

Graduate Nurse Practice

I have hired a Graduate Nurse (GN) as part of my team. What is appropriate practice for a GN?

- The purpose of a GN license is to enable new graduates to begin consolidating their nursing knowledge, skills and judgment. It is the optimal time for managers and staff to support and enable GNs as they transition fully into the RN role.
- GNs are not yet RNs and cannot function as or replace RNs, including performing the charge nurse role or coordination of care. (1).
- The SRNA sets professional practice limits for GNs who have not met all the requirements for registration as a RN. GNs can assist with and develop skills in RN Specialty Practices (RNSPs) but not independently perform these activities until they become a RN and have the individual competence to safely perform the activity (2).
- Graduate nurses are obligated to know and adhere to their professional scope of practice.
- The team is responsible to know and understand GN scope of practice to appropriately assign client care to GNs and to support them to function within their role.
- Both GNs and employers of GNs are obligated to verify licensure exists prior to beginning employment as a GN in any setting. (3)
- To best learn how to perform as a RN, GNs need to be supervised and mentored by RNs (4).
- Budgetary pressures must not compromise the regulatory requirements for GN practice and supervision.

Q&A

- **I am a manager with two Graduate Nurses that just completed their orientation to the unit. Can I put them into the schedule where they are responsible for a patient care team on evenings and weekends?**
No. GNs cannot replace the need for a RN. Supervision of GNs is vital to ensuring they have the support and resources to access immediately if they have questions or concerns about a patient.
- **Can GNs perform RN Specialty Practices (RNSP) independently?**
No. GNs may contribute to the RN Specialty Practice while working under the direct supervision of a RN once the GN has successfully completed the appropriate employer education. Once they are licensed as a RN and have the competencies they may independently perform RNSPs. One example is immunization administration. GNs may be able to administer flu shots within a facility while being supervised by an RN who has all of the required competencies and who is supported by policy to conduct an immunization program.
- **Can GNs be supervised by a LPN?**
No. GNs work in this role to begin to understand their responsibilities as a RN on a particular team. Transitioning from the student role to the RN role takes time and mentoring by a professional with the same responsibilities. The transition period is best

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supported when GNs work under the supervision of RNs, and in collaboration with all members of the healthcare team.

- **What level of supervision is required for GNs?**

GNs should have direct supervision when they begin their position. The RNs who work with them need to assess the GNs’ knowledge, skill and competence to appropriately assign care and to assist the GN with transitioning from their student role into an autonomous practitioner. As the GN demonstrates consolidation of their nursing skills and judgment and the RN(s) become more familiar with the level of knowledge, skills and competence of the GN, supervision can be decreased to indirect supervision. It is important to note that GNs must always be supervised – either directly or indirectly.

SRNA Resources

[Guidelines for Graduate Nurse Practice, 2012](#)

[Code of Ethics for registered nurses, 2008](#)

[Standards and Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses, 2013](#)

[Standards & Competencies for RN Specialty Practices, 2016](#)

[New Nurses of Saskatchewan Professional Practice Group](#)

External Resources

[A Process of Becoming: The Stages of New Nursing Graduate Professional Role Transition Transition Theory](#)

[New Graduate Nurse Transition Best Practices](#)

Resource Key		
Number	Resource	Reference
1	Guidelines for Graduate Nurse Practice, 2012	p. 8
2	Standards and Competencies for RN Specialty Practices (2016)	Competency 24, page 7
3	Guidelines for Graduate Nurse Practice, 2012	p. 5
4	Guidelines for Graduate Nurse Practice, 2012	p. 7

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