
Preface

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.

The *Outcome Standards for Cancer Nursing Education at the Fundamental Level* was published by ONS in 1982. The *Scope of Advanced Oncology Nursing Practice*, developed by the Clinical Practice and Education Committees of ONS in 1987, provided the forum for the development of *Standards of Oncology Nursing Education: Advanced Practice Level*. In 1989, the standards were revised and consolidated into one document, *Standards of Oncology Nursing Education: Generalist and Advanced Practice Levels*. A second edition was published in 1995 and the third in 2003. The standards outlined in this edition reflect the demands of a rapidly changing healthcare environment that significantly challenges health care, cancer care, and the oncology nursing profession and how oncology nurses are educated to meet these challenges.

The Institute of Medicine published *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* in 2011. This report centered on several key points and associated recommendations to ensure that nurses practice to the full potential of their education, as well as achieve higher levels of education and training through improved education systems. The projected increase in demand for services related to cancer prevention, treatment, survivorship, and end-of-life care has important implications for the future of oncology nursing and requires that oncology nurses have the education and training necessary to provide optimal cancer care across the continuum.

The *Standards of Oncology Nursing Education* provides educational guidelines for oncology nurses and educators (see *faculty* in the Glossary) to

- Enhance the quality of oncology nursing education
- Improve the quality of cancer care for the public in a rapidly changing healthcare environment
- Promote the standardization of oncology nursing academic preparation and continuation of professional development.

Guidelines for Use

This document is designed as a reference for oncology nurses, educators in clinical settings, and faculty members in schools of nursing. It provides comprehensive guidelines for oncology nursing education that may be used by students and educators to

- Plan, update, and evaluate generalist level education offered in associate or baccalaureate degree programs
- Plan, update, and evaluate advanced level education offered in master's programs
- Plan and evaluate continuing education programs at the generalist and advanced practice levels
- Assess individual knowledge of oncology nursing care
- Assist with continuing education planning.

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

The following assumptions were made in the development of these standards.

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