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## Arizona Board of Nursing

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<p><b>NOTE:</b> An advisory opinion adopted by AZBN is an interpretation of what the law requires. While an advisory opinion is not law, it is more than a recommendation. In other words, an advisory opinion is an official opinion of AZBN regarding the practice of nursing as it relates to the functions of nursing. Facility policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations related to competency, validation, training, and supervision to assure the safety of their patient population and or decrease risk.</p>	<b>Opinion Name:</b>	Supervision of Unlicensed Nurse Externs by Registered Nurses
	<b>Approved Date:</b>	3/1993
	<b>Revised Dates:</b>	12/02, 3/03, 3/06, 1/09, 09/12, 7/16; 4/19
	<b>Within the Scope of Practice for:</b>	RN
	<b>Originating Committee:</b>	Education Committee

### **ADVISORY OPINION:** **SUPERVISION OF UNLICENSED NURSE EXTERNS BY RN's**

#### **STATEMENT OF SCOPE**

It is within the scope of the Registered Nurse (RN) to supervise unlicensed Nurse Externs if the following requirements are met:

#### **I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Unlicensed Nurse Extern is defined as a student nurse employed by a facility and currently enrolled in a board-approved or accredited nursing program recognized by U.S jurisdiction, in good standing, who has completed their first clinical rotation OR a graduate from a Board-approved or accredited nursing program waiting to take NCLEX. After graduation they are eligible to remain or become a nurse extern as long as they are qualified to take the Board exam or per individual facility policy. Nurse Externs become ineligible to work in this role after receiving licensure.
- B. Written policies and procedures are maintained by the facility/employer, including nursing responsibilities that are done under RN supervision or direct observation.
- C. The Nurse Extern has a duty to report a lapse in academic progression to the facility/employer, such as failure of a course, leave of absence, change of program, etc.
- D. An RN, who has been assigned to supervise an unlicensed Nurse Extern, shall be chosen by and meet the facility requirements. It is recommended the supervising RN demonstrate qualities of professional practice that lead to safe and effective patient care, and have the expertise to support Nurse Extern achievement of expected outcomes.
- E. An RN may directly supervise an unlicensed Nurse Extern employed by a facility only if the unlicensed Nurse Extern is currently enrolled in or a graduate of an accredited professional nursing program, or a program approved by the State Board of Nursing.
- F. An RN supervising an unlicensed Nurse Extern must be physically present on the same nursing unit and able to intervene in the care of the client.

- G. An RN assigned to an unlicensed Nurse Extern must provide direct supervision of the Nurse Extern when assessing a patient, accepting or signing off orders, administering medications, adjusting IV pump rates or devices, parenteral fluids, blood products or IV flushes. If competency has been demonstrated, while under the direct supervision of the RN, the Nurse Extern may initiate, titrate, and discontinue oxygen.
- H. If the Nurse Extern has other educational training or background such as, but not limited to, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Paramedic, etc. They can only function within the role of Nurse Extern and cannot perform skills or duties specific to other background or training.
- I. The unlicensed Nurse Extern, under the direct supervision of an RN, may perform nursing skills for which they have received didactic and clinical instruction as demonstrated by their nursing program's skill checklist, which must show evidence that the Nurse Extern has demonstrated competency in individual skills. The skills checklist must be kept with the Nurse Extern or on file at the facility of which they are employed.

**II. COURSE OF INSTRUCTION** for the unlicensed Nurse Extern is to include but is not limited to:

- A. Basic data collection and documentation of client progress in the medical record.
- B. Observing, performing and documenting nursing procedures in the medical record including attending to clients' comfort needs and performing specific duties related to the assigned nursing unit as delegated by the RN and within the approved policies of the facility in which they are employed.
- C. The unlicensed Nurse Extern must show proof of having completed didactic instruction with clinical validation in fundamental nursing skills and satisfactory completion of at least one semester of a professional nursing program.
- D. The unlicensed Nurse Extern must have received didactic and clinical instruction in any nursing skill in order to participate in the care of clients. Such skills must be validated and documented in accordance with the facility policy.

**III. RATIONALE**

To provide guidelines for the supervision of unlicensed nurse externs. The purpose of the externship is to enhance education and to facilitate the transition into the RN role while assuring safe and effective nursing care to clients.

**IV. REFERENCES**

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