethics and professional conduct for ethical decision making.
- 1.1.3 Practise nursing in accordance with institutional/national legislations, policies and procedural guidelines considering patient/client rights.
- 1.1.4 Demonstrate responsibility and accountability for care within the scope of professional and practical level of competence.

DOMAIN ٢ - HOLISTIC PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

٢-١- COMPETENCY

Provide holistic and evidence-based nursing care in different practice settings.

KEY ELEMENTS

- ٢.١.١. Conduct holistic and focused bio-psychosocial and environmental assessment of health and illness in diverse settings.
- ٢.١.٢. Provide holistic nursing care that addresses the needs of individuals, families and communities across the life span.
- ٢.١.٣. Provide holistic patient-centered care respecting people diversity.
- ٢.١.٤. Advocate the patient/client needs/problems within the Egyptian health care system and the personal context.
- ٢.١.٥. Utilize different community resources for referral to assist the patient/client and family through transitions across the continuum of care.
- ٢.١.٦. Examine evidence that underlie clinical nursing practice to offer new insights to nursing care for patients, families, and communities.

٢-٢- COMPETENCY

Provide health education based on the needs/problems of the patient/client within a nursing framework.

KEY ELEMENTS

- ٢.٢.١. Determine health related learning needs of patient/client within the context of culture, values and norms.
- ٢.٢.٢. Assess factors that influence the patient's and family's ability, including readiness to learn, preferences for learning style, and levels of health literacy.
- ٢.٢.٣. Participate in informal and formal methods of teaching that correspond to the health of patient/client needs and abilities in different health care settings.
- ٢.٢.٤. Use educational principles and counseling techniques appropriately and effectively with diverse populations.
- ٢.٢.٥. Communicate health information and coordinate health education/promotion activities effectively according to patient/client needs.
- ٢.٢.٦. Utilize information from variety of reliable sources for planning and improving health promotion and health education activities.

DOMAIN ۳- MANAGING PEOPLE, WORK ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY

۳-۱- COMPETENCY

Demonstrate effective managerial and leadership skills in the provision of quality nursing care.

KEY ELEMENTS

- ۳.۱.۱. Apply leadership skills to manage personnel to maximize health, independence and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities.
- ۳.۱.۲. Plan and implement change conducive to the improvement of health care provision.
- ۳.۱.۳. Organize own workload and apply time management principles for meeting responsibilities.
- ۳.۱.۴. Demonstrate controlling techniques for the work flow and patient outcomes through delegating and supervising members of the nursing team.

۳-۲- COMPETENCY

Provide a safe working environment that prevents harm for patients and workers.

KEY ELEMENTS

- ۳.۲.۱. Apply leadership skills to recognize and manage risks to provide safe care that best meets the needs and interests of individuals, families and communities.
- ۳.۲.۲. Act to protect patients and their families from unsafe, illegal, or unethical care practices in different work settings.
- ۳.۲.۳. Promote a research environment that supports and facilitates research mindedness and utilization that help in maintaining safe environment.
- ۳.۲.۴. Apply research methods related to area of practice that enable and use the best evidences to maintain safe work environment.

۳-۳- COMPETENCY

Review health care outcomes in the light of quality indicators and benchmarks to achieve the ultimate goals of improving the quality of nursing care.

KEY ELEMENTS

- ۳.۳.۱. Apply leadership skills, and decision making in improving the quality of nursing care by using the existing resources.
- ۳.۳.۲. Participate in quality improvement process to enhance nursing care rendered and patient/client outcomes.
- ۳.۳.۳. Utilize quality indicators and benchmarks to evaluate the effect of improvements in the delivery of nursing care.
- ۳.۳.۴. Implement standardized protocols when providing nursing care considering quality improvement and patient's safety.

DOMAIN 4 - INFORMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY

4-1 - COMPETENCY

Utilize information and technology to underpin health care delivery, communicate, manage knowledge and support decision making for patient care.

KEY ELEMENTS

- 4.1.1. Use different sources of data related to contemporary standards of practice and patient care.
- 4.1.2. Apply technology and information management tools to support safe care and evaluate their impact on patient outcomes.
- 4.1.3. Evaluate the impact of computerized information management on the role of the nurse in providing holistic patient-centered care.
- 4.1.4. Use and evaluate information management technologies for providing the holistic patient care in different health care settings.

4-2 - COMPETENCY

Utilize information and communication technologies in the delivery of patient/client care.

KEY ELEMENTS

- 4.2.1. Retrieve, and manage data to make decisions using information management system for providing holistic patient care.
- 4.2.2. Apply communication technologies that support clinical decision making, care coordination, and protection of patients' rights.
- 4.2.3. Apply technologies and information systems to support provision of safe nursing care practice to individuals, families, and communities.

DOMAIN ๑ - INTER-PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

๑-๑ - COMPETENCY

Collaborate with colleagues and members of the health care team to facilitate and coordinate care provided for individuals, families and communities.

KEY ELEMENTS

- ๑.๑.๑. Maintain inter-professional collaboration, in a variety of settings to maximize health outcomes for the patients, families and communities.
- ๑.๑.๒. Function within behavioral norms related to the interdisciplinary communication and the health care organizations.
- ๑.๑.๓. Use standardized communication approach to transfer care responsibilities to other professionals to facilitate experience transitions across different health care settings.
- ๑.๑.๔. Utilize communication styles that diminish the risks associated with authority gradients among health care team members.

Glossary

Competency

An observable ability of a professional, integrating multiple components such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Since competencies are observable, they can be measured and assessed to ensure their acquisition.

Competency Domain

Broad distinguishable areas of competence that, in the aggregate, constitute a general descriptive framework for a profession.

Graduate Attributes

Characteristics, qualities, attitudes and dispositions that graduates should possess upon completion of a particular program.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills intended by the institution to be gained by the learners completing a particular educational activity. The ILOs emphasize what is expected that learners will be able to do as a result of a learning activity.

National Academic Reference Standards (NARS)

Reference points defined by NAQAAE to outline/describe the expected minimum competencies to fulfill the requirements of a program of study.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

A framework that provides a systematic description of all qualifications within the educational systems of the state and categorizes them according to a set of standards that determine the level of learning outcomes for each qualification gained. The NQF is used as a tool for benchmarking, quality assurance, comparison and coordination between the different qualifications.

The Program

A set of educational courses and activities designed by the institution to determine the systematic learning progress. The program also imparts the intended competencies required for the award of an academic degree.

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