

Nurse Practitioner Practice Analysis Summary

October 2024

Introduction

The Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators (CCRN) initiated a practice analysis in 2023 as a first step to developing a new national entry-level Nurse Practitioner (NP) exam.

A practice analysis is a rigorous evidence-based investigation of the key work attributes and tasks a professional performs. A practice analysis provides information about the profession, outlines what the professional needs to be successful in the role and informs the development of test questions for an entry-to-practice or licensure exam. This practice analysis focused on entry-to-practice requirements to practice safely and competently as an NP in Canada.

The practice analysis was facilitated by Meazure Learning (formerly known as Yardstick) with oversight provided by the Steering Committee of the Nurse Practitioner Regulation Framework Implementation Project Plan (NPR-FIPP). The NPR-FIPP is the initiative guiding the implementation of the national NP regulatory model (see more information about the NPR-FIPP [here](#)). The NPR-FIPP Steering Committee is made up of regulatory body representatives from Canadian jurisdictions and reports to the CCRN Board of Directors.

Practice Analysis Process

NP Subject Matter Experts

Ten NPs formed the NP Practice Analysis Project Advisory Committee or NP PAPAC and provided subject matter expertise. NP PAPAC members were suggested by each jurisdictional regulatory body before final selection by the NPR-FIPP Steering Committee based on the following criteria:

- jurisdictions across Canada;
- differing practice settings and experiences, including representing the current categories of practice (Family/All Ages, Adult, Pediatric, Neonatal);
- English- and French-speaking, including Francophone;
- personal and/or professional experience with Indigenous communities;
- differing years of practice, with a strong representation of newer practitioners;
- representatives with experience providing NP education and in nursing regulation; and
- urban and rural experiences, including experience working in remote areas.

See the appendix with the list of NP PAPAC members.

Research Conducted

An environmental scan and literature review were conducted by Meazure Learning to understand the knowledge, skills, and job-related competencies required for safe and competent NP practice. The research explored existing practice analysis documents, entry-level competencies (ELCs), and standards of practice for NPs around the world. The research was limited to English-speaking countries that regulate NPs, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. The findings were summarized and presented to the NP-PAPAC.

Development of Draft Practice Analysis Domains and Statements

The NP PAPAC met in person and virtually to develop the draft practice analysis domains and statements. The discussions were informed by the environmental scan and literature review conducted by Meazure Learning and the expertise of the NP PAPAC members with a focus on developing statements that can be tested on an NP exam. The recently revised NP ELCs were the basis or starting point for discussions and development of the draft practice analysis statements.

National NP Validation Survey

With input from CCRNR and the NPR-FIPP Steering Committee, Meazure Learning developed an online survey, available in English and French, to validate the draft practice statements with NPs from across Canada. The survey collected NP demographic information (e.g., NP jurisdiction(s), years of NP practice) to ensure that the survey was a representative sample of NPs in Canada. The survey asked NP respondents to provide their perspective on what is generally expected of an NP at entry-to-practice by rating the importance and frequency of each of the draft practice statements.

The survey was administered from March 20 to April 24, 2024. Over 9,000 NPs from across the country were invited to complete the survey through email invites and reminders sent to them by their regulatory body. National NPR-FIPP newsletters about the survey were also developed and shared by CCRNR, nursing associations, and other nursing groups and employers to encourage NPs' participation.

NPs responded from across Canadian jurisdictions and provided perspectives from a broad range of healthcare settings and experiences. Over 1,000 NPs completed all survey questions, representing a 12.5% response rate.

Based on Canadian census and jurisdictional NP data, Meazure Learning confirmed that the survey results can be generalized to the larger population of NPs in Canada.

Final revisions to Practice Analysis Statements

Meazure Learning analyzed the results from the validation survey and used a criticality factor rating of 15 or lower as the metric to indicate that a practice analysis statement may not be widely supported. This was calculated by multiplying the importance and frequency ratings collected for each statement. It was noted that a statement may be rated lower for several reasons, including a belief that it does not apply to NP practice or the statement is not understood. The survey findings were presented and reviewed by the NP PAPAC, which focussed discussions on the draft practice statements that received lower survey importance and frequency ratings.

Based on the discussions and survey findings, the NP PAPAC revised the wording of two practice analysis statements to improve understanding and determined that no additional statements needed revising.

Analysis of Survey Findings Across Current NP Categories of Practice

Meazure Learning analyzed the survey findings to determine whether there were any notable differences between the responses by NP category or streams of practice (Family/All Ages, Adult, and Pediatric). The Neonatal category of practice was not included, given the small number of responses from NPs in this category.

No systematic or meaningful differences in responses were identified between NPs in the Family/All Ages, Adult and Pediatric categories of practice. Any differences related to category of practice were small and not statistically significant.

Conclusion

The practice analysis domains and statements developed and validated will inform the examination blueprint, which is the next step in developing the national entry-level NP exam.

Appendix

Members of the NP Practice Analysis Project Advisory Committee (NP PAPAC)

Name	Jurisdiction
Kelvin Bei	British Columbia
Jill Larocque	Alberta
Lori Penner	Saskatchewan
Naomi Nickerson	Manitoba
Chantal Rioux	Ontario
Kristine Turnbull	Ontario
Krista Cormier	New Brunswick
Marge Ancliffe	Nova Scotia
Gail Macartney	Prince Edward Island
Heather Tracey Michelin	Newfoundland and Labrador