Employment of Assistants in Nursing (AIN) in NSW Health Acute Care

Summary  The purpose of this Policy is to facilitate uniform practices for employing, expanding and developing the Assistant in Nursing role in Public Health acute care facilities. It outlines the education, qualification or equivalency, scope of practice and skills recognition processes to be applied to those in this employment category. It also refers employers to assessment processes for identifying the appropriate clinical environments for Assistants in Nursing allocation in acute care.

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EMPLOYMENT OF ASSISTANTS IN NURSING (AIN) IN NSW HEALTH ACUTE CARE

PURPOSE
This Policy Directive applies to the employment of all assistants in nursing who are employed under the Award classification of Assistants in Nursing (AIN) in the NSW Public Health System. This Policy Directive does not apply to students on clinical placement.

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate uniform practices for employing, expanding and developing the Assistant in Nursing role in Public Health acute care facilities. It outlines the education, qualification or equivalency, scope of practice and skills recognition processes to be applied to those in this employment category. It also refers employers to assessment processes for identifying the appropriate clinical environments for Assistants in Nursing allocation in acute care.

Further information can be found on the NSW Health Workforce Planning and Development Website.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS
1. Assistants in Nursing (AIN) are to be employed in acute care areas following the assessment process outlined in the Assistants in nursing working in the acute care environment – Health Service Implementation package.

2. An AIN will work within a plan of care under the supervision and direction of a registered nurse when providing aspects of nursing care.

3. An AIN will be responsible for their own actions and will remain accountable to the registered nurse for all allocated duties.

4. An AIN working in acute care will be allocated nursing activities that are within the parameters documented in the NSW Health Assistant in Nursing – Acute Care position description.

5. Any additional context specific nursing activities allocated must follow a formally documented process that reflects the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Decision Making Framework and Health Service guidelines.

6. AINs are to be assigned to appropriate clinical areas according to identified skill mix assessment process guidelines and be provided with support and supervision at all times.

7. The skill mix for the provision of nursing care in acute care areas is to reflect those categories of staff who are required to meet the clinical needs of patients/clients as determined by established tools.
8. The AIN will wear the NSW Health uniform and identification badge that indicates their AIN classification.

9. AINs employed in NSW Health acute care environments are to have completed a relevant Certificate III (or higher) qualification in Health Services Assistance, for example the current course HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance (Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care), or having equivalent experience or have completed 1 or more years training as an undergraduate nursing student.

10. AINs who are employed in public health aged care facilities must successfully complete a relevant Certificate III (or higher) qualification in aged care, for example the current course CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support or have equivalent experience.

11. AINs currently employed in NSW Health acute care areas, who are not current undergraduate students of nursing or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cadets, will be supported by Health Services to upgrade their qualification to the level of HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance (Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care) skills pathway.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Policy Directive will be the responsibility of Health Service Directors of Nursing and Midwifery.

**AINs working in Acute Care**

Attaining the competencies to work as an AIN in acute care in NSW Health can occur in a number of ways including through:

- Formal or informal education and training;
- Experiences in the workplace;
- A combination of the above.

NSW Health supports the qualification, HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance (Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care) skills pathway for AINs working in acute care environments who are not undergraduate students of nursing. Note that All Group B electives must be selected for award of the AIN working in acute care specialisation.

The qualification, HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance (Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care) skills pathway, is the nationally recognised qualification to train as an Assistant in Nursing for the acute care environment. NSW Health has identified preferred units of competency (Group B electives) for students to complete as part of their qualification, to support their employment as acute care AINs in the NSW public health system.

**Recognition of Skills Process**

Health Services are encouraged to support AINs to convert or upgrade their current qualifications to the HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance (Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care) skills pathway, through a “recognition of skills” process.
Recognition (including Recognition of Prior Learning or RPL) is the process through which a person’s skills, knowledge and experience are assessed by a qualified and experienced trainer/assessor in order to ascertain the person’s level of competency against a range of vocational skills.

Existing workers employed as AINs at the date of issue of this Policy Directive are encouraged but not required to obtain formal qualifications.

**Undergraduate Students of Nursing**

NSW Health supports the employment of undergraduate nursing students in the role of an AIN in acute care environments.

The employment of the undergraduate students of nursing as AINs in acute care environments does not form part of their formal education program. This employment provides students with increased exposure to clinical environments in preparation to practice as a nurse and the opportunity to gain an income while studying.

Undergraduate students of nursing will only be employed as AINs in their second or third year of their Bachelor program. First year undergraduate students may be employed as an AIN if previously gained qualifications and/or experience are deemed equivalent. The scope of practice for the undergraduate student of nursing employed as an AIN in the acute care environment is consistent with that outlined in the NSW Health Assistant in Nursing Acute Care Position Description.

**ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

The following supporting resources are available at:


1. Background to AIN employment in acute care facilities
2. Assistant in Nursing Acute Care - Position Description
3. Assistant in Nursing - Nursing Care Activities (section 4.2 of the implementation package)

**REVISION HISTORY**

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<th>Version</th>
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<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary People, Culture and Governance</td>
<td>Updated Policy</td>
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<td>(PD2018_017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2010</td>
<td>Deputy Director-General Health System Support</td>
<td>Updated Policy to recognise expanded employment criteria for AINs in acute care health services</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2001</td>
<td>Director-General</td>
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