



Fact Sheet: Self-regulation

Nursing is a self-regulated profession in Canada. Regulation of a profession ensures practice is safe, competent, and ethical. Its purpose is to protect the public, and the activities associated with regulation are directed toward this goal.

When a profession is self-regulated, it means that the government has granted that group the privilege and responsibility to regulate themselves. Self-regulation recognizes that the nursing profession is best qualified to determine the standards for nursing education and practice required to ensure the public receives safe, competent, and ethical care. If self-regulation fails, the government can remove the right for the profession to self-regulate.

The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) is the regulatory body for graduate nurses, registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in New Brunswick; and receives its regulatory authority from the [Nurses Act](#). This makes the profession, and nurses as individuals, accountable to the public for the delivery of safe, competent, and ethical nursing care. Nurses participate in individual self-regulation when they are accountable for their practice and make appropriate decisions respecting their [scope of practice](#) and the [Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses](#). These decisions should be based on their [nursing standards](#), their practice context, and employer policies.

The regulatory framework used by NANB has three components:

- promoting good practice
- preventing poor practice
- intervening when practice is unacceptable.

NANB promotes good practice by setting [standards for nursing education](#), setting [registration](#) requirements, and establishing and promoting professional practice standards and entry-level competencies. Preventing poor practice is done by providing nurses with [tools and resources](#) to maintain and enhance their competencies and helping them identify issues that contribute to poor practice and potential resolutions. NANB intervenes when nursing practice is unacceptable by addressing [complaints](#) received and intervening when necessary. The Complaints and Discipline Process is initiated and conducted using the principles of fairness, transparency, and natural justice. Complaints are reviewed carefully to determine what actions need to be taken and may include an investigation. By placing most emphasis on promotion and prevention, the need for discipline interventions is kept to a minimum.

NANB regulates nursing practice by utilizing the minimal amount of regulatory force required to achieve a desired outcome, a concept known as right-touch regulation. This is accomplished by seeking to understand issues to ensure the level of regulation is proportionate to the level of risk to the public. As a right-touch regulator, NANB aims to be proportionate, consistent, targeted, transparent, accountable, and agile.

For more information about this topic or any other practice questions, please email NANB's nurse consultants at practiceconsultation@nanb.nb.ca.

This content is adapted from the Nova Scotia College of Nursing [Self-Regulation Information Sheet \(2020\)](#).