



The American Organization of Nurse Executives

## AONE Nurse Executive Competencies Assessment Tool

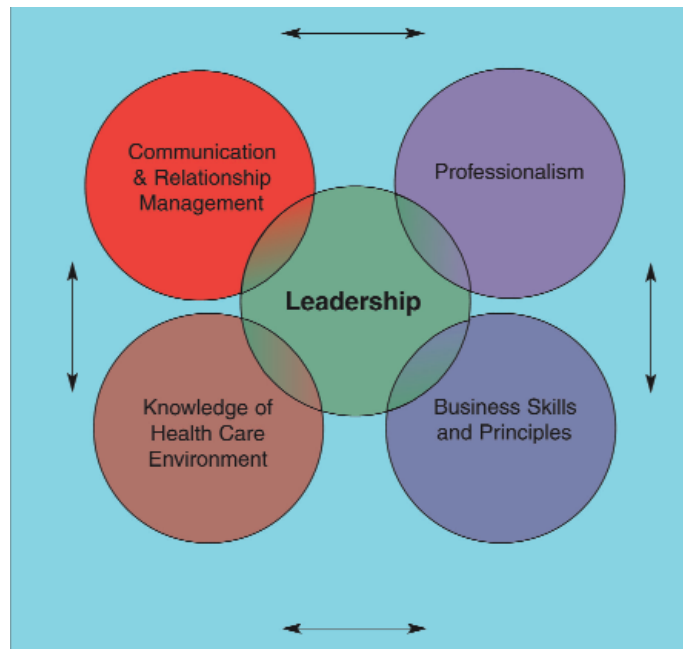
The *AONE Nurse Executive Competencies* (originally published in the February 2005 issue of *Nurse Leader*) describe skills common to nurses in executive practice regardless of their educational level or titles in different organizations. They are presented as information for both nurse leaders and those who employ or work with them. Executives can use these competencies as a self-assessment tool, useful in the identification of possible areas for growth. Aspiring nurse leaders can use them in planning personal preparation for their careers. Healthcare organizations may see them as a guideline for job descriptions, expectations and evaluations of nurse leaders. Nurse educators can utilize them as a curriculum guideline for the educational preparation of nurses seeking expertise and knowledge in executive practice.

This document is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all areas of expertise for individual nurses in executive practice. It does, however, illustrate how complex and important their roles have become. Nursing leadership/management is as much a specialty as any clinical nursing specialty. As such, it requires proficiency and competent practice specific to the executive role. The *AONE Nurse Executive Competencies* sets the standard for that practice.

The vision of the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) is “to shape the future of healthcare through innovative nursing leadership.” Innovative nursing leadership requires that nurses in leadership positions are competent.

AONE believes that managers at all levels must be competent in:

1. **Communication and relationship building**
2. **A knowledge of the healthcare environment**
3. **Leadership**
4. **Professionalism**
5. **Business skills**



*The competencies are captured in a model developed by the Healthcare Leadership Alliance (HLA) in 2004. HLA members include AONE, the American College of Healthcare Executives, American College of Physician Executives, Healthcare Financial Management Association, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, and the Medical Group Management Association. This graphic model was used in work to identify a common core set of competencies for leadership executives in healthcare.*

While all nursing leaders share these competency domains, the emphasis on particular competencies will be different depending on the leader's specific position in the organization.

**Communication and relationship building competencies include:**

1. Effective communication
2. Relationship management
3. Influence of behaviors
4. Ability to work with diversity
5. Shared decision-making
6. Community involvement
7. Medical staff relationships
8. Academic relationships

**Knowledge of the health care environment includes:**

1. Clinical practice knowledge
2. Patient care delivery models and work design knowledge
3. Health care economics knowledge
4. Health care policy knowledge
5. Understanding of governance
6. Understanding of evidence based practice
7. Outcome measurement
8. Knowledge of and dedication to patient safety
9. Understanding of utilization/case management
10. Knowledge of quality improvement and metrics
11. Knowledge of risk management

**Leadership skills include:**

1. Foundational thinking skills
2. Personal journey disciplines
3. The ability to use systems thinking
4. Succession planning
5. Change management

**Professionalism includes:**

1. Personal and professional accountability
2. Career planning
3. Ethics
4. Evidence-based clinical and management practice
5. Advocacy for the clinical enterprise and for nursing practice
6. Active membership in a professional organization

**Business skills include:**

1. Understanding of health care financing
2. Human resource management and development
3. Strategic management
4. Marketing
5. Information Management & Technology

This assessment tool is designed to assist you in assessing your level of preparation on each of the competencies. For each competency, use the 5-point scale to rate your level of competency from novice (1) to expert (5). Identify the strategy(ies) you plan on implementing to raise your competency level. This will give you a good picture of how much preparation you will need to become a well-rounded nurse executive.



## Nurse Executive Competency

### Competency Level

### Communication and Relationship Building

#### Diversity

- ❖ Create an environment which recognizes and values differences in staff, physicians, patients, and communities
- ❖ Assess current environment and establish indicators of progress toward cultural competency
- ❖ Define diversity in terms of gender, race, religion, ethnic, sexual orientation, age, etc.
- ❖ Analyze population data to identify cultural clusters
- ❖ Define cultural competency and permeate principles throughout the organization
- ❖ Confront inappropriate behaviors and attitude towards diverse groups Develop processes to incorporate cultural beliefs into care

#### Shared Decision-Making

- ❖ Engage staff and others in decision-making
- ❖ Promote decisions that are patient-centered
- ❖ Provide an environment conducive to opinion sharing

#### Community Involvement

- ❖ Represent the organization to non-healthcare constituents within the community.
- ❖ Provide consultation to community and business leaders regarding nursing and health care
- ❖ Be an effective Board member for community and/or professional organizations

#### Medical Staff Relationships

- ❖ Build credibility with physicians as a champion for patient care, quality and nursing professionalism
- ❖ Confront and address inappropriate behavior towards patients and staff
- ❖ Represent nursing at medical executive committee and other medical staff committees
- ❖ Collaborate with medical staff leaders in determining needed patient care services
- ❖ Collaborate with physicians to develop patient care protocols, policies and procedures
- ❖ Collaborate with physicians to determine patient care equipment and facility needs
- ❖ Utilize medical staff mechanism to address physician clinical performance issues
- ❖ Facilitate disputes involving physicians and nurses or other disciplines

Novice

Competent

Expert

1

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## Nurse Executive Competency

### Communication and Relationship Building

#### Academic Relationships

- ❖ Determine current and future supply and demand for nursing care
- ❖ Identify educational needs of existing and potential nursing staff
- ❖ Collaborate with nursing programs to provide required resources
- ❖ Collaborate with nursing programs in evaluating quality of graduating clinicians and develop mechanisms to enhance this quality
- ❖ Serve on Academic Advisory Councils
- ❖ Collaborate with nursing faculty in nursing research and incorporate nursing research into practice

## Competency Level

Novice	Competent			Expert
1	2	3	4	5
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## Nurse Executive Competency

## Competency Level

### Knowledge of the Health Care Environment

Novice	Competent			Expert
1	2	3	4	5

#### Clinical Practice Knowledge

- ❖ Maintain knowledge of current nursing practice and the roles and functions of patient care team members
- ❖ Articulate patient care standards as published by JCAHO, CMS, and professional nursing literature
- ❖ Understand, articulate, and ensure compliance with the State Nurse Practice Act, State Board of Nursing regulations, regulatory agency standards, and policies of the organization
- ❖ Ensure that written organization clinical policies and procedures are reviewed and updated in accordance with evidence-based practice
- ❖ Role model lifelong learning, including clinical subjects, such as disease processes, pharmaceuticals, and clinical technology

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#### Delivery Models/Work Design

- ❖ Maintain current knowledge of patient care delivery systems and innovations
- ❖ Articulate various delivery systems and patient care models and the advantages/disadvantages of each
- ❖ Serve as change agent when patient care work/work flow is redesigned
- ❖ Determine when new delivery models are appropriate, and then envision and develop them

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#### Health Care Economics

- ❖ Articulate federal and state payment systems and regulations, as well as private insurance issues, which affect organization's finances
- ❖ Understand and articulate individual organization's payer mix, CMI and benchmark database

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#### Health Care Policy

- ❖ Articulate federal and state laws and regulations which affect the provision of patient care i.e. tort reform; malpractice/negligence; reimbursement
- ❖ Participate in legislative process concerning healthcare through membership in professional organization and personal contact with officials
- ❖ Educate patient care team members on the legislative process, the regulatory process and methods for influencing both
- ❖ Interpret impact of legislation at the state or federal level on nursing and health care organizations

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## Nurse Executive Competency

## Competency Level

### Leadership Skills

#### Succession Planning (continued)

- ❖ Develop a succession plan for one's own position

#### Change Management

- ❖ Utilize change theory to plan for the implementation of organizational changes
- ❖ Serve as a change agent, assisting others in understanding the importance, necessity, impact and process of change
- ❖ Support staff during times of difficult transitions
- ❖ Recognize one's own reaction to change and strive to remain open to new ideas and approaches
- ❖ Adapt leadership style to situational needs

Novice

Competent

Expert

1 2 3 4 5

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## Nurse Executive Competency

### Competency Level

### Business Skills

#### Financial Management

- ❖ Articulate business models for health care organizations and fundamental concepts of economics
- ❖ Describe general accounting principles and define basic accounting terms
- ❖ Analyze financial statements
- ❖ Manage financial resources by developing business plans
- ❖ Establish procedures to assure accurate charging mechanisms
- ❖ Educate patient care team members on financial implications of patient care decisions

#### Human Resource Management

- ❖ Participate in workforce planning and employment decisions
- ❖ Champion a diverse workforce
- ❖ Use corrective discipline to mitigate workplace behavior problems
- ❖ Interpret and evaluate employee satisfaction/quality of work surveys
- ❖ Create opportunities for employees to be involved in decision-making
- ❖ Reward and recognize exemplary performance
- ❖ Formulate programs to enhance work-life balance
- ❖ Interpret legal and regulatory guidelines
- ❖ Manage collective bargaining environments or implement programs to avoid the need
- ❖ Identify and eliminate sexual harassment, workplace violence, verbal and physical abuse
- ❖ Implement ergonomically sound work environments to prevent worker injury and fatigue
- ❖ Develop and implement bioterrorist, biohazard and disaster readiness plans
- ❖ Identify clinical and leadership skills necessary for performing job related tasks.
- ❖ Provide mentorship and career counseling to aspiring clinicians and leaders to develop required skill sets. (Succession planning)

Novice

Competent

Expert

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## Nurse Executive Competency

### Business Skills

#### Human Resource Management (continued)

- ❖ Identify future skill sets needed to remain competitive.
- ❖ Analyze market data in relation to supply and demand and manage resources to ensure appropriate compensation.
- ❖ Develop and implement recruitment and retention strategies.

#### Strategic Management

- ❖ Analyze the situation and identify strategic direction
- ❖ Conduct SWOT and Gap analyses
- ❖ Formulate objectives, goals, and specific strategies related to mission and vision
- ❖ Understand what organizations should measure in order to 'balance' the financial perspective
- ❖ Measure and analyze performance from the learning and growth, business process, customer, and financial perspectives

#### Marketing

- ❖ Analyze marketing opportunities
- ❖ Develop marketing strategies
- ❖ Integrate marketing and communications strategies
- ❖ Use public relations and media outlets to promote your organization

#### Information Management & Technology

- ❖ Demonstrate basic competency in E-mail, Word, spreadsheet, and internet programs.
- ❖ Recognize the relevance of nursing data for improving practice
- ❖ Recognize limitations of computer applications
- ❖ Use telecommunication devices
- ❖ Utilize hospital database management, decision support, and expert system's programs to access information and analyze data from disparate sources for use in planning for patient care processes and systems.
- ❖ Participate in system change processes and utility analysis
- ❖ Participate in evaluation of information systems in practice settings

## Competency Level

Novice

Competent

Expert

1 2 3 4 5


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## Nurse Executive Competency

### Business Skills

#### Information Management & Technology (continued)

- ❖ Evaluate and revise patient care processes and systems
- ❖ Use applications for structured data entry (classification systems, acuity level, etc.)
- ❖ Recognize the utility of nursing involvement in the planning, design, choice and implementation of information systems in the practice environment
- ❖ Demonstrate awareness of societal and technological trends, issues and new developments as they apply to nursing
- ❖ Demonstrate proficient awareness of legal and ethical issues related to client data, information, confidentiality
- ❖ Read and interpret benchmarking, financial and occupancy data

## Competency Level

Novice	Competent			Expert
1	2	3	4	5

