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*A Position Statement does not carry the force and effect of law and rules but is adopted by the Board as a means of providing direction to licensees who seek to engage in safe nursing practice. Board Position Statements address issues of concern to the Board relevant to protection of the public and are reviewed regularly for relevance and accuracy to current practice, the Nursing Practice Act, and Board Administrative Code Rules.*

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**Issue:**

Licensed nurses are sometimes employed in positions having qualifications and responsibilities below the level of the nurses' highest level of licensure/approval/recognition.

This Position Statement applies, but is not limited to, licensed nurses employed in the following situations:

- Registered Nurse (RN) working as Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP)
- LPN working as UAP
- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) [Nurse Practitioner, Certified Nurse Midwife, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, or Clinical Nurse Specialist] working as an RN, LPN, or UAP

**RN, LPN, and APRN Responsibility and Accountability:**

Licensed nurses are held responsible and accountable for practicing at all times within the scope associated with their highest level of active licensure as either an RN or LPN, and with their highest level of active approval/recognition as an APRN. Regardless of employment role, title, status, or position description, licensed nurses are responsible and accountable for the components of practice specified in the Nursing Practice Act and Administrative Code Rules. This includes, but is not limited to, the responsibility/accountability to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate client care within the full scope of their highest level of active licensure/approval/recognition. Employment roles, titles, status, and position descriptions do not alter or eliminate this responsibility and accountability. Employers, nurse leaders, and others can restrict or limit specific practice activities or tasks but cannot expand legal scope of practice and cannot alter or eliminate legally-determined components or standards of practice.

Nurses should give careful consideration to the challenges and potential complexities of accepting employment at a level other than their highest level of active licensure/approval/recognition. Role and scope of practice confusion may result when performing duties within a designated position description while still being held responsible and accountable for practicing within the full scope of highest level of active licensure/approval/recognition.

**References:**

G.S. 90-171.20 (7) and (8) [Nursing Practice Act](#)  
[21 NCAC 36.0224 Components of Nursing Practice for the Registered Nurse](#)  
[21 NCAC 36.0225 Components of Nursing Practice for the Licensed Practical Nurse](#)

[21 NCAC 36.0226 Nurse Anesthesia Practice](#)  
[21 NCAC 36.0228 Clinical Nurse Specialist Practice](#)  
[21 NCAC 36.0800 Approval and Practice Parameters for Nurse Practitioners](#)  
[G.S. 90-178.1 through 90-178.7 Practice of Midwifery](#)  
[21 NCAC 33.0100 Midwifery Joint Committee](#)  
[G.S. 90-640 Identification Badges Required](#)

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