

# CONTINUING COMPETENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT: Have You Met Your Professional Responsibility?

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## Outcome:

At the completion of this learning activity, the participant will be able to describe and implement the self-assessment step of the continuing competence process.

The mission of the North Carolina Board of Nursing (NCBON) is to protect the public by regulating the practice of nursing. One way the Board meets this mandate is through the Continuing Competence requirement for nurses. All licensed nurses in North Carolina (NC) must meet Continuing Competence (CC) requirements in order to renew or reinstate their license.

Continuing Competence, according to the NC Administrative Code Nursing Rules, is the ongoing acquisition and application of knowledge and the decision making, psychomotor, and interpersonal skills expected of the licensed nurse resulting in nursing care that contributes to the health and welfare of clients served (NC Nursing Rules, 21 NCAC 36.0120[11]). Initial competence is demonstrated when one completes an approved program of nursing education and passes the licensure examination. Nursing practice changes quickly, however, and in order to provide safe care, all nurses must engage in reflective practice to maintain competence. Reflective practice is a process used to assess one's own practice to identify and seek learning opportunities to promote continuing competence. Reflective practice helps



nurses identify goals and progress from “novice to expert” (Benner 1984). All NC licensees seeking renewal or reinstatement must attest to having completed the Continuing Competence process (including a self assessment, development of a learning plan, and completion of specific chosen learning activities) and be prepared to submit evidence of completion if requested by the Board. This means, that if you have an active license, you will complete the entire Continuing Competence process within every 2-year renewal cycle. A good way to stay on top of this is to remember as soon as your license is renewed, it is time to begin the two year continuing competence cycle again: complete your self assessment, develop your plan, select learning opportunities, and implement your plan so that you have completed the cycle by the time you once again renew your license. This means that you will have a new self assessment, plan, and action implementation every two years! If your license is

currently inactive, you will have to demonstrate that you have met the continuing competence requirements within the immediate two years before your license can be reinstated.

The first step of the reflective practice process is for you, as a registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN), to assess your practice. This is depicted in the NCBON Continuing Competence Cycle diagram (see attached Figure 1). This self assessment includes four dimensions, is based on NCBON standards, and provides the basis from which to identify learning needs, develop a plan to meet those needs, and ultimately to meet the Continuing Competence requirements for NC nurses. This may sound very intimidating, but although the process is a bit more formal and involves a few more steps, it is not really different from what you do every single day in your practice.

Think about the following situations:

- a patient you are caring for has a problem with which you are unfamiliar;

- a medication has been ordered that you have never given before and about which you don't know anything;
- you will need to use a new, unfamiliar piece of equipment for patient care;
- you have moved to a new specialty of practice, or a new patient population is now part of your clinical area;
- you are part of a team examining a process, but do not have all of the information you need to participate fully; or,
- you are a faculty member who has been asked to teach using a new methodology.

What is the first thing that you do in every one of these situations? Right! You do a self assessment of what you need to know!

Now that you see how self assessment is part of your practice every day, let's look at the specific self assessment steps for NC BON-required Continuing Competence. This self assessment includes four dimensions of nursing practice that are applicable in all practice settings and roles. The dimensions are founded in NC nursing law and rules and are general in nature, allowing them to be applicable regardless of your specific nursing practice setting or role. When selecting standards that apply to your area of practice, you may also consider professional or specialty organization standards or agency policies. Your performance evaluation and feedback from your colleagues or manager may be other resources to help you complete a self assessment. The NC BON has created four worksheets to assist you as you examine the self assessment dimensions. Each worksheet includes broad statements that you need to rate in terms of your own practice. The possible ratings for each statement are from "1" (novice) to "5" (expert). Only you will see this self assessment, and it is important that you are honest in your rating as your self assessment will be the basis for your learning plan. Keep in mind that often it is difficult to honestly assess oneself, and you will need to thoughtfully consider the items on the worksheets so that you do not rate yourself too high or too low. Once you complete all four of the worksheets, you will use this information to identify areas of your practice that are strong, and areas where you would like to improve or gain additional knowledge and/or experience. This will lead you to the next step in the Continuing Competence process (development of a learning plan), but that is beyond what will be discussed in this article. The link for accessing each of the self assessment worksheets is included with each individual dimension discussion below so that you can pull them up now on your computer and/or print them off for use as you complete this exercise.

Let's examine the four dimensions, one at a time.

- **DIMENSION ONE: Professional Responsibility**  
(<https://www.ncbon.com/vdownloads/self-assessment/self-assessment-dimension1.pdf>).

This dimension examines your knowledge and understanding of your responsibility and accountability for ensuring that your practice, behaviors, and conduct meet the standards of the profession and comply with the NC Nursing Practice Act. On this worksheet you are asked to rate items related to the NC Law and Rules governing nursing practice, policies relevant to your practice setting, safely accepting an assignment and providing care, and seeking advice or guidance when uncertain. Take a few moments now to reflect upon these components and complete this worksheet for Dimension One.

- **DIMENSION TWO: Knowledge Based Practice**  
(<https://www.ncbon.com/vdownloads/self-assessment/self-assessment-dimension2.pdf>).

This dimension examines your knowledge and understanding of your responsibility and accountability for having the knowledge and skills necessary to provide safe, competent nursing practice. On this worksheet you are asked to rate items related how you gain and use knowledge, how you remain current in your practice, how you share knowledge with others, and how you use technology in your practice. Take a few moments now to reflect upon these components and complete the worksheet for Dimension Two.

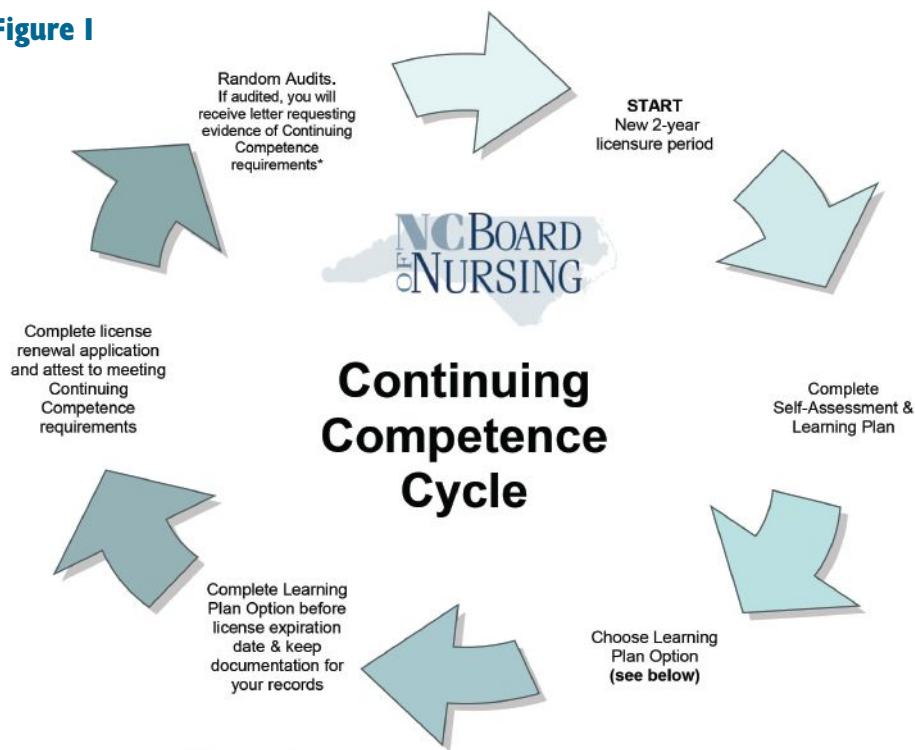
- **DIMENSION THREE: Legal-Ethical Practice**  
(<https://www.ncbon.com/vdownloads/self-assessment/self-assessment-dimension3.pdf>).

This dimension examines your understanding of the legal and ethical aspects of your practice. Here you are asked to rate items related to your knowledge of required NC BON reporting situations, client advocacy responsibilities, maintaining confidentiality, assuring professional boundaries, your role in creating or supporting a professional healthcare environment, and identification of alternate approaches to maximize outcomes for clients. Take some time now to reflect upon these components and complete this worksheet for Dimension Three.

- **DIMENSION FOUR: Collaborative Practice**  
(<https://www.ncbon.com/vdownloads/self-assessment/self-assessment-dimension4.pdf>).

This dimension examines your understanding of your responsibility to maintain safe, effective nursing care in collaboration with clients, significant others, and other health care providers. You are asked to rate the way that you are able to communicate and collaborate with others, maintain accountability for your assignment, maintain sensitivity to the client(s) and provide care that meets individual needs, and include appropriate teaching in your care. You are also asked to look at the effectiveness of your interactions with clients and health team members. Take a few moments now to reflect upon these components and complete this last worksheet for Dimension Four.

**Figure 1**



\*Do not send materials to NCBON unless audited

Now that you have completed the four worksheets, here are the next steps in your self-assessment process:

- Using your worksheets, identify areas where you feel strong in your practice. Is there anything in these areas that you want to make even stronger? Do you want to consider ways that you can share your areas of strength with other nurses?

- Using your worksheets, identify areas where you have opportunities to improve your knowledge and/or skill, or where you are uncomfortable in your nursing practice. Are there any areas that could potentially cause you to provide care that is not of the highest quality, or is actually unacceptable or unsafe?

- Talk with your peers if you are comfortable asking for feedback. If you do not want to ask directly, think back—have you gotten any feedback from your peers about areas where you were strong, or areas that could use some improvement? Do these areas coincide with your self-assessment?
- Talk with your manager or look at your last performance evaluation. What areas were identified as strong? Which areas need some improvement? Do these areas match your self-assessment?
- Think about your area of practice, the clients you care for, and any goals you have for yourself (for example, are you planning to become certified in a specialty?).
- Are you a supervisor, manager, or nursing administrator? If so, did you reflect upon your broader responsibilities as you addressed each of the four worksheets? Did you reflect upon how you impact and assure safe client care in your role? Did you think about leadership and organizational development knowledge and skills? If not, return to the worksheets and reflect again with these issues in mind.

<b>LEARNING PLAN OPTIONS</b>							
SELECT ONE OF THE LEARNING PLAN OPTIONS							
<b>1) NATIONAL CERTIFICATION OR RE-CERTIFICATION BY A NATIONAL CREDENTIALING BODY RECOGNIZED BY THE BOARD</b>	<b>2) 30 CONTACT HOURS OF CONTINUED EDUCATION</b>	<b>3) COMPLETION OF A BOARD APPROVED REFRESHER COURSE</b>	<b>4) COMPLETION OF A MINIMUM OF TWO SEMESTER HOURS OF POST-LICENSURE ACADEMIC EDUCATION RELATED TO NURSING PRACTICE</b>	<b>15 CONTACT HOURS ALONG WITH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS (5-8):</b>			
				<b>5) COMPLETION OF A NURSING PROJECT AS PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OR CO-INVESTIGATOR TO INCLUDE STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, PROJECT OBJECTIVES, METHODS, DATE OF COMPLETION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>6) AUTHORIZING OR CO-AUTHORING A NURSING-RELATED ARTICLE, PAPER, BOOK OR BOOK CHAPTER</b>	<b>7) DEVELOPING AND CONDUCTING A NURSING CONTINUING EDUCATION PRESENTATION OR PRESENTATIONS TOTALING A MINIMUM OF FIVE CONTACT HOURS, INCLUDING PROGRAM BROCHURE OR COURSE SYLLABI, OBJECTIVES, DATE AND LOCATION OF PRESENTATION, AND APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF ATTENDEES</b>	<b>8) 640 HOURS OF ACTIVE PRACTICE WITHIN PREVIOUS 2 YEARS</b>

- Are you an educator, consultant, regulator, or practice in a unique role? If so, did you reflect specifically upon your role and responsibilities in considering the various components of each dimension? Did you think about how knowledge and skill enhancement related to your role might improve your ratings?

Using all of the information you have gathered from these sources, you now have a thorough self-assessment that will allow you to develop a plan, identify appropriate actions, and complete your Continuing Competency requirements for the current two year license renewal cycle. You may need to establish priorities as you determine a reasonable, achievable plan. The eight learning plan options (see Figure 1) enable you to customize exactly how you want to achieve your goals. The need for lifelong learning among all professionals is well-established. This is particularly important in the healthcare professions

where the health and welfare of others depends upon our knowledge and skills being kept current. The NCBON Continuing Competence requirements provide a structure within which all NC nurses are able to demonstrate lifelong learning and assure the public of their continuing competence to practice.

Detailed information on the Continuing Competency requirements can be found on the NCBON website (see links below). Should you have questions once you review the information on the website, please contact Tammy Edelen at [tammy@ncbon.com](mailto:tammy@ncbon.com).

Required reading for successful course completion can be found on the NCBON website at [www.ncbon.com](http://www.ncbon.com). Under Licensure & Listing; click on Continuing Competence. Read and/or print the following documents:

- ABCD Sheet
- Self-Assessment – Dimension Worksheet 1
- Self-Assessment – Dimension

Worksheet 2

- Self-Assessment – Dimension Worksheet 3
- Self-Assessment – Dimension Worksheet 4
- Rule definitions
- Rule 232
- Continuing Competence Cycle Diagram (PDF)

## Reference

1. North Carolina Administrative Code Title 21 Occupational Licensing Boards and Commissions Chapter 36 Nursing. Retrieved from <http://reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac/title%2021%20-%20occupational%20licensing%20boards%20and%20commissions/chapter%2036%20-%20nursing/21%20ncac%2036%20.0120.pdf>
2. Benner, P. (1984). From novice to expert: Excellence and power in clinical nursing practice. Menlo Park:CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company

## EARN CE CREDIT

Continuing Competence Self-Assessment: Have You Met Your Professional Responsibility?

### INSTRUCTIONS

Read the article and on-line reference documents (if applicable). There is not a test requirement, although reading for comprehension and self-assessment of knowledge is encouraged.

### RECEIVE CONTACT HOUR CERTIFICATE

Go to [www.ncbon.com](http://www.ncbon.com) and hover over “Education”; under “Continuing Education” select “Board Sponsored Bulletin Offerings”, scroll down to the link, “Continuing Competence Self-Assessment: Have You Met Your Professional Responsibility?” After registration, please write down your confirmation number, complete, and submit the evaluation, and print your certificate immediately.

### PROVIDER ACCREDITATION

The North Carolina Board of Nursing will award 1.0 contact hour for this continuing nursing education activity.

The North Carolina Board of Nursing is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the North Carolina Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

### NCBON CNE CONTACT HOUR ACTIVITY DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The following disclosure applies to the NCBON continuing nursing education article entitled “Continuing Competence Self-Assessment: Have You Met Your Professional Responsibility?”

Participants must read the CE article and online reference documents (if applicable) in order to be awarded CNE contact hours. Verification of participation will be noted by online registration. Neither the author nor members of the planning committee have any conflicts of interest related to the content of this activity.