

## Fact Sheet: Dual Registration and Concurrent Practice

In Canada, about 20% of occupations are regulated to protect the health and safety of Canadians (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, 2022). Regulated professions<sup>1</sup> are governed by legislation and regulated by their respective regulatory authority. The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) regulates the practice of registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in New Brunswick. Legislation (i.e., [The Nurses Act](#)) defines the scope of practice while NANB establishes regulation (e.g., registration requirements, standards of practice, practice guidelines) to support safe, competent, and ethical nursing practice (NANB, 2019a).

*Dual registration* applies to a nurse<sup>2</sup> holding a registration with the NANB and another professional regulatory body and is authorized to practice in healthcare under both professional titles<sup>3</sup>. This is considered concurrent practice<sup>4</sup>. Dual registration requires that the regulated professional be accountable to the scope and standards of practice of each profession and to each regulator. Nurses registered with the NANB and with another regulator should contact both regulatory bodies to verify if dual registration is permitted and for additional guidance on practising in this context.

Dual registration can cause role confusion, blurring of accountability, and potentially impact the quality of care when scopes of practice overlap (Nova Scotia College of Nurses, 2017). Nurses involved in practice under dual registration are expected to:

- understand the scope of practice and accountabilities related to both registrations;
- practice within the scope of nursing practice when nursing care is being provided;
- demonstrate accountability for their conduct and nursing practice;
- provide information allowing clients/co-workers/employers to understand the scope of nursing practice, set clear practice expectations, and identify accountabilities;
- ensure the client health record clearly reflects the nursing services provided.

If healthcare services are offered in both capacities in the same setting, the client should be informed of the dual registration and authority to perform services under both scopes of practice.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of regulated professions in New-Brunswick, visit:

[https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary\\_education\\_training\\_and\\_labour/Jobs/content/LabourMobility/CertifiedOccupations.html](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour/Jobs/content/LabourMobility/CertifiedOccupations.html)

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this document, the term “nurse” refers to the graduate nurse, the registered nurse and the nurse practitioner.

<sup>3</sup> For example, dual registration would apply to a nurse holding a RN or NP registration and a registration to practice as: a Primary Care Paramedic, a dietician, a physiotherapist, a social worker, or a massage therapist.

<sup>4</sup> Concurrent practice also applies to a nurse practising in both an NP and an RN role without a dual registration- see section: NP Practising as an RN.

## Accountability

The nurse is accountable to the client, public, employer, and profession. Nursing practice is expected to be in accordance with relevant legislation, standards, regulatory requirements, and employer policy (NANB, 2019b). While employer policy supports nursing practice and defines lines of accountability at the organizational level, the practice and conduct of nurses must comply with the legislated scope of practice and standards of practice. Furthermore, nurses are accountable for reflecting on their individual scope and for considering whether they have the adequate knowledge, skill, and judgment to perform an activity or procedure safely and competently (NANB, 2020).

Indicator 1.6 of the [Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses](#) requires that nurses recognize and take action in situations where client safety is potentially or actually at risk. This sets the expectation that the nurse determines when and what knowledge and skills must be applied to ensure safe, competent, and ethical care in the client's best interest. This applies whether practising as a nurse or in another healthcare provider role. When the nurse is practising in another healthcare provider role, the expectation would be that client issues that require nursing care be reported to the most responsible nursing care provider or acted upon accordingly depending on the urgency.

Because employer policies further define the lines of accountability, it is important to clarify the employer expectations before engaging in concurrent practices. If these conflict with the regulatory expectations (as described above), the nurse should consult NANB for further guidance.

For more information on accountabilities and considerations when practicing with a dual registration, please see Appendix A: Case Study.

## NP practicing as an RN

Concurrent practice also applies to a nurse concurrently practicing under different nursing titles, such as an NP practising as an RN. In this case, the nurse would hold an NP registration only. NPs in New Brunswick are accountable for both the [Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses](#) and the [Standards for the Practice of Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners](#). Although NANB does not encourage concurrent or simultaneous practice under both titles, in the event a NP practices as an RN:

- The NP must determine whether she has the knowledge and competence to work in the specific setting and with the client population.
- It must be clear to the employer, the healthcare team, and the clients that the NP is practicing as a RN and not as a NP.
- The NP remains accountable to the NP advanced knowledge and skills; meaning that the NP may assess and identify client issues that an RN might not and would be expected to report the findings to the most responsible provider for follow up.

## **Nursing Practice Hours**

Each nursing category (RN, NP) has distinct registration requirements for currency of practice. When practising in both a nursing and other healthcare provider capacity, the hours worked in a non-nursing capacity cannot be counted as nursing practice hours. This requires ensuring separate and distinct tracking of services. Likewise, the hours accumulated while working within the scope of one nursing practice category may not be used to satisfy the currency of practice requirements for another nursing practice category. This means that the NP cannot report hours working as an RN as hours of practice towards NP registrations.

## **Liability Coverage**

Nurses who intend to maintain dual registration should determine the details of the liability protection available through both their employer and regulatory bodies. Registrants with NANB have liability coverage through the [Canadian Nurses Protective Society](#) (CNPS). CNPS also offers additional liability coverage for members who require supplementary coverage. NANB recommends contacting CNPS to determine the appropriate liability protection for a nurse with dual registration.

For any questions regarding nursing practice, contact a NANB nurse consultant at [practiceconsultation@nanb.nb.ca](mailto:practiceconsultation@nanb.nb.ca)

This document does not constitute legal advice with respect to dual practice. Details of liability coverage should be determined prior to engaging in concurrent healthcare practices. NANB recommends consulting the [Canadian Nurses Protective Society](#) (CNPS) for more information on related liability risks and protection.



## References

Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials. (2022). *Learn about qualifications recognition*.

[https://www.cicic.ca/928/find\\_out\\_if\\_your\\_occupation\\_is\\_regulated\\_or\\_not.canada](https://www.cicic.ca/928/find_out_if_your_occupation_is_regulated_or_not.canada)

Nova Scotia College of Nurses. (2017). *Dual licensure registered nurses and licensed practical nurses*.

<https://www.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/DualLicensure.pdf>

Nurses Association of New Brunswick [NANB]. (2019a). *Practice guideline. A collaborative approach to assigning, delegating and teaching in health care*.

[https://www.nanb.nb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NANB-ANBLPN-PG-CollaborativeApproachAssigningDelegatingTeachingHealth\\_Care-May19-E-1.pdf](https://www.nanb.nb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NANB-ANBLPN-PG-CollaborativeApproachAssigningDelegatingTeachingHealth_Care-May19-E-1.pdf)

NANB. (2019b). *Standards of practice for registered nurses*. <https://www.nanb.nb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NANB2019-RNPracticeStandards-E-web.pdf>

NANB. (2020) *What is my scope of practice?* Info Nursing, Spring 2020.

<https://www.nanb.nb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/INFO-What-Is-My-Scope-Of-Practice-E.pdf>

## Appendix A: Case Study

*This case study is a fictional educational resource. Any resemblance to actual people or events is coincidental. Thank you to the College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta for granting permission to adapt their case study.*

Jesse has been a paramedic for the past eight years. He continued to work part-time during the completion of his Bachelor of Nursing program. He recently passed the NCLEX-RN and applied for registration with NANB. This week, he was offered a part-time position as a registered nurse (RN) with the same employer where he currently works as a paramedic. Jesse would like to continue working both as a paramedic and an RN but has some questions about how he would do this.

What does Jesse need to consider?

### Regulatory Considerations

- Contact each regulatory body to verify their requirements for registration and keep up to date on regulatory requirements related to each profession, including NANB's [Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses](#) and other NANB guiding documents.
- Remember that under the *Nurses Act* he is required to maintain competency and practice hours for registration renewal, and ensure he is reporting only practice hours worked in an RN role to NANB. Each regulatory body may have different approaches to the requirements of registration renewal.
- Ensure Use the appropriate authorized title for the specific role. For example, he cannot call himself an RN when he is practicing in the role as a paramedic or vice versa.
- Understand that the standards of both regulatory bodies apply in situations where a client's condition deteriorates, and he will be held to the highest level of accountability in the interest of the client.
- Failing to meet the standards of the regulatory bodies may result in a complaint to either or both regulatory bodies, which may result in an investigation of professional misconduct.
- Determine details of liability protection available through the regulatory bodies.

### Employment Considerations

- Contact the human resources department and his manager(s) to:
  - Discuss the factors to consider when working in two different roles for the same employer.
  - Obtain job descriptions for both positions to familiarize himself with the roles and responsibilities of each.
  - Ensure it is clear within which regulated profession he is practicing in each shift.
  - Review employer policy related to practicing dual registration.
  - Review liability coverage with the employer.

- Remember that location of practice does not determine professional accountability, but rather the role he is practising in and the care he provides during that shift.
- Consider practising in a different practice setting for each role to decrease the potential of confusion.