

Module Three Assignment: Competencies, Essentials, and Accreditation

Mary McClain

Auburn University, Graduate College of Nursing

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Professional organizations create core concepts, domains, and competencies that illustrate the uniqueness of the nursing profession, reflecting the diversity of practice settings yet sharing a common language (DeNisco & Stewart, 2023). Therefore, Auburn University's College of Nursing (AUCON) is responsible for meeting certain professional organizational standards ensuring quality education is understood by healthcare professionals, employers, students, faculty, and the public. Nurse practitioner (NP) curricular regulatory bodies including the National organizations of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF), the Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing (MSN Essentials), the National Task Force on Quality Education of Nurse Practitioners, interprofessional competencies, and the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) competencies ensure quality education and standards for NP practice. This paper discusses how these professional organizations help shape AUCON's NP program.

NONPF Core Competencies

The NONPF is a specialty organization that sets the standards for NP programs and includes nine core competency areas with various sub-competency standards (NONPF, 2017). The NONPF core competency areas include scientific foundation, leadership, quality, practice inquiry, technology, information literacy, policy, health delivery system, ethics, and independent practice. The components must be met for role development and help develop NP curriculum requirements (DeNisco & Stewart, 2023). Therefore, NONPF helps shape AUCON's NP program by ensuring courses reflect the nine core competency areas. Among the nine core competencies, three competencies have assisted and shaped my NP student role, including leadership, technology and information literacy, and independent practice. The competencies have been exemplified in my NP program clinical experience and by my clinical preceptor.

NONPF (2017) highlighted that leadership competencies include assuming complex and advanced leadership roles while initiating and guiding change. Additionally, the advanced role includes positive collaboration with multiple stakeholders while improving access, quality, and cost-effective healthcare. My preceptor portrays a strong relationship with her fellow NP colleagues and the clinic's collaborating physician. During clinical, my preceptor collaborates with clinic staff, constantly searching for the best treatment plan for the patient with access and cost in mind.

The competency also includes communicating practice knowledge both orally and in writing. The current module three assignment displays the sub-competency standard proving that the NP student can communicate professionally in writing. The competency also includes participating in professional organizations and activities that influence nursing and population health outcomes (NONPF, 2017). My preceptor displays a leadership role by being an active member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), American Nurses Association (ANA), and the Alabama States Nurses Association (ASNA). By mentoring alongside a NP with high leadership skills, I can see first-hand how such standards shape the NP role.

According to NONPF (2017), technology and information literacy competencies include integrating appropriate technologies for knowledge management, translating technical and scientific health, demonstrating information literacy skills in complex decision making, and using technology systems that capture data on variables (NONPF, 2017). Increasing technology and information literacy, my preceptor has the option to hand out samples and prescribe the Freestyle Libre Glucose Monitoring System. The Freestyle Libre is a disposable sensor worn on the patient's arm for up to 14 days and connects via a smartphone app (Blum, 2018). Therefore,

the patient can decrease multiple fingersticks and receive glucose information on demand. The patient can capture the data on the smartphone app and bring the information to the next clinic visit. The patient can also schedule a telephone visit to adjust medications (Blum, 2018).

However, as an NP student, I utilize technology in various ways, including access to canvas for recording and assignments, electronic textbooks, zoom, and online apps such as Epocrates to broaden my overall knowledge of NP concepts.

NONPF (2017) discussed independent practice as another essential NP standard.

Moreover, the competency includes functioning as a licensed independent practitioner and demonstrating the highest level of accountability for professional practice. The NP manages acute and chronic health problems while prescribing medications within the scope of practice. The NP uses advanced health assessment skills to differentiate normal from abnormal findings and employs screening and diagnostic strategies to develop diagnoses (NONPF, 2017). In my clinical rotation, I demonstrate the competency by performing each patient encounter independently with the guidance of my preceptor. I always utilize skills from previous nursing courses to ensure my assessment is correct and concise while highlighting all abnormal findings. After all the information is obtained, I present the patient to my preceptor and tell her what diagnostic testing I would order and what medications I would prescribe. The NONPF core areas of leadership, technology and information literacy, and independent practice are demonstrated through required academic courses and supervised clinical rotations.

MSN Essentials

The *new essentials* of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2021) include ten identified domains and domain descriptions in terms of concepts, competencies, and sub-competencies building the nursing curriculum. The *new essentials* were released in 2021 as

an intentional departure from previous versions of essentials that were aligned with an academic degree (AACN, 2021). Therefore, the domains presented create consistency in NP program outcomes and emphasize learning through demonstrations and attainment of competencies and necessary skill sets. The MSN essentials shape NP programs by providing competencies that build and progress from entry-level competencies to advanced education in nursing. The competencies are integrated throughout and across the curriculum as the NP student progresses through the AUCON program.

The National Task Force on Quality Education of Nurse Practitioners

The National Task Force on Quality NP Education (2016) is a multi-organization collaboration that has established a framework with criteria and measurable objectives for NP educational programs. The criteria verify that each program integrates certain core courses, including advanced physiology, pathophysiology, physical health assessment, and pharmacology prior to or concurrent with supervised clinical hours (National Task Force on Quality NP Education, 2016). The AUCON utilizes the framework to shape the NP program by aligning with these standards ensuring the student is fully prepared for the national certification exam and the NP role.

Interprofessional Collaboration Competency

According to DeNisco and Rosenbloom (2023), the NP role requires interprofessional collaboration (IPC) with other healthcare team members to deliver high-quality patient care. Therefore, the World Health Organization developed a global framework for IPC, setting the stage for a “collaborative practice ready” workforce. According to the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (2016), the four core competency domains revolve around establishing values, ethics, roles, responsibilities, interprofessional communications, and teamwork into

clinical practice. AUCON's NP program ensures students are knowledgeable of the four domains by incorporating these competencies in course material and during supervised clinical hours.

Graduate QSEN Competency and Program Accreditation

The Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) aims to develop curriculum and competencies in patient-centered care, teamwork and collaboration, evidence-based practice (EBP), quality improvement, safety, and informatics (Rosenbloom et al., 2023). Moreover, the QSEN initiative aids the NP's ability to analyze, synthesize, and utilize EBP research findings in clinical practice. The AUCON displayed QSEN competencies by including EBP didactic courses into the program requirements. The program also utilizes the QSEN initiative to ensure graduates possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to deliver high-quality, safe patient care.

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) is an anonymous accrediting agency that ensures the quality and integrity of nursing educational and residency programs (CCNE, 2018). AUCON receives accreditation from the CCNE, holding the program accountable to the public and the profession to apply, evaluate, and measure effective educational practices (CCNE, 2018). Therefore, the accrediting agency supports and encourages quality improvement and serves as AUCON's statement of good standing.

Conclusion

The NP program at AUCON utilizes various professional organizations to establish essential program outcome competencies. Each professional organization provides necessary practice standards that shape the NP educational curriculum and professional role. Being aware of and understanding each competency enhances overall performance as a student and eventually as a practicing NP. Upon AUCON graduation, the student should be able to demonstrate each competency while providing safe and effective nursing care.

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