

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1375/20-21(06)

Ref : CB4/PL/HS

Panel on Health Services

**Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 20 August 2021**

Voluntary Scheme on Advanced and Specialized Nursing Practice

Whilst the definition of advanced nursing practice varies among places, it is a well-recognized global trend to promote advanced and specialized nursing practice. In Hong Kong, there are various training institutions, healthcare service providers and nursing professional organizations providing advanced and specialized nursing education and training. To take forward advanced and specialized nursing practice training in a coordinated and effective manner, the Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") has set up a task force in 2016 with wide participation from the nursing profession to study the applicability and practicability of introducing specialization of nursing practice in Hong Kong.

2. In April 2018, FHB invited the Nursing Council of Hong Kong ("NCHK") to formulate a voluntary scheme on advanced and specialized nursing practice ("the Scheme"), with a view to advancing the professional competence of nurses; and paving the way for setting up a statutory registration system in the long run. NCHK was invited to, among others,:

- (a) prescribe guidelines on the scope of practice and/or core competencies¹ of nurses with advanced expertise and standards;
- (b) devise a mechanism by setting training standards and recognizing training institutes; and
- (c) explore the feasibility of setting up a mechanism for advanced/specialized practice register under NCHK.

¹ Core competencies are construed as essential competencies that a nurse is expected to possess at entry to advanced nursing practice as an outcome of their nursing education and experience in a specific area of practice in order to provide the public with safe, effective and ethical care.

3. After conducting a two-month public consultation exercise, NCHK submitted a proposal on the implementation of the Scheme to FHB in July 2019. In response, FHB asked NCHK to finalize the core competencies of 16 specialties. Such specialties include:

- (i) Cardiac Nursing;
- (ii) Community, Primary and Public Health Nursing;
- (iii) Critical Care Nursing;
- (iv) Education and Research in Nursing;
- (v) Emergency Care Nursing;
- (vi) Gerontology Nursing;
- (vii) Gynaecology Nursing;
- (viii) Infection Control in Nursing;
- (ix) Management in Nursing;
- (x) Medical Nursing;
- (xi) Mental Health Nursing;
- (xii) Oncology Nursing;
- (xiii) Orthopaedic Nursing;
- (xiv) Paediatric Nursing;
- (xv) Perioperative and Anaesthesia Nursing; and
- (xvi) Surgical Nursing.

4. To this end, the Hong Kong Academy of Nursing and its Colleges have been invited to set up 16 panels to formulate the relevant core competencies for each individual specialty. Proposed core competencies of the first batch of specialties were endorsed and approved by NCHK in December 2020. The scope of core competencies of an advanced practice nurse builds on the following five competence areas required of registered nurses:

- (i) professional, legal and ethical nursing practice;
- (ii) health promotion and health education;
- (iii) management and leadership;
- (iv) evidence-based practice and research; and
- (v) personal and professional development.

5. The policy initiatives of FHB for the 2019 Policy Address included, among others, a voluntary registration scheme for the development of nursing specialties, which aimed to pave way for the eventual setting up of a statutory registration system. The Scheme was launched on 27 January 2021.

6. A currently employed registered nurse ("RN") in Hong Kong meeting the following criteria should be eligible to apply for recognition as an advanced practice nurse under the Scheme:

- (a) having obtained a post-RN registration Clinical Master in Nursing/Health Science² in the related specialty; or
- (b) having obtained a post-RN registration Master degree in health related stream³ and completed the Post-registration Certificate Course/Hospital Authority's Specialty Nurse Recognition Scheme Certificate/recognised in-service training⁴ for at least 80 hours ; or
- (c) being a Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Nursing or equivalent; and
- (d) possessing six years of full time post-registration nursing experience immediately prior to his/her application in which at least the most recent four years must be serving in the related specialty area.

7. Applications for recognition as advanced practice nurses in specialties (vii), (ix) and (xii) referred to in paragraph 3 above have been accepted since the launch of the Scheme. The applications in respect of specialties (x) and (xiii) and specialties (iii), (v) and (xiv), as well as specialties (i), (ii), (viii) and (xvi) have been accepted since 22 March 2021, 21 June 2021 and 2 August 2021 respectively.

8. A list of advanced practice nurses in each specialty is available on the website of NCHK. As of 2 August 2021, 436 applications for recognition as advanced practice nurses have been approved.

9. The Administration will brief the Panel on Health Services on the Scheme on 20 August 2021.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
16 August 2021

² The lists of recognized master programmes, which have been compiled based on available courses recognized by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications ("HKCAAVQ"), are provided on NCHK website. They are subject to regular review and update. For non-local qualifications which are not included in the lists, applicants are required to apply for assessment services from HKCAAVQ.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The recognized in-service training should be specialty training with structured content and clear learning outcomes, and have interaction as well as assessment components.