



Clinical Nurse Specialists: Application Guide

September 2016

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If you have any questions regarding this guide please contact the relevant Director of Clinical Operations

Version 2: September 2016

Introduction

RCH nursing has a vision to standardise the leadership and management of nursing teams. In 2015 we completed the orientation and development guides for Nurse Unit Managers (NUM) and Associate Nurse Unit Managers (ANUM).

The development of this guide in 2016 is the next step in achieving our vision, clarifying the role of the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) as the pinnacle in point of care nursing practice. This guide provides NUM and applicants with clear organisational expectations of the CNS role. In RCH we plan to shine a light on CNS within teams and organisationally. This will occur organisationally in Tuesday@2 ceremonies in April and October of each year. CNS will be publically acknowledged for their success in obtaining the title and presented with a RCH CNS pin.

Included in this guide are:

- An outline of the application process
- Copies of the Position Descriptions for CNS & RN which demonstrate the different expectations of both roles.
- Evidence table for applications (Word version on NUM Drive and made available on Mercury for applicants)
- Successful Applicant Letter template for NUM (Word version on NUM Drive)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the working group for their enthusiasm and commitment in the development of the CNS application guide. We look forward to your feedback and the standardisation of CNS expectations across RCH.

Kind regards

Bernadette Twomey
Executive Director Nursing & Allied Health
Chief Nursing Officer
14th June 2016

Application Process

Prior to applying for a CNS role it is important the applicant consider the following:

- A nurse practising in a specialised field, does not automatically meet the classification of a CNS.
- A nurse practising 'new' or highly technical clinical skills does not automatically meet the classification of CNS.
- A nurse who is able to perform some tasks better than other nurses or all tasks competently does not automatically meet the classification of CNS.
- The terms 'team', 'unit', 'ward', 'department' and 'program' are synonymous.
- Leave without pay does not count towards qualifying length of experience.
- Length of service at RCH does not determine eligibility for CNS.

It is also essential the applicant is familiar with the RCH CNS position description (Appendix 1).

How to apply:

Eligible Applicants will submit the following to their NUM via mercury and include the following:

1. Application form completed via Mercury, including CV and letter of application.
2. Completion of the CNS Evidence of Attainment of Standards Tool (Appendix 2).

Interview Process:

- The application will be reviewed by the NUM and if deemed appropriate an interview will be organised within 1 week of the closing date.
- The interview panel will consist of two NUM +/- Clinical Support Nurse from the unit.

Interview Format:

- The interview will consist of questions relevant to the position description and application.
- The applicant will provide a short presentation detailing a quality initiative appropriate to the unit.

Post interview:

- The NUM will forward interview documents and recommendation to Director of Clinical Operations and will endorse recommendation of being successful/unsuccessful

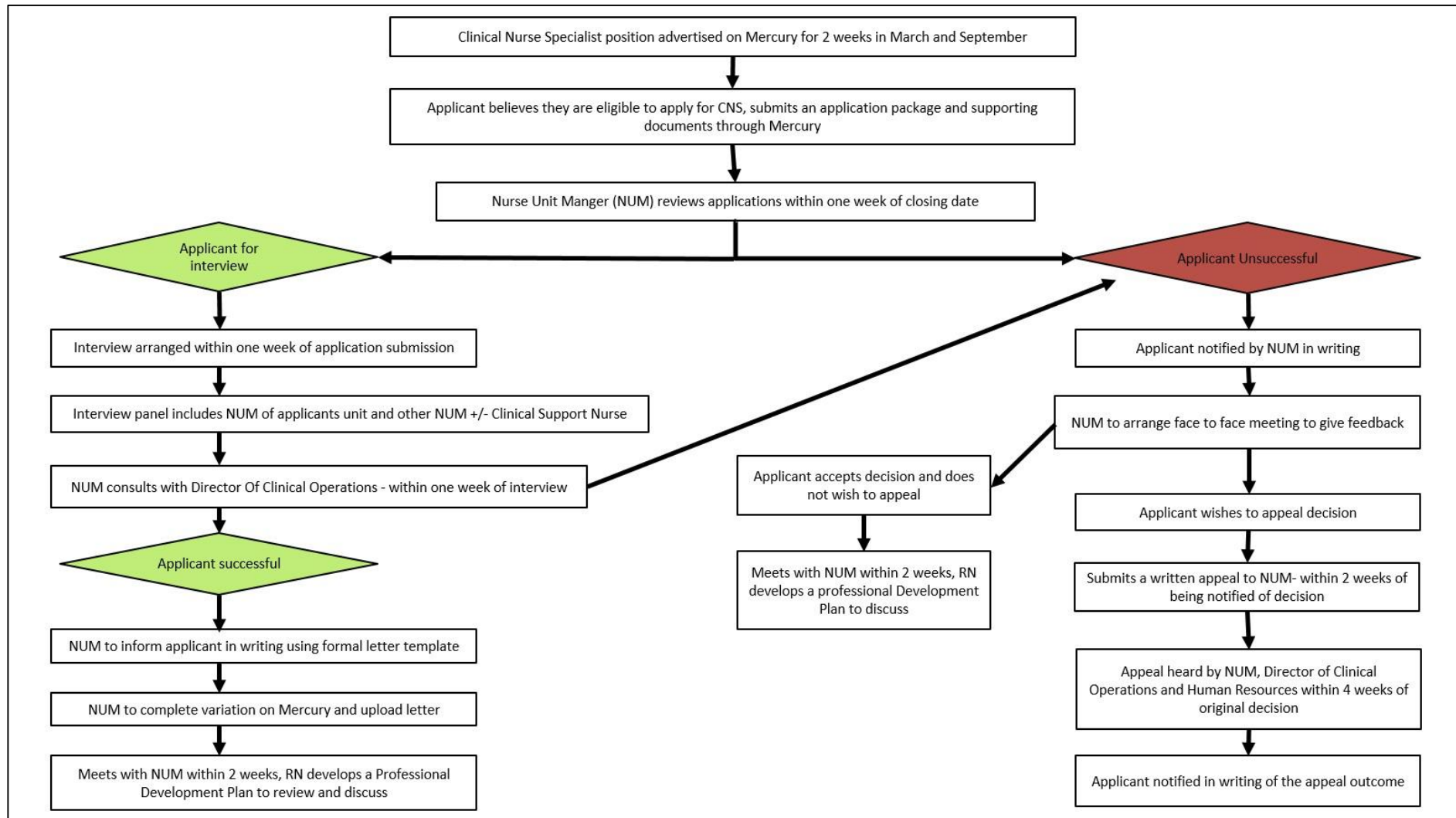
If Successful, the applicant will:

- Meet with their NUM for feedback and professional development planning for the coming year.
- Have a variation completed through Mercury
- Receive a letter of congratulations from the NUM. An example letter is included in Appendix 3. A word version for personalisation is accessible on the NUM Drive, CNS applications folder
- Be presented with a "CNS" pin at a Nursing Forum

If Unsuccessful, the applicant will:

- Meet with their NUM for feedback.
- Be provided with an explanation, based on selection criteria.
- Discuss their application, including setting further objectives, with completion time frames, in preparation for future application.
- If the applicant wishes to appeal the decision, a written submission must be made by the applicant to the NUM within two weeks.
- The appeal will be heard by the NUM, Director of Clinical Operations and Human Resources within 4 weeks of original decision.
- Applicant notified in writing of appeal decision.

Flow chart for CNS application process



Appendix 1: RN Position Description

Position Title	Registered Nurse		
Unit / Branch	All departments		
Classification	Registered Nurse Grade 2 Year 2 to Year 10	Employment Status	Full time and Part time:
Position reports to	Nurse Unit Manager		
Location	The Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville		
Position Contact	Nurse Unit Manager		

The Royal Children's Hospital

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) in Melbourne is a leading provider of specialist public health services for children and adolescents and is the major specialist paediatric hospital in Victoria, caring for children from Tasmania and southern New South Wales as well as other states around Australia and overseas.

With a staff of over 4,500 and an annual operating budget of over \$500M RCH has an international reputation as a centre of clinical excellence and is a state-wide teaching, training and research hospital providing tertiary, secondary and primary infant, child and adolescent health services.

RCH has a variety of research and academic partners including the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), and the University of Melbourne and other tertiary institutions for teaching medical and nursing students and for postgraduate study and medical research as well as a number of community based partners.

Further information on RCH is available at www.rch.org.au

ROLE DESCRIPTION

In Victoria and therefore at the RCH, a registered nurse (RN) is responsible for ensuring that clinical practice and delivery of care is consistent with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia Standards for Practice. You will be responsible for providing comprehensive, safe, evidence-based practice across a range of contexts, to facilitate optimal health outcomes; performing self-assessment of scope of practice and competence related to assigned responsibilities as discussed with the care delivery team; retaining responsibility for individual actions and accountability for care.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

It is an expectation that RN demonstrate a **minimum** level of competent as described in Benner's "Novice to Expert". At the competent level, the nurse

- Sees actions as a part of long term goals
- Contemplates a problem and consciously and deliberately plans care,
- Questions practice and continuously develops through ongoing mentoring and support.

Direct and Comprehensive Care

- Conduct comprehensive patient assessments including history, physical examination and psychosocial, cultural, and religious factors affecting needs.
- Interpret assessment data to formulate plans of care and initiate care within scope of practice.
- Competently perform specialty-specific procedures.
- Assess patient response to treatment and modify plan of care on the basis of response, seeking guidance when required.
- Effectively communicate with patient and family including the sharing of information and education.
- Document appropriately and accurately.
- Engage in ethical decision making in patient care.
- Participate in interdisciplinary planning for care of patients.

Support of systems

- Support efficient movement of patients through the RCH.
- Participate in planning for the unit.
- Adhere to standards of practice, policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Serve as a spokesperson for nursing and the RCH when interacting with other professionals, patients, families, and the public.

Education and Professional Development

- Actively pursue own professional development and maintain a record of continuing professional development
- Serve as an informal educator to less experienced staff while providing direct care activities.
- Formally serve as preceptor for less experienced staff.
- Participate in unit based education activities.

Research and Quality

- Use evidence and integrate theory into practice.
- Participate in unit based quality improvement initiatives to monitor and improve patient care.

Professional leadership

- Act as a positive professional role model.
- Represent a professional nursing image.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Nursing registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

To be successful in the role of RN, you will be able to demonstrate:

- ability to meet key accountabilities
- well-developed interpersonal skills
- effective working relationships
- flexibility and ability to prioritise workloads
- commitment to ensuring safe, quality care for all patients and their families

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All employees are required to adhere to the Royal Children's Hospital Values:

- Unity - We work as a team and in partnership with our communities
- Respect - We respect the rights of all and treat people the way we would like them to treat us
- Integrity - We believe that how we work is as important as the work we do
- Excellence - We are committed to achieving our goals and improving outcomes

Potential employees will be required to undertake a National Criminal Record Check and a Working With Children Check.

QUALITY, SAFETY AND IMPROVEMENT

RCH Employees are required to:

- Act in accordance and comply with all relevant Safety and Quality policies and procedures
- Participate in and contribute to quality improvement programs and commit to RCH Values
- Comply with the Requirements of the National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards
- Comply with all relevant clinical and/or competency standards
- Comply with the principles of Patient and Family Centred Care that relate to this position

Position description last updated

June 2016

Appendix 2: CNS Position Description

Position Title	Clinical Nurse Specialist		
Unit / Branch	All departments		
Classification	Registered Nurse Grade 2 Clinical Nurse Specialist YS9	Employment Status	Full time and Part time: Minimum 0.4 EFT
Position reports to	Nurse Unit Manager		
Location	The Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville		
Position Contact	Nurse Unit Manager		

The Royal Children's Hospital

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) in Melbourne is a leading provider of specialist public health services for children and adolescents and is the major specialist paediatric hospital in Victoria, caring for children from Tasmania and southern New South Wales as well as other states around Australia and overseas.

With a staff of over 4,500 and an annual operating budget of over \$500M RCH has an international reputation as a centre of clinical excellence and is a state-wide teaching, training and research hospital providing tertiary, secondary and primary infant, child and adolescent health services.

RCH has a variety of research and academic partners including the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), for teaching medical and postgraduate nursing students and for postgraduate study and medical research as well as a number of community based partners.

Further information on RCH is available at www.rch.org.au

ROLE DESCRIPTION

In Victoria, the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) is defined in the EBA as a nurse who "is responsible for clinical nursing duties", therefore is recognised as someone providing direct clinical care. The CNS is a clinical expert in an area of nursing specialisation and accepts responsibility for professional activities that support service delivery and the professional development of self and others.

The CNS classification is made in recognition of a Registered Nurse, who:

- Has developed and continues to maintain a higher level of clinical knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes
- Actively participates in and contributes to initiatives that have a unit and/or organisational impact
- Undertakes ongoing professional development activities for self and contributes to others' development
- Engages in quality improvement and research activities to improve practice
- Serves as a role model and demonstrates leadership in the specialty

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

It is an expectation that CNS demonstrate a **minimum** level of proficiency as described in Benner's "Novice to Expert". At the proficient level, the nurse

- Takes in the overall picture and identifies the important aspects to focus on.
- Knows what to expect and how to modify plans in atypical situations.
- Applies increased understanding to improved problem solving and decision making.
- Is stimulated to question practice and continuously develop.

Direct and Comprehensive Care

1. Conduct comprehensive patient assessments including history, physical examination and psychosocial, cultural, and religious factors affecting needs.
2. Interpret assessment data to formulate plans of care and proactively initiate care within scope of practice.
3. Proficiently perform specialty-specific procedures.
4. Assess patient response to treatment and modify plan of care on the basis of response.
5. Effectively communicate with patient and family including the sharing of information and education.
6. Document appropriately and accurately.
7. Facilitate the process of ethical decision making in patient care.
8. Coordinate interdisciplinary plan for care of patients.
9. Collaborate with other services to optimise the patient's health status.

Support of systems

1. Facilitate efficient movement of patients through the RCH.
2. Participate in planning for the unit.
3. Contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of standards of practice, policies, procedures and guidelines.
4. Serve as a spokesperson for nursing and the RCH when interacting with other professionals, patients, families, and the public.

Education

1. Actively pursue own professional development and maintain a record of continuing professional development
2. Take an active role in teaching and enabling others.
3. Serve as an informal educator to staff while providing direct care activities.
4. Formally serve as a supervisor, preceptor or mentor.
5. Take a lead role in unit based education activities.
6. Contribute to the development of education resources.

Research and Quality

1. Use evidence and integrate theory into practice.
2. Participate in audits to monitor and improve patient care.
3. Actively contribute to unit quality-improvement initiatives.
4. Identify practice problems and utilise resources to address practice issues through research or quality improvement processes.

Professional leadership

1. Act as a positive professional role model.
2. Represent a professional nursing image.
3. Serve as a resource or committee member to groups within the unit or organisation.
4. Disseminate nursing knowledge through presentation or publication.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Nursing registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)
- Postgraduate qualification in specific nursing field, twelve months' experience working in clinical area of specific post graduate qualification OR
- Minimum 4 years' post basic registration experience including 3 years' experience within relevant area of specialty
- Evidence of ongoing professional development as reflected in Professional Practice Portfolio

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

To be successful in the role of CNS, you will be able to demonstrate:

- ability to meet key accountabilities
- well-developed interpersonal skills
- effective working relationships
- flexibility and ability to prioritise workloads
- commitment to ensuring safe, quality care for all patients and their families

ONGOING AGREED CNS CRITERIA FULFILMENT

CNS is a personal classification that allows an individual CNS or RPN2 to elect at a future date to discontinue fulfilling the higher level CNS criterion and henceforth revert to a non-CNS Grade 2 classification whilst remaining within the current team/ unit.

In cases where it is identified by the manager that an individual CNS has ceased to meet the agreed criteria for CNS classification, the CNS will be given the opportunity to produce evidence of meeting the criteria within a 7 day timeframe. If the CNS is unable to produce evidence of meeting the criteria within a 7 day timeframe, the CNS classification will be withdrawn and the individual will revert to the appropriate grade 2 classification.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All employees are required to adhere to the Royal Children's Hospital Values:

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- Respect - We respect the rights of all and treat people the way we would like them to treat us
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QUALITY, SAFETY AND IMPROVEMENT

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- Act in accordance and comply with all relevant Safety and Quality policies and procedures
- Participate in and contribute to quality improvement programs and commit to RCH Values
- Comply with the Requirements of the National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards
- Comply with all relevant clinical and/or competency standards
- Comply with the principles of Patient and Family Centred Care that relate to this position

Position description last updated

June 2016

Appendix 3: Clinical Nurse Specialist Evidence of Attainment of Standards Tool

As part of the application process for classification as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) at the RCH, you are required to present evidence of attainment of the Standards for Practice for CNS that are outlined in the position description under key accountabilities. It is an expectation that you are able to demonstrate a **minimum level of proficiency** as described in Benner’s “Novice to Expert”. At the proficient level, the nurse

- Takes in the overall picture and identifies the important aspects to focus on.
- Knows what to expect and how to modify plans in atypical situations.
- Applies increased understanding to improved problem solving and decision making.
- Is stimulated to question practice and continuously develop.

You are required to complete the table below and submit it as part of your application. The dot points provided under each domain are prompts only. You should refer to the Key Accountabilities in the CNS position description for more detailed explanation. It is not an expectation that all standards will be addressed in the table, however you should be prepared to speak to any of the standards during the CNS interview.

DOMAIN	EVIDENCE OF ATTAINMENT AT MINIMUM LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY
Direct and Comprehensive Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient assessments • Care planning • Care delivery • Patient communication and education • Documentation • Ethical decision making • Multidisciplinary collaboration 	
Support of Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient flow • Planning • Guidelines • Spokesperson 	
Education and Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing professional development • Enabling others • Education • Resource development 	
Research and Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of evidence • Questioning practice • Audits, Quality improvement and Research 	
Professional Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model • Professional nursing image • Committee membership • Knowledge dissemination 	

Appendix 4: Letter of Congratulations for Successful Applicants

Day Month Year

Addressee's details

00 Street Address

SUBURB/TOWN STATE 0000 (*postcode*)

Country (*if required*)

RE: Clinical Nurse Specialist Application

Dear Addressee

Congratulations on your successful application for the Clinical Nurse Specialist position on **XXXX** Ward. The work you have done and skills you have shown demonstrate your readiness to become a senior member of our team. This appointment is an active role, with certain expectations that you need to meet to maintain the title of Clinical Nurse Specialist on an ongoing basis. These include that you:

- Have developed and continue to maintain a higher level of clinical knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes
- Actively participate in and contribute to initiatives that have a unit and/or organisational impact
- Undertake ongoing professional development activities for self and contributes to others' development
- Engage in quality improvement and research activities to improve practice
- Serve as a role model and demonstrate leadership in the speciality

A yearly performance appraisal will be undertaken with your Nurse Unit Manager to allow you to demonstrate how you have met these expectations, plan your future professional development and discuss your contribution to the ward through clinical practice, education, quality improvement and research.

There will be a ceremony and formal recognition of your new appointment as a Clinical Nurse Specialist. These details will be provided to you shortly.

Once again, congratulations on your success. We look forward to your continuing contribution to the **XXXX** Ward and to the Royal Children's Hospital.

Yours Sincerely,

Sender

Position

Department/Program/Service

The Royal Children's Hospital

50 Flemington Road

Parkville Victoria 3052

Telephone (03) 9345 0000

Facsimile (03) 9345 0000

Email name@rch.org.au