

# Employing a Nurse in a General Practice

General practice nursing is one of the fastest growing areas of the healthcare sector with approximately 14,600 nurses working in practices across Australia in 2025, according to the RACGP.

Employing a nurse can reduce patient waiting times, improve access to primary care services and relieve workforce pressure on general practitioners.

The role of nurses may vary between practices, depending on the local populations' health needs and the complementary services provided by the rest of the multidisciplinary practice team.

## Scope of practice

A nurse's scope of practice covers that in which they are educated, authorised, competent and confident to perform, which is influenced by their:

- Registration - available as either a registered nurse (RN), an enrolled nurse (EN), or a midwife.
- Endorsement such as a nurse practitioner (NP)
- Educational background,
- Previous nursing experience, and
- Clinical specialisation.

## Duties and key responsibilities

A nurse may be a Registered Nurse or an Enrolled Nurse. The duties and key responsibilities of a nurse employed in a general practice can vary and include:

### Clinical care

- Provide proficient, evidence-based chronic disease management,
- Conduct preventative health screening,
- Demonstrate organisational values including respect, dignity and cultural safety,
- Plan and manage holistic patient care in consultation with medical staff while acting as a patient advocate,
- Provide acute care as required to patients,
- Liaise with hospitals, community agencies and allied health to coordinate patient care,

- Share innovative practice and work as an integrated team.

### General practice environment

- Maintain accurate documentation using clinical software including recall/ reminder systems, IT and information management,
- Apply knowledge of funding models to deliver optimal care,
- Implement GP Chronic Condition Management Plans in consultation with GPs and the multidisciplinary team,
- Demonstrate an understanding of workplace health and safety principles,
- Ensure quality systems are in place and reviewed regularly,
- Manage supplies and clinical resources within budget,
- Ensure clinical governance and safe use of medicines following federal/ state legislation.

### Team-based care and integrated practice

- Work as a member of the multidisciplinary team, reflecting the values of the organisation,
- Work as an inclusive member of the primary care team, providing appropriate mentoring and guidance for registrars and medical and nursing students (applicable to Registered Nurses),
- Demonstrate a high level of teamwork, support, engagement and communication with the general practice nursing team,
- Work on quality improvement strategies with the practice team to bring efficiencies to practice systems, procedures and clinical outcomes.

### Professional practice

- Maintain awareness of current legislation to ensure compliance with all statutory and regulatory obligations,
- Ensure care is evidence-based and delivered using clinical guidelines and practice to underpin competency,

[WWW.PRACTICEASSIST.COM.AU](http://WWW.PRACTICEASSIST.COM.AU)

WA Primary Health Alliance is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the PHN Program.

Rural Health West is funded by the Australian Government and WA Country Health Service.

*Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.*

*Disclaimer: While the Australian Government has contributed funding support for this resource the information contained within it does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government and has not been endorsed by the Australian Government.*

## Fact Sheet

V4 /July 2025

- Use health literacy principles to lead patient education, community health and outreach programs as well as health promotion initiatives,
- Practice within the organisation's policy and the nursing standards and codes,
- Undertake continuing professional development,
- Review systems and procedures to ensure efficient and accessible care,
- Utilise practice data to identify areas for quality improvement,
- Provide leadership to nursing team and other staff,
- Provide direct and indirect supervision and mentoring to Enrolled Nurses within the organisation (applicable to Registered Nurses).

### Nursing Registration

Nurses must be registered as either a Registered Nurse (RN) or an Enrolled Nurse (EN) with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), which manages the process on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

A Nurse Practitioner (NP) is a Registered Nurse who is further educated and authorised to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role.

General practices should establish workplace processes to ensure their nurses' registrations are current. To view the public register of all nurses who are registered in Australia, visit the [AHPRA website](#)

### Supervising Enrolled Nurses

Enrolled Nurses are qualified to perform a wide range of nursing activities. However, an Enrolled Nurse cannot practice independently and must be supervised by a Registered Nurse. A General Practitioner cannot supervise an Enrolled Nurse.

When an Enrolled Nurse is employed in a general practice, it is important to have a policy in place that outlines clear pathways for professional supervision by a Registered Nurse.

### Enrolled Nurses administering medicines

To administer medicines, Enrolled Nurses must have successfully completed the relevant medication administration education as required by the NMBA. Enrolled Nurses who cannot administer medicines will have the following notation on their registration: *Does not hold Board-approved qualification in administration of medicines.*

### Professional indemnity insurance

All nurses must be covered by professional indemnity insurance to practice and maintain their registration.

Employers and nurses should discuss whether the practice's insurance covers nurses employed in the practice for professional indemnity.

If they are not covered by their employer's professional indemnity insurance, nurses must arrange their own individual policy.

### Professional Standards and Codes

To practice in Australia, nurses must adhere to the professional standards and codes of the NMBA.

The NMBA's professional standards and codes define the practice and behaviour of nurses including:

- Standards for practice
- Codes of conduct
- Codes of ethics.

The professional standards and codes are available to view and download on the [NMBA website](#).

### Further information

To find out more about employing a nurse in a general practice, refer to the links below:

- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia [Professional codes and guidelines](#)
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency [Online register of practitioners](#)
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation [Continuing professional development](#)
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association [General practice nursing](#)
- Western Australian Department of Health [Nursing - further education](#)
- Healthy Practices [The benefits of having a nurse in your practice](#)
- [Australian College of Nurse Practitioners](#)

WWW.PRACTICEASSIST.COM.AU

WA Primary Health Alliance is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the PHN Program.

Rural Health West is funded by the Australian Government and WA Country Health Service.

*Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.*

*Disclaimer: While the Australian Government has contributed funding support for this resource the information contained within it does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government and has not been endorsed by the Australian Government.*