

RCN Response to ICN survey:

The Draft Definitions for Consultation

Definition of NURSING

“Nursing is a profession dedicated to upholding everyone’s right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. A hallmark of the profession is its shared commitment to health for all through collaborative, safe, people-centred, compassionate care and services. Nursing practice is a unique combination of science-based disciplinary knowledge, technical capability, ethical standards, and culturally safe therapeutic relationships. This enables autonomous decision making, and the supervision of, and delegation to, others who may assist in the provision of health care.

Nursing is entrusted with providing professional care in the most personal aspects of people’s lives. The profession promotes health, protects safety in care, manages and leads healthcare organizations and systems. Nursing acts and advocates for people’s equitable access to health and health care, and safe, sustainable environments. Nursing is committed to compassion, social justice and a better future for humanity.”

Definition of a NURSE

“A nurse is a professional who is educated in the scientific knowledge, skills and philosophy of nursing, and regulated to practice nursing based on established standards of practice and ethical codes. Nurses enhance health literacy, promote health, prevent illness, protect patient safety, alleviate suffering, and facilitate recovery and adaptation. They work autonomously and collaboratively across settings to improve the health of all, through advocacy, and evidence-informed decision-making. Nurses provide people-centred, compassionate clinical and social care, manage services, enhance health systems, and foster safe and sustainable environments, through clinical practice, management, leadership, education, research and policy.

Further, nurses play a unique role in health and social care for populations of all ages, and in all settings. Through therapeutic interpersonal partnerships nurses

build trust with individuals, families and communities and gain valuable insights into people's experiences of health and illness. Building on a foundation of personalised direct and social care, nurses manage services, provide culturally safe care, strengthen health systems, and advance public and population health. Nurses advance their capabilities through ongoing education, research and exploration of best practices. A nurse's scope of practice is defined by their level of education, experience, competency, professional standards and lawful authority. They play a key role in the coordination and supervision of others who may assist in the provision of health care.

Nurses lead, educate, research, advocate, innovate and shape policy to improve health outcomes. Often on the front lines, they respond to crises such as disasters, conflicts, emergencies and pandemics, demonstrating courage, dedication, adaptability and commitment to the health of individuals, communities and the environment.”

Abridged version of a NURSE (The abridged version below provides a summary of the official Definition of a Nurse, as outlined above. Please note that this summary should not be considered independently, but rather within the full context of the official definition.)

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Consultation Goals and Key Questions (with proposed responses)

ICN seeks the feedback of National Nursing Associations (NNAs) to ensure the definitions resonate with your experience and professional context. Your insights will help refine the definitions and ensure their global applicability. We ask that you consider the following questions:

1. Credibility and Clarity: Are the definitions clear and credible to you and your members? **Yes** / No (Comment)

2. Evidence and Support: Do the definitions align with current evidence and research in nursing practice, education, and policy? **Yes** / No

(Comment) The RCN has recently carried out a similar piece of work which also reviewed current evidence which is summarised here: [Nursing definition background | Publications | Royal College of Nursing](#)

3. Omissions or Gaps: Are there any critical components missing from the definitions that should be included to effectively define the terms? Yes / **No**

(Comment) added a 'non critical' comment – It would be preferable to strengthen that nursing is a safety critical profession.

4. Reputational Risks: Could any aspect of the definitions pose a risk to the ICN's reputation or undermine the public understanding of the nursing profession?
Yes / **No** (Comment)

5. Essential Changes: Are there any critical modifications that are absolutely required to improve the definitions? Yes / **No** (Comment) 'adding that nursing is a safety critical profession.'

6. How likely is your NNA to support the definitions provided in this consultation as formal ICN definitions?

a) Very Unlikely

b) Unlikely

c) Neutral

d) Likely

e) **Very Likely**