

Adult Nursing: Field Specific competencies

A new version of the Test of Competence for nurses and midwives launches on 2 August 2021. This document relates to the legacy 2014 version of the Test of Competence for nursing and midwifery.

For the latest information visit www.nmc.org.uk/toc

Adult Nursing: Field Specific competencies

Competency (Adult nurses) and application	Domain and ESC	Suitable items for Multi-choice Exam: Nursing Field specific (E* = Critical item when related to patient and public safety and if tested in MCQ must be passed) (20Qs)	Suitable items for testing within OSCE's E* = Critical item when related to patient or public safety and if tested in scenario/skill must be passed
1.1 Adult nurses must understand and apply current legislation to all service users, paying special attention to the protection of vulnerable people, including those with complex needs arising from ageing, cognitive impairment, long-term conditions and those approaching the end of life.	D1 Professional values Competency 1.		
	Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements to older people with complex needs	E*	E*
	Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements to people with complex needs and cognitive impairment		
	Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements to people with complex needs and Long term conditions.		
	Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements to people with complex needs as they near end of life		
	Articulates the underpinning values of the Code(NMC, 2018). Care, Compassion and Communication CCC1 ,1.	Y	Y
	Adopts a principled approach to care underpinned by the Code CCC4,3.	Y	Y

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	Upholds peoples legal rights and speaks out when these are at risk of being compromised CCC4.4.	Y	Y
	Is acceptant of differing cultural traditions, beliefs, UK legal frameworks and professional ethics when planning care with people and their families and their carers CCC4.5.	Y	Y
	Through reflection and evaluation demonstrates commitment to personal and professional development and lifelong learning CCC5.13.	Y	
	Acts professionally and autonomously in situations where there may be limits to confidentiality, for example, public interest and protection from harm CCC7.5.	Y	
	Works within legal frameworks for data protection including access to and storage of records CCC7.8.	Y	Y
	Works within legal frameworks when seeking consent CCC8, 5.	Y	Y
	Assesses and responds to the needs and wishes of carers and relatives in relation to information and consent. CCC8,6	Y	Y

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	Shares information safely with colleagues and across agency boundaries for the protection of individuals and the public. OAC11, 6.	Y	Y
	Works within ethical and legal frameworks and local policies to deal with complaints and concerns. OAC12,9.	Y	Y
	Challenges the practice of self and others across the multi-professional team OAC 14, 7	Y	Y
	Works within the requirements of the cCde (NMC, 2018) in delegating care and when care is delegated to them. OAC15, 2.	Y	
	Recognises and addresses deficits in knowledge and skill in self and others and takes appropriate action OAC15,5.	Y	
	Takes decisions and is able to answer for these decisions when required OAC 16,2	Y	Y
	Appropriately reports concerns regarding staffing and skill-mix and acts to resolve issues that may impact on the safety of service users within local policy frameworks OAC 17,9.	Y	

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	Works within legal and ethical frameworks that support promoting safety and positive risk taking. OAC18, 13.	Y	Y
	Applies research based evidence to practice OAC 9,14	Y	Y
	Works within the limitations of the role and recognises own level of competence. CCC1, 2	Y	Y
	Applies legislation that relates to the management of specific infection risk at a local and national level. Infection Preventions and Control IPC22,8.	Y	Y
	Assists people to make safe and informed choices about their medicines. MM.40,5.	Y	Y
	Applies legislation to practice in safe and effective ordering, receiving, storing, administering and disposal of drugs, including controlled drugs in both primary and secondary care settings and ensures others do the same Medicine Management MM34,4.	Y	Y
	Assesses the person's ability to safely self-administer their medicines. MM40,4	Y	Y

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	Gives clear instructions and explanation and checks that a person understands the use of medicines and treatment options MM40,3.	Y	Y
	Fully understands all methods of supplying medicines, for example Medicines Act exemptions, patient group directions(PGDs), clinical management plans and other forms of prescribing MM34,6	Y	Y
3.1 Adult nurses must promote the concept, knowledge and practice of self-care with people with acute and long-term conditions, using a range of communication skills and strategies.	D2 Communication and Interpersonal skills Competency 3		
	Acute medical and surgical conditions	E*	E*
	Long term conditions	E*	E*
	Communicates effectively and sensitively in different settings, using a range of methods and skills CCC6, 8.	Y	Y
	Consistently shows ability to communicate safely and effectively with people providing guidance for others. CCC6,7	Y	Y

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	Provides accurate and comprehensive written and verbal reports based on sound evidence. CCC6, 9.	Y	Y
	Provides information to people and their carers. NFM.28,7.	Y	Y
	Uses strategies to enhance communication and remove barriers to effective communication minimising the risk to people from lack of or poor communication. CCC6, 6.	Y	Y
1.1 Adult nurses must be able to recognise and respond to the needs of all people who come into their care including babies, children and young people, pregnant and postnatal women, people with mental health problems, people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, older people, and people with long term problems such as cognitive impairment.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making competency 1.		
	Responding to the needs of babies and children	E*	
	Responding to the needs of young people	Y	
	Responding to the needs of pregnant women	Y	

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	Responding to the needs of postnatal women	Y	
	Responding to the needs of people with mental health problems	Y	
	Demonstrates clinical confidence through sound knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to field. CCC1,8.	Y	
	Recognises the significance of information and acts in relation to who does or does not need to know. CCC,7,6	Y	
	Refers to specialists when required. OAC9,19	Y	
	Works within the Code (NMC 2018) and in keeping with guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery students (NMC,2010) and in collaboration with people and their carer's to meet responsibilities for prevention and control of infection. IPC21,7	Y	
	Recognises and acts upon the need to refer to specialist advisors as appropriate. IPC23,5.	Y	

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	Refers to specialist members of the multi- disciplinary team for additional or specialist advice. NFM27, 8.	Y	
	Acts appropriately in sharing information to enable and enhance care with carers, multi-disciplinary teams and across agency boundaries. CCC7,7.	Y	
	Responding to the needs of people with physical disability	Y	Y
	Responding to the needs of people with learning disabilities	E*	E*
	Responding to the needs of older people	E*	E*
	Responding to people with long term problems	Y	Y
	Demonstrates clinical confidence through sound knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to field. CCC1,8.	Y	Y

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	Recognises the significance of information and acts in relation to who does or does not need to know. CCC,7,6	Y	Y
	Refers to specialists when required. OAC9,19	Y	Y
	Works within the Code(NMC,2018) and in keeping with guidance on professional conduct for nursing and midwifery students (NMC,2010) and in collaboration with people and their carers to meet responsibilities for prevention and control of infection. IPC21,7	Y	Y
	Recognises and acts upon the need to refer to specialist advisors as appropriate. IPC23,5.	Y	Y
	Refers to specialist members of the multi- disciplinary team for additional or specialist advice. NFM27, 8.	Y	Y
	Acts appropriately in sharing information to enable and enhance care with carers, multi-disciplinary teams and across agency boundaries. CCC7,7.	Y	Y
3.1 Adult nurses must safely use a range of diagnostic skills, employing appropriate technology, to assess the needs of service users.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 3		

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	A range of diagnostic skills using technology	E*	E*
	Actively empowers people to be involved in the assessment and care planning process. CCC2,2.	Y	Y
	Accurately undertakes and records base line assessments of weight, height, temperature, pulse, respiration and blood pressure using manual and electronic devices. OAC9,2		Y
	Takes and records accurate measurements of weight, height, length, body mass index and other appropriate measures of nutritional status. NFM28,1		Y
	Measures documents and interprets vital signs and acts autonomously and appropriately on findings OAC 9,21	Y	Y
	Acts autonomously and appropriately when faced with sudden deterioration in people's physical or psychological condition or emergency situation, abnormal vital signs, collapse, cardiac arrest, dehydration, self harm, extremely challenging behaviour, attempted suicide. OAC9,20.	Y	Y
	Performs routine diagnostic tests, for example urinalysis, under supervision as part of the assessment process (near client testing). OAC9,7.		Y

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	In partnership with the person, their carers and their families, makes a holistic, person centred and systematic assessment of physical, emotional, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual needs, including risk, and together, develops a comprehensive personalised plan of nursing care. OAC9,12.	Y	Y
	Acts autonomously and takes responsibility for collaborative assessment and planning of care delivery with the person, their cares and their family. OAC9,13.	Y	Y
	Provides accurate and comprehensive written reports based on best possible evidence. CCC6,9.	Y	Y
	Works within a public health framework when assessing the needs of people, communities and populations within the UK. OAC9,22.	Y	Y
4.1 Adult nurses must safely use invasive and non-invasive procedures, medical devices, and current technological and pharmacological interventions, where relevant, in medical and surgical nursing practice, providing information and taking account of individual needs and preferences.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 4		
	Invasive and non-invasive procedures	Y	E*
	Safe use of medical devices	Y	E*

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	safe use of current technology	Y	E*
	Pharmacological interventions	E*	E*
	Medical nursing context	E*	E*
	Surgical nursing context	E*	E*
	Detects, records and reports if necessary, deterioration or improvement and takes appropriate action autonomously. OAC 10,8	Y	Y
	In partnership with people and their carers, plans, delivers and documents care that demonstrates effective risk assessment, infection prevention and control. IPC21,8.	Y	Y
	Initiates and maintains appropriate measure to prevent and control infection according to route of transmission of micro-organism, in order to protect service users, members of the public and other staff. IPC.22,7	Y	Y

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	Demonstrates effective hand hygiene and the appropriate use of standard infection control precautions when caring for people. IPC,22,1		Y
	Works within legal and ethical frameworks taking account of personal choice. NFM31.6	Y	Y
	Ensure provision is made for replacement meals for anyone who is unable to eat at the usual time, or unable to prepare their own meals. FNM30,7.	Y	Y
	Uses knowledge of dietary, physical, social and psychological factors to inform practice being aware of those that can contribute to poor diet, cause or be caused by ill health. NFM27,6	Y	Y
	Promotes health and well-being, self care and independence by teaching and empowering people and carers to make choices in coping with the effects of treatment and the ongoing nature and likely consequences of a condition including death and dying. OAC9,16.	Y	Y
	Provides safe and effective care in partnership with people and their carers within the context of people's ages, conditions and developmental stages. OAC,10,6	Y	Y
	Discusses in a non-judgemental way how diet can improve health and the risks associated with not eating appropriately. NFM27,9.	Y	

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	Provides support and advice to carers when the person they are caring for has specific dietary needs. NFM27,11.	Y	Y
	In liaison with a registered midwife provides essential advice and support to mothers who are breast feeding. NFM27,10	Y	
	Explains medical devices to people and checks understanding. OAC20,5.	Y	Y
	Demonstrates awareness of a range of commonly recognised approaches to managing symptoms, for example, relaxation, distraction and lifestyle advice. MM35,7	Y	Y
	Accesses commonly used evidence based sources relating to the safe and effective management of medicine. MM40,1	Y	Y
	Safely and effectively administers and, where necessary, prepares medicines via routes and methods commonly used and maintains accurate records. MM38,4.	Y	Y
4.2 Adult nurses must recognise and respond to the changing needs of adults, families and carers during terminal illness. They must be aware of how treatment goals and service users' choices may change at different stages of progressive illness, loss and bereavement.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 4		

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	Understand changing needs of adults, families and carers during terminal illness	Y	Y
	Detects, records and reports if necessary, deterioration or improvement and takes appropriate action autonomously. OAC 10,8	Y	Y
	In partnership with people and their carers, plans, delivers and documents care that demonstrates effective risk assessment, infection prevention and control. IPC21,8.	Y	Y
	Initiates and maintains appropriate measure to prevent and control infection according to route of transmission of micro-organism, in order to protect service users, members of the public and other staff. IPC.22,7	Y	Y
	Demonstrates effective hand hygiene and the appropriate use of standard infection control precautions when caring for people. IPC,22,1		Y
	Works within legal and ethical frameworks taking account of personal choice. NFM31.6	Y	Y
	Ensure provision is made for replacement meals for anyone who is unable to eat at the usual time, or unable to prepare their own meals. FNM30,7.	Y	Y

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	<p>Uses knowledge of dietary, physical, social and psychological factors to inform practice being aware of those that can contribute to poor diet, cause or be caused by ill health. NFM27,6</p>	Y	Y
	<p>Promotes health and well-being, self care and independence by teaching and empowering people and carers to make choices in coping with the effects of treatment and the ongoing nature and likely consequences of a condition including death and dying. OAC9,16.</p>	Y	Y
	<p>Provides safe and effective care in partnership with people and their carers within the context of people's ages, conditions and developmental stages. OAC,10,6</p>	Y	Y
	<p>Discusses in a non-judgemental way how diet can improve health and the risks associated with not eating appropriately. NFM27,9.</p>	Y	
	<p>Provides support and advice to carers when the person they are caring for has specific dietary needs. NFM27,11.</p>	Y	Y
	<p>In liaison with a registered midwife provides essential advice and support to mothers who are breast feeding. NFM27,10</p>	Y	
	<p>Explains medical devices to people and checks understanding. OAC20,5.</p>	Y	Y

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	Demonstrates awareness of a range of commonly recognised approaches to managing symptoms, for example, relaxation, distraction and lifestyle advice. MM 35, 7	Y	Y
	Accesses commonly used evidence based sources relating to the safe and effective management of medicine. MM40,1	Y	Y
	Safely and effectively administers and, where necessary, prepares medicines via routes and methods commonly used and maintains accurate records. MM38,4.	Y	Y
7.1 Adult nurses must recognise the early signs of illness in people of all ages. They must make accurate assessments and start appropriate and timely management of those who are acutely ill, at risk of clinical deterioration, or require emergency care.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 7		
	Recognise early signs of illness in people of all ages	E*	E*
	Make accurate initial assessment	E*	E*
	Manage acute illness	E*	E*

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	Manage clinical deterioration	E*	E*
	Emergency care	E*	E*
	Anticipates how people might feel in a given situation and responds with kindness and empathy to provide physical and emotional comfort. CCC5,6.	Y	Y
	Listens to, watches for, and responds to verbal and non-verbal cues. CCC5, 8.		Y
	Acts autonomously and appropriately when faced with sudden deterioration in people's physical or psychological condition or emergency situations, abnormal vital signs, collapse, cardiac arrest, self-harm, extremely challenging behaviour, attempted suicide. OAC,9,20	Y	Y
	Recognises stress in others and provides appropriate support or guidance ensuring safety to people at all times. OAC 17,10	Y	Y
	Refers to specialists when required. OAC9,19	Y	Y

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	Acts autonomously to initiate appropriate action when malnutrition is identified or where a person's nutritional status worsens, and report this as an adverse event. NFM 28,10	Y	Y
	Identifies signs of dehydration and acts to correct these. NFM,29,6	Y	Y
	Recognises, responds appropriately and reports when people have difficulty eating or swallowing.NFM. 31,1.	Y	Y
	Takes action to ensure that, where there are problems with eating and swallowing, nutritional status is not compromised.NFM31,3.	Y	Y
	Reports adverse incidents and near misses. MM 36,5	Y	Y
7.2 Adult nurses must understand the normal physiological and psychological processes of pregnancy and childbirth. They must work with the midwife and other professionals and agencies to provide basic nursing care to pregnant women and families during pregnancy and after childbirth. They must be able to respond safely and effectively in an emergency to safeguard the health of mother and baby.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 7		
	Recognise specific risks to health and wellbeing of pregnant women and babies and respond effectively in an emergency to safeguard the health of mother and baby.	E*	

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	Anticipates how people might feel in a given situation and responds with kindness and empathy to provide physical and emotional comfort. CCC5,6.	Y	
	Listens to, watches for, and responds to verbal and non-verbal cues. CCC5, 8.	Y	
	Acts autonomously and appropriately when faced with sudden deterioration in people's physical or psychological condition or emergency situations, abnormal vital signs, collapse, cardiac arrest, self-harm, extremely challenging behaviour, attempted suicide. OAC,9,20	Y	
	Recognises stress in others and provides appropriate support or guidance ensuring safety to people at all times. OAC 17,10	Y	
	Refers to specialists when required. OAC9,19	Y	
	Acts autonomously to initiate appropriate action when malnutrition is identified or where a person's nutritional status worsens, and report this as an adverse event. NFM 28,10	Y	
	Identifies signs of dehydration and acts to correct these. NFM,29,6	Y	

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	Recognises, responds appropriately and reports when people have difficulty eating or swallowing. NFM. 31,1.	Y	
	Takes action to ensure that, where there are problems with eating and swallowing, nutritional status is not compromised. NFM31,3.	Y	
	Reports adverse incidents and near misses. MM 36,5	Y	
8.1 Adult nurses must work in partnership with people who have long-term conditions that require medical or surgical nursing, and their families and carers, to provide therapeutic nursing interventions, optimise health and wellbeing, facilitate choice and maximise self-care and self-management.	D3 Nursing practice and decision making Competency 8		
	Partnership working with people, families and carers with long term conditions requiring medical or surgical interventions	E*	E*
	Is sensitive and empowers people to meet their own needs and make choices and considers with the person and their carer(s) their capability to care. CCC,2,8	Y	Y
	Acts with dignity and respect to ensure that people who are unable to meet their activities of living have choices about how these are met and feel empowered to do as much as possible for themselves. CCC2,12.	Y	Y

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	Actively helps people to identify and use their strengths to achieve their goals and aspirations. CCC2,14	Y	Y
	Uses helpful and therapeutic strategies to enable people to understand treatments and other interventions in order to give informed consent. CCC,8,4	Y	Y
	Demonstrates respect for the autonomy and rights of people to withhold consent in relation to treatment within legal frameworks and in relation to people's safety. CCC,8,7	Y	Y
	Assess the person's ability to safely self-administer their medicines MM40,4.	Y	Y
	Supports people to make appropriate the choices and changes to eating patterns, taking account of dietary preferences, religious and cultural requirements, treatments and special diets needed for health reasons. NFM.27,7.	Y	Y
	Promotes health and well-being, self care and independence by teaching and empowering people and carers to make choices in coping with the effects of treatment and the ongoing nature and likely consequences of a condition including death and dying. OAC9,16.	Y	Y

Online Resources

Below are some useful online links which can be used to support preparation for the NMC's Test of Competence. These online links are not exhaustive, and many other useful sources will exist. The links are designed to help candidates identify gaps as they explore each domain and competence. Candidates should consider the need for revision and consolidation of knowledge before taking the test of competence. Please copy and paste the links into your web browser to access the information.

<http://dementiachallenge.dh.gov.uk/>

<http://restraintreductionnetwork.org/conference-resources/>

<http://scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Services/Long-Term-Conditions>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/strategies/integration/?lang=en>

http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=117

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/>

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/living-longterm-conditions.pdf>

<http://www.endoflifecare-intelligence.org.uk/home>

<http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/providing-integrated-care-older-people-complex-needs>

http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_document/managing-people-long-term-conditions-gp-inquiry-research-paper-mar11.pdf

http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_pdf/Library-reading-list-bme-older-people.pdf

<http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/time-to-think-differently/trends/disease-and-disability/long-term-conditions-multi-morbidity>

<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/help-information/learning-disability-a-z/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/mental-health-services-explained/Pages/TheMentalHealthAct.aspx>

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/>

<http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/mental-health-act-the-mind-guide/>

<http://www.mwscot.org.uk/the-law/mental-health-act/>

<http://www.ncpc.org.uk/palliative-care-explained>

<http://www.nhs.uk/planners/end-of-life-care/pages/end-of-life-care.aspx>

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG62>

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG84>

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/Population-groups/Children-and-young-people>

<http://www.nice.org.uk/resources/Service-delivery--organisation-and-staffing/End-of-life-care>

<http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/>

<http://www.palliativecareguidelines.scot.nhs.uk/>
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/dementia>
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/royal-college-of-nursing/documents/publications/2013/june/pub-004439.pdf>
<http://www.sageusa.org/resources/publications.cfm?ID=107>
<http://www.scie.org.uk/>
<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/elearning/index.asp>
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Support/Older-People/ReshapingCare>
<http://www.unfpa.org/emergencies/motherhood.htm>
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/87552>
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