

Gerontological Nursing Competencies (GNCs)

Aged Care Transition to Practice Program (ACTPP)

Further Information: [GNCs website](#) or gnc-enquiries@uow.edu.au

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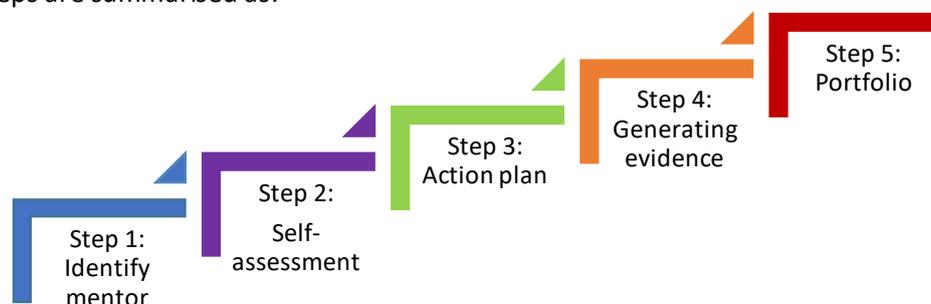
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Following are a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on implementing the Gerontological Nursing Competencies (GNCs) through the Aged Care Transition to Practice Program (ACTPP).

What is the GNCs Program?

The GNCs Program implements the GNCs in the work place through five steps, including the development of a portfolio of evidence. Completing these steps and developing a portfolio helps Registered Nurses (RNs) demonstrate their competence as specialist gerontological nurses.

The five steps are summarised as:



What UOW support is provided?

UOW offers an online course for RNs to support the implementation GNCs. Through facilitation and ongoing support, participating RN's are guided through the course to successful completion of the program.

Organisations who implement the GNCs program are supported by UOW along the way. Through the online course, UOW provides the following activities to organisations and their participants:

Workshop 1 (face-to-face or virtual): A preparation activity that focuses on explaining the program, outlining the Five Steps and providing interactive activities to develop new knowledge and skills to successfully complete the GNCs program and equip participants to develop a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their specialist gerontological nursing practice.

Ongoing support: Via the online course, participants will be provided with ongoing support to answer questions and maintain momentum as they progress through the Five Steps.

Five newsletters: The newsletters will help connect participants and mentors as they complete the online program. Featuring stories from the participants and messages from their mentors, each edition will provide motivation and direction about completing the Five Steps in the program.

Workshop 2 (face-to-face or virtual): A collaborative experience where participants are provided with specific feedback on their action plans and the evidence generated to demonstrate their specialist gerontological nursing practice.

How ARE participants selected?

There are a few options for identifying and selecting participants:

- **Direct Nomination by Manager:** The most successful model for selecting participants is through a direct nomination process by managers of practitioners who have the potential to be future leaders work towards essential level of practice or those who are already in leadership positions work towards the enhanced level of practice.
- **Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI):** An additional strategy is to call for 'expressions of interest' so that practitioners who have the capacity to complete the GNCs program self-nominate.
- **New Grads or Existing Learners:** New graduates, practitioners who have postgraduate degrees or currently undertaking further study have the skills required to successfully complete the GNCs program. Those willing to undertake further study have the motivation to learn the new skills required to successfully complete the GNCs program.

Importantly, participants who successfully complete the GNCs program become the future mentors for the GNCs program. Embedded in the GNCs program is a capacity building strategy to sustain the momentum created from each cohort of participants successfully completing their portfolio of evidence demonstrating their specialist gerontological nursing practice.

How long does it take to complete?

The program is designed to take participants on a **six month** learning journey, via the online course. Some flexibility may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What commitment is required by the organisation?

All organisations who implement the GNCs program are asked that they support groups/cohorts of practitioners through to completion. Integral to the success of the GNCs program is the support of mentors. Organisations are asked to nominate mentors to support the participants. The main role of mentors is to motivate and guide participating practitioners through the Five Steps of the GNCs program.

Practically, organisations are expected to provide the following support when implementing the GNCs program:

- Work time for participants to meet with their mentors every four to six weeks, for one to two hours, for the six month duration of the GNCs program, that is, until the participating practitioners submit their portfolios.
- Allocate one senior staff member to become a mentor for each group of 3-5 practitioners completing the GNCs program.
- Work time for the participants and mentors to attend Workshop 1 (five hours) and Workshop 2 (three hours)
- Work time for the participants and mentors to engage with the UOW support offered through the online course, during the implementation of the GNCs program. This support includes our online course content, resources and newsletters, to ensure the participants successfully complete the GNCs program.
- Work time for the mentors to engage the practitioners in the GNCs program, for example, communicating reminders to the participants about using the UOW support available to them through the online course and other resources, along with administrative time to organise the mentor meetings.

Individual practitioners who participate in the GNCs program also need to make their own personal and professional commitment to actively engage with the online course. During the GNCs program, we imagine that individual participants will need to commit an average of two hours a fortnight to move through Steps One to Five and move forward to successful completion.

Importantly, some of this time will be part of individual practitioner CPD time that is required for their re-registration. We encourage participants to consider their involvement in the GNCs program as one way of meeting these requirements.

Participants also need to find additional CPD time to complete the GNCs program because the NMB compulsory CPD hours is 20 hours which is less than half an hour per fortnight.

Practitioners who engage in the GNCs program make a commitment to extend their knowledge and skills while they complete the GNCs program and by the end they achieve their goal of generating a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates their specialist gerontological nursing practice.

How is the portfolio of evidence assessed?

Portfolio assessment is a two-stage process:

1. The mentor of the participant approves that the portfolio of evidence reflects specialist gerontological nursing practice at the Essential **or** Enhanced Level of Practice.
2. A UOW course facilitator confirms the endorsement and approves the issue of a certificate of completion for the participant.

Can the GNCs program support my organisation to meet the Aged care standards?

Yes - the GNCs match clearly with the aged care standards. Having RNs in your organisation who demonstrate their specialist gerontological nursing practice will provide you with the capacity to more easily meet the aged care standards. This is because, during the GNCs program, these RNs will develop the knowledge and skills to demonstrate how your organisation is already meeting the aged care standards, identify any gaps and most importantly develop action plans to address gaps and evaluation strategies to monitor their implementation.



Can the GNCs be used to structure an organisational learning and development program?

Yes – the GNCs can be used by an organisation to structure a learning and development program.

The 11 Core Competencies were derived from a rigorous research study using an e-Delphi consensus survey method where over 400 aged care colleagues agreed that these 11 Core Competencies reflect the work of Registered Nurses working with older people and their family carers. The 33 Domains of Practice that are used to explain in detail the work of Registered Nurses across the 11 Core Competencies were created by and agreed upon by these 400+ aged care colleagues. We provide these Core Competencies and Domains of Practice to organisations as a strategy to inform their learning and development program over the next three years.

Some organisations adopt each of the 11 Core Competencies as a ‘topic of the month’ when they design their learning and development strategy. This can be repeated annually or spread across a three-year program. These Core Competencies are priority areas that are evidence based and therefore you can be sure that by using the Core Competencies to structure your learning and development strategy the content of your learning and development plan is evidence based.

Can an organisation use the GNCs to structure a ‘New Grad year’?

The GNCs are designed to provide organisations with resources that can easily be used to structure a new graduate year. The 11 Core Competencies and the Essential Level of Practice could be used to inform all content for a New Graduate Year.

Will my portfolio get me any academic credit?

Yes – all participants who successfully complete a portfolio at either essential **or** enhanced level will be eligible for six credit points towards a postgraduate degree at UOW. For example, Graduate Certificate or Master of Science in ‘Person Centred Dementia Care’ or ‘Leadership in Gerontology and Rehabilitation Studies’.

All participants who successfully complete their portfolio will receive a certificate from UOW demonstrating completion of prior learning equivalent to a UOW postgraduate subject.

Can enrolled nurses participate in the GNCs program?

Yes - If an organisation or individual considers that this program reflects the role of an Enrolled Nurse (EN) we are happy to provide access to the resources for ENs.

Are there any Strategies for successful completion of the GNCs program after a career break from nursing or are new to aged care?

Yes - The GNCs program can help practitioners make a successful transition into aged care following a career break or a career change.

Some practitioners may be returning to nursing after a career break or starting a new nursing career in aged care. These practitioners may lack confidence in their specialist gerontological nursing competence. Working through the GNCs program with a mentor, will enable practitioners to identify specific areas where their knowledge and skills are lacking and develop an action plan to seek out learning opportunities that will address those gaps and enable the practitioners to demonstrate their competence as a specialist gerontological nurse.