



**South African Nursing Council**  
(Under the provisions of the Nursing Act, 2005)

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## COMPETENCIES FOR OPHTHALMIC NURSE SPECIALIST

### 1. NATURE OF SPECIALISATION

Ophthalmic Nursing is a specialist field that focuses on comprehensive eye care for the promotion of eye health and the prevention of visual impairment and blindness. An Ophthalmic Nurse Specialist is a Professional Nurse with an additional qualification in Ophthalmic Nursing and is registered as such with the SANC.

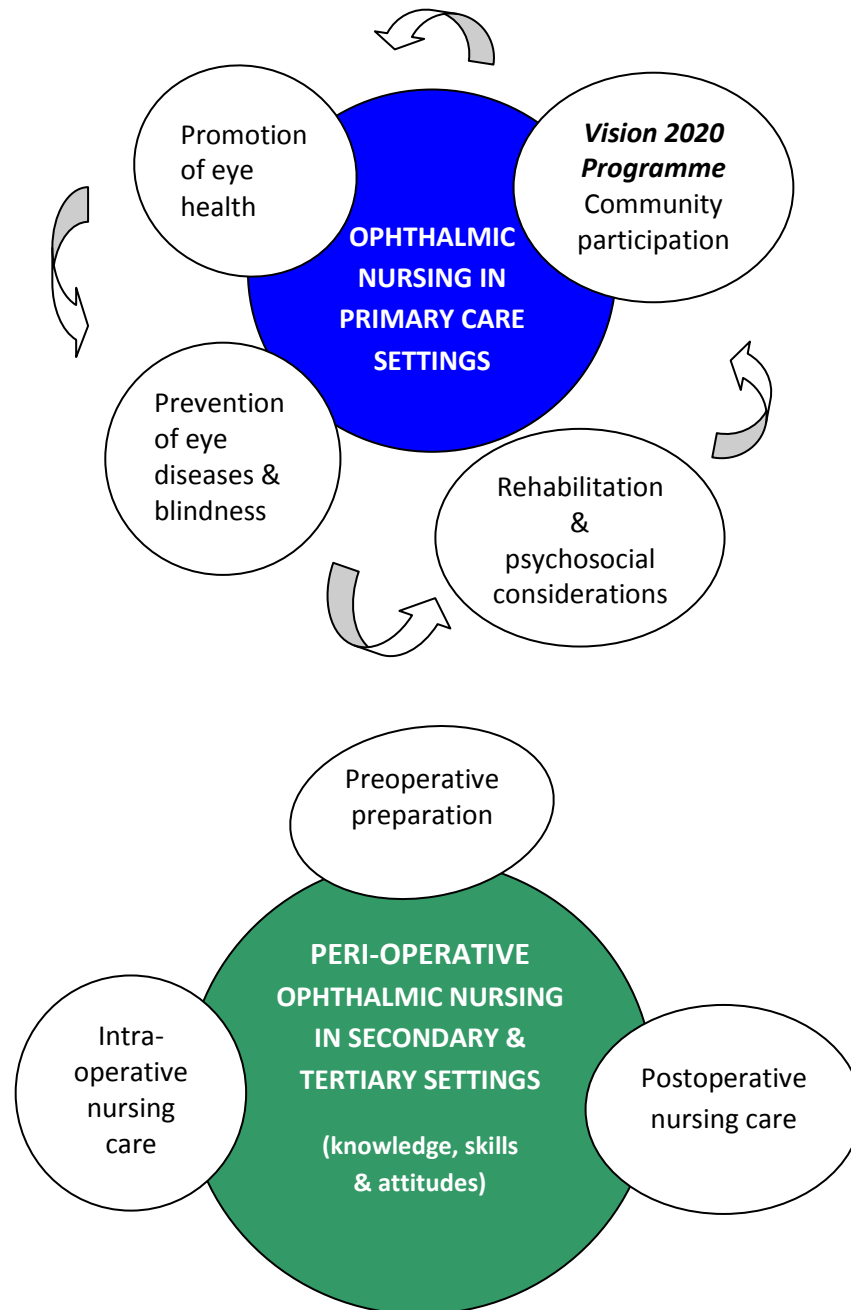
### 2. CONTEXT (WORK SETTING)

An Ophthalmic Nurse Specialist is found in the following workplaces:

- Primary/Community healthcare settings, including school health services, where they work with specialist teams;
- clinics including gateway clinics and community health centres;
- units/wards in quaternary/tertiary (academic), regional and district hospitals;
- eye institutes/hospitals; and
- rehabilitation centres, where the Ophthalmic Nurse Specialist refers patients to rehabilitation services.

### 3. CONTINUUM OF CARE

The diagram below reflects the environment in which the Ophthalmic Nurse practices, focusing on primary care as well as secondary and tertiary care settings:



#### 4. COMPETENCY OVERLAPS WITH OTHER NURSING SPECIALISATIONS

The competencies of an Ophthalmic Nurse Specialist overlap with:

- o Midwifery & Neonatal Nursing, e.g. retinopathy of prematurity (ROP);
- o Child Nursing;
- o Emergency Nursing in respect of eye traumas;
- o Occupational Nursing in terms of acute, chronic and emergency eye injuries;
- o Community Health Nursing (health promotion);

- o Family Nursing;
- o Operating Theatre (preoperative preparation); and
- o Oncology & Palliative Nursing.

## 5. COMPETENCIES

DOMAIN	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
<b>DOMAIN 1: PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL &amp; LEGAL PRACTICE</b>	
<b>1.1 Professional Practice</b>	Engages legislation to influence good practice in the care of ophthalmic patients
<b>1.2 Ethical Practice</b>	Applies ethical principles in the role as advocate within a diversified context
<b>1.3 Legal Practice</b>	1.3.1 Interprets relevant legislation frameworks governing the promotion of ophthalmic health to prevent visual impairment and avoidable blindness, e.g. the National Health Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act
	1.3.2 Practices within the relevant legal framework
<b>DOMAIN 2: CLINICAL PRACTICE – CARE PROVISION &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>2.1 Health Promotion &amp; Prevention</b>	2.1.1 Liaises with community health nurses, primary healthcare nurses and occupational health nurses for the referral of patients with ocular conditions/ injuries and blindness
	2.1.2 Provides eye healthcare information using a variety of strategies, including but not limited to, eye care awareness campaigns, compliance with treatment and follow-up
	2.1.3 Provides specific information brochures about postoperative care
	2.1.4 Conducts in-service education of community health nurses, primary healthcare nurses and occupational health nurses in the prevention of ocular injuries and blindness
	2.1.5 Conducts vision screening campaigns across the lifespan
	2.1.6 Partners with other team members within the healthcare system for the promotion of eye health and the prevention of visual impairment and

DOMAIN	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
	blindness
	2.1.7 Develops a network of referral system for patients and their families which includes, amongst others, geneticists, social workers, ocularists, orthoptists, optometrists and other members of the multidisciplinary care team
<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	2.2.1 Conducts a needs assessment to identify factors that promote or threaten eye health (socio-economic, physical)
	2.2.2 Conducts vision screening and eye examinations to identify ocular emergencies, manage them and/or refer patients
	2.2.3 Conducts specific eye testing, including but not limited to visual acuity examination, gross ocular mobility, confrontation visual field, anterior segment examination and posterior segment examination (fundoscopy)
	2.2.4 Conducts basic minimum paediatric eye screening, including but not limited to, red reflex, visual acuity, squint to diagnose/identify abnormalities and diseases of external structures of the eye
	2.2.5 Triage for management or referral of patients with ocular conditions
	2.2.6 Conducts a community assessment to identify prevalent and/or potential ocular conditions
	2.2.7 Demonstrates the ability to apply specialist knowledge for the utilisation of correct techniques and tools for assessment in the diagnosis
	2.2.8 Analyses, keeps records and reports on demographic data
<b>2.3 Planning</b>	2.3.1 Plans eye healthcare programmes at ward, district, provincial and national level in collaboration with other members of the multidisciplinary team
	2.3.2 Uses data from community assessment and individual screening to plan individual and group eye care
	2.3.3 Develops evidence-based nursing care plans for ophthalmic patients across the continuum

DOMAIN	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
	2.3.4 Plans for discharge on admission
	2.3.5 Collaborates with the eye specialist team to motivate for resources for the eye care programmes
<b>2.4 Implementation</b>	2.4.1 Implements planned eye care programmes in line with needs assessment conducted
	2.4.2 Demonstrates the ability to apply specialist knowledge in the care of patients with ocular conditions
	2.4.3 Implements evidence-based treatment and care as planned
	2.4.4 Applies the latest science and technology in the rehabilitation of visually impaired and blind patients in healthcare settings and the community
	2.4.5 Participates in and implements a referral system according to policy
	2.4.6 Advocates for the care of patients with ocular conditions
	2.4.7 Applies specialist knowledge and skills in the care of individuals, groups and communities who need eye care services
	2.4.8 Shares specialist knowledge and skills with generalist nurses who treat patients with ocular conditions
	2.4.9 Refers patients to rehabilitation services and specialists
<b>2.5 Evaluation</b>	2.5.1 Evaluates planned eye care programmes in line with needs assessment conducted
	2.5.2 Evaluates the ability to apply specialist knowledge in the diagnosis and care of patients with ocular conditions
	2.5.3 Evaluates the effect of care after interventions
	2.5.4 Evaluates the quality of treatment according to evidence-based practice modalities
	2.5.5 Documents all interventions
<b>2.6 Therapeutic Communication &amp;</b>	2.6.1 Develops communication protocols between the members of the multidisciplinary team for effective

DOMAIN	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
<b>Relationships</b>	referral systems
	2.6.2 Implements therapeutic protocols as prescribed
	2.6.3 Creates a communication pathway for patients and families regarding rehabilitation and other ophthalmic care needs
DOMAIN 3: QUALITY OF PRACTICE	
<b>3.1 Quality Improvement</b>	3.1.1 Conducts clinical audits for ophthalmic care
	3.1.2 Analyses statistical data to identify trends, acquire resources and inform policy
	3.1.3 Conducts in-service training to improve the quality of ophthalmic care and patient outcomes
	3.1.4 Establishes appropriate staffing norms based on a needs analysis of the clinical context
	3.1.5 Motivates for specialist ophthalmic resources, including but not limited to, visual acuity testing charts, pinhole, occluders ophthalmoscopes, tonometers, lid retractors, instruments for incision and drainage of Meibomian cysts
	3.1.6 Applies specialist knowledge and skills in the prevention of eye infections
<b>3.2 Continuing Education</b>	3.2.1 Takes personal responsibility for own learning needs
	3.2.2 Develops a continuing education programme for self and all staff in the unit
DOMAIN 4: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	
	4.1 Participates in the formulation of policy guidelines for eye care services
	4.2 Interrogates and interprets policy guidelines for eye care services
	4.3 Applies policy guidelines for eye care services
	4.4 Manages care and all resources for specialised ophthalmic care in the ophthalmic unit efficiently
	4.5 Participates in formulating standards of specialist nursing practice in the care of ophthalmic patients
	4.6 Identifies gaps in personnel's knowledge and skills and implements interventions to address them
	4.7 Demonstrates an informed and critical

DOMAIN	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
	understanding of principles, theories and emerging issues and debates in ophthalmic nursing
	4.8 Manages human and physical resources effectively
	4.9 Provides clinical supervision and mentorship within the ophthalmic unit
DOMAIN 5: RESEARCH	
	5.1 Identifies appropriate research methods for particular ophthalmic research problems
	5.2 Conducts research
	5.3 Disseminates research findings to improve patient outcomes and promotes evidence-based practice