

Standards of Oncology Nursing Education: Generalist and Advanced Practice Levels (4th Edition)

Introduction

The scope of oncology nursing practice encompasses clinical practice, education, consultation, research, and administration. Oncology nursing practice is focused on the care of individuals, families, groups, and communities at risk for or with a diagnosis of cancer. The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) maintains that nurses involved in cancer care have the responsibility to develop and demonstrate knowledge and skills that display competence in the field.

In 1982 ONS published the *Outcome Standards for Cancer Nursing Education at the Fundamental Level*. This was followed by the publication of *The Scope of Advanced Oncology Nursing Practice* that was developed by the Clinical Practice and Education Committees of ONS in 1987, and provided the forum for the development of *Standards of Oncology Nursing Education: Advanced Practice Level*. In 1989, these two standards were revised and consolidated into one document, the first edition of the *Standards of Oncology Nursing Education: Generalist and Advanced Practice Levels*. A second edition was completed in 1995, and the third in 2003.

The standards outlined in the 2015 edition reflect the demands of a rapidly changing health care environment that significantly challenge health care, cancer care, and the oncology nursing profession and how oncology nurses are educated to meet these challenges.

The 2011 *Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report on the Future of Nursing* centered on several key points and associated recommendations to ensure that nurses practice to the full potential of

22 their education and to enable nurses to achieve higher levels of education and training through
23 improved education systems. The projected increase in demand for services related to cancer
24 prevention, treatment, survivorship, and end-of-life care have important implications for the
25 future of oncology nursing and require that oncology nurses have the education and training
26 necessary to provide optimal cancer care across the continuum of care.

27 *The Standards of Oncology Education: Generalist and Advanced Practice Levels* provide
28 educational guidelines for oncology nurses and educators in order to accomplish the following:

- 29 • Enhance the quality of oncology nursing education
- 30 • Improve the quality of cancer care for the public in a rapidly changing health care environment
- 31 • Promote the standardization of oncology nursing academic preparation.

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33 **Guidelines for use**

34 This document is designed as a reference for oncology nurses, educators in clinical settings,
35 and faculty members in schools of nursing. It provides comprehensive guidelines for oncology
36 nursing education that may be used by students and/or educators to accomplish the following:

- 37 • Plan, update, and evaluate generalist level education offered in diploma, associate or
38 baccalaureate degree programs
- 39 • Plan, update, and evaluate advanced level education offered at the graduate level
- 40 • Plan and evaluate continuing education programs at the generalist and advanced practice levels
- 41 • Assess individual knowledge of oncology nursing care
- 42 • Assist with continuing education planning.

43 The standards outlined in this document are descriptive statements designed to guide the
44 achievement of quality education for nurses. The standards have been developed to reflect the
45 structure, process, and outcomes of educational offerings.

46 The following assumptions were made in the development of these standards:

- 47 1. Oncology nursing is an established specialty.
- 48 2. Oncology nursing practice is based on effective communication; therapeutic, theory based,
49 and research supported nursing interventions; and critical thinking skills.
- 50 3. Oncology nursing is practiced at both the generalist and advanced levels in a variety of
51 settings and across the continuum of cancer care.
- 52 4. Oncology nurses have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continuously improve
53 the quality and safety of cancer care.
- 54 5. Professional nurses function in collaboration with other disciplines.

55 **Oncology Generalist Level Education**

56 **Standard I. Faculty**

57 The faculty is prepared academically and clinically to teach oncology nursing in a variety of
58 settings to diverse learners.

59 **Criteria**

60 Faculty

- 61 1. Has relevant and current education and/or clinical experience in oncology nursing and
62 Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN[®]) and/or Advanced Oncology Certification (AOCN[®],
63 AOCNP[®], AOCNS[®]) certification demonstrating expertise in oncology nursing.
- 64 2. Utilizes the Statement on the Scope and Standards of Oncology Nursing Practice: Generalist
65 and Advanced Practice (ONS, 2013) and ONS Leadership Competencies (2012) to inform the
66 development, implementation, and evaluation of education activities.
- 67 3. These criteria are specific to classroom and clinical faculty teaching oncology focused
68 content.

69 **Standard II. Resources**

70 Clinical and educational resources are adequate to meet the learning objectives related to
71 teaching oncology nursing.

72 **Criteria**

73 Resources

- 74 1. Educational materials specific to oncology nursing are peer-reviewed, evidence-based,
75 current, available, and accessible to the faculty and students.

- 76 2. Clinical and laboratory resources are available and accessible to practice the skills relevant
77 for oncology nursing practice.
- 78 3. Clinical experiences provide access to people across the life span and the cancer continuum.
- 79 4. Clinical experiences provide access to culturally and economically diverse populations.

80 **Standard III. Curriculum**

81 Basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for the delivery of competent nursing care to
82 people at risk for or experiencing cancer are included in the curriculum.

83 **Criteria**

84 Curriculum includes:

- 85 1. Principles from the Statement on the Scope and Standards of Oncology Nursing Practice:
86 Generalist and Advanced Practice (ONS, 2013).
- 87 2. Comprehensive delineation that inform clinical reasoning, critical thinking, and leadership,
88 and clinical practice.
- 89 3. Evidence-based content relevant to the practice of oncology nursing and is based on the
90 current ONCC OCN blueprint that includes: health promotion and disease prevention;
91 screening, early detection and diagnosis; scientific basis for practice including research;
92 cancer treatment modalities; symptom management; psychosocial dimensions of care;
93 oncologic emergencies; sexuality; survivorship; and end of life care.
- 94 4. Content on professional performance issues in oncology nursing including safety, quality
95 improvement, care coordination, informatics, legal and ethical issues.
- 96 5. Description of collaborative practice models within nursing and inter-professional teams to
97 achieve quality cancer care.

98

Standard IV. Teaching-Learning Process

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Teaching-learning theories are applied to the development, implementation, and evaluation

100

of learning experiences related to oncology nursing practice.

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Criteria

102

Faculty

103

1. Systematically collects and analyzes assessment data in order to identify cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning needs of the student cohort.

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105

2. Develops a teaching plan that includes:

106

- Behavioral objectives based on identified learning needs

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- Content to meet identified objectives

108

- Teaching strategies and learning experiences that promote active learning

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- Criteria and methods for evaluation

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3. Implements the teaching plan in an environment conducive to learning.

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4. Collects data from the student and other sources to evaluate achievement of learning objectives and effectiveness of instruction.

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5. Modifies teaching-learning process based on evaluation data.

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Standard V. The Oncology Nurse Generalist

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Nurses assume responsibilities commensurate with their educational and experiential

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preparation or acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to practice in the role of the oncology

117

nurse generalist.

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Criteria

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The oncology nurse generalist

- 120 1. Utilizes the nursing process including the assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation,
121 and evaluation in delivering nursing care to diverse populations across the continuum of
122 cancer care in a variety of settings.
- 123 2. Collaborates and communicates within nursing and inter-professional teams to provide safe
124 and effective cancer care.
- 125 3. Works in partnership with researchers to identify the need for and generate new knowledge
126 for practice.
- 127 4. Uses appropriate documents, such as ANA's Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015) and the ONS
128 State on the Scope and Standards of Oncology Practice (2013) and ONS Leadership
129 Competencies (2012), to guide professional oncology nursing practice and understand the
130 ethical and legal implications of that practice.
- 131 5. Assumes responsibility for personal and professional development in oncology nursing
132 including self-care, leadership and life-long learning.

133 **Oncology Advanced Practice Education**

134 **Standard I. Faculty**

135 The faculty is prepared academically and clinically to teach graduate-level oncology nursing
136 to diverse learners.

137 **Criteria**

138 Faculty

- 139 1. Has masters' or doctoral level preparation, advanced practice licensure, and specialty
140 certification in oncology nursing reflective of expertise.
- 141 2. Utilizes the ONS Statement on the Scope and Standards on Oncology Nursing Practice:
142 Generalist and Advanced Practice (2013) in education, practice and/or student supervision.
- 143 3. Applies evidence-based findings to oncology nursing education curriculum and clinical
144 practice experiences.

145 **Standard II. Resources**

146 Clinical, educational, and research resources are adequate to achieve graduate program
147 objectives related to oncology nursing.

148 **Criteria**

149 Resources

- 150 1. Peer reviewed and evidence based educational materials specific to oncology nursing are
151 current, available, and accessible to faculty and students.
- 152 2. Oncology clinical practice, education, administration, and research experiences are available
153 as appropriate for the program objectives.

154 a. Advanced level clinical practice opportunities with culturally and economically diverse
155 populations are available and accessible across the life span and the cancer continuum
156 of care in a variety of collaborative oncology settings.

157 b. Oncology research opportunities and mentors appropriate for the program objectives are
158 available to the student.

159 c. Experienced oncology nurses in advanced practice roles are available to serve as
160 preceptors for graduate students.

161 **Standard III. Curriculum**

162 Specialized knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for the implementation of oncology
163 nursing at the advanced practice level are included in the curriculum.

164 **Criteria**

165 Curriculum includes

- 166 1. Opportunities for specialization in oncology nursing consistent with advanced practice as
167 described in the ONS Statement on the Scope and Standards on Oncology Nursing Practice:
168 Generalist and Advanced Practice (2013) and ONS Leadership Competencies (2012).
- 169 2. Application of theories and research to the roles in oncology nursing at the advanced practice
170 level.
- 171 3. Individualized learning opportunities based on previous knowledge, experience, learning
172 style, and professional goals.

173 Evidence-based content based on the current ONCC AOCNS/AOCNP blueprints and
174 include: screening, prevention, early detection and genetic risk; diagnosis, staging and treatment
175 planning; cancer treatment; side effect and symptom management; oncologic emergencies;

176 survivorship; end-of-life care; psychosocial issues; coordination of care; professional
177 practice; roles of the advanced practice nurse.

178 5. Integration of healthcare trends, health policy, legislation and regulatory, and reimbursement
179 issues.

180 6. Education and experiences that focus on the development of advanced clinical reasoning,
181 critical thinking, leadership, and clinical practice skills.

182 7. Opportunities to develop communication and collaboration skills to function effectively
183 within nursing and inter-professional teams to achieve quality cancer care.

184 **Standard IV. Teaching-Learning Process**

185 Teaching-learning theories are applied to the development, implementation, and evaluation
186 of learning experiences related to advanced oncology nursing.

187 **Criteria**

188 Faculty

189 1. Systematically obtains and analyzes assessment data from the student cohort in order to
190 identify cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning needs.

191 2. Develops a teaching plan that includes:

192 • • Behavioral objectives based on identified learning needs

193 • • Content to meet identified objectives

194 • • Teaching strategies and learning experiences that promote active learning and critical

195 • thinking by the student

196 • • Criteria and methods for evaluation

197 3. Implements teaching plans in an environment conducive to learning.

- 198 4. Collects data from students to evaluate achievement of learning objectives and teaching
199 instruction.
- 200 5. Modifies teaching-learning process based on evaluation data.

201 **Standard V. Student: The Advanced Practice Oncology Nurse**

202 Graduate-level nursing education program graduates assume responsibilities in oncology
203 nursing commensurate with their educational preparation and experience.

204 **Criteria**

205 The advanced practice oncology nurse

- 206 1. Utilizes knowledge of existing theory, research, and evidenced-based guidelines for use in the
207 implementation of an advanced practice role.
- 208 2. Applies advanced nursing practice skills in the provision, guidance, and evaluation of care for
209 individuals at risk for or experiencing cancer.
- 210 3. Applies appropriate theories to meet the educational needs of people at risk for or diagnosed
211 with cancer, members of the inter-professional healthcare team, and the public
- 212 4. Provides leadership in promoting ethical decision making, implementing planned change, and
213 facilitating resource allocation to improve the quality of cancer care.
- 214 5. Provides expert consultation based on theory and advanced clinical knowledge to other
215 healthcare professionals or healthcare consumers.
- 216 6. Contributes to the development of nursing theory, research, and advanced practice.
- 217 7. Assumes responsibility for personal and professional development in oncology nursing
218 including self-care, leadership and life-long learning.

219 **Glossary**

220 Advanced practice level— Level of practice for a registered nurse with master’s, doctoral, or
221 post-doctoral education who applies theoretical knowledge in a specialized field.

222 Cancer continuum — Care at all phases of illness and includes prevention, detection,
223 treatment, survivorship and end-of-life care.

224 Critical thinking — A cognitive process that involves the use of facts, principles, theories,
225 abstractions, deductions, interpretations, and evaluation of arguments. The cognitive skills of
226 comprehension, application, synthesis, and evaluation are utilized.

227 Cultural competence — Refers to being sensitive and responsive to issues related to culture,
228 race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Cultural competence
229 indicates translation of cultural sensitivity and awareness into credible behaviors and actions.

230 Diversity — Differences in race and ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual
231 orientation and age.

232 Evidence-based practice — Integrating best current evidence with clinical expertise and
233 patient/family preferences and values into nursing care.

234 Generalist level — Level of practice for a registered nurse who possesses general knowledge
235 and skills applicable to diversified health concerns.

236 Quality Improvement — The use of data to monitor outcomes and the use of improvement
237 methods to design and test changes to continuously improve the quality and safety of the
238 healthcare system.

239 Quality cancer care — The degree to which health services for individuals and populations
240 increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional
241 knowledge. Good quality means providing patients with appropriate services in a technically

- 242 competent manner, with good communication, shared decision making, and cultural sensitivity.
- 243 (from IOM Chapter 4, page 2 in Ensuring Quality cancer care)

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