**Radiation Oncology Nursing Knowledge and Skills Framework**



# Standardised learning and assessment

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**Cancer institute**

**NSW**

Working together to lessen

the impact of cancer

# Contents

[Contents 2](#bookmark0)

[1.0 Introduction 3](#bookmark2)

* 1. [Training Responsibilities 3](#bookmark3)
  2. [Learner Responsibilities 3](#bookmark4)
  3. [Facilitator Responsibilities 3](#bookmark5)
  4. [Facility Responsibilities 3](#bookmark6)

[3.0 Structure 3](#bookmark7)

[4.0 Training Progression 4](#bookmark9)

* 1. [Training Resources and Tools 5](#bookmark11)
  2. [eviQ Education Modules 5](#bookmark12)
  3. [eviQ Resources 5](#bookmark13)
  4. [Local Policies and Procedures 6](#bookmark15)
  5. [Skill Checklists 6](#bookmark16)
  6. [Practical skill record 6](#bookmark17)
  7. [Competency assessment tools 6](#bookmark17)
  8. Facilitator/assessor guide 7

[6.0 Knowledge and Skill Requirements 7](#bookmark20)

[Domain 1: Patient education 7](#bookmark21)

[Domain 2: Nursing review and assessment 8](#bookmark23)

[Domain 3: Side effects management 9](#bookmark25)

# 1.0 Introduction

The Radiation Oncology Knowledge and Skills (RONKAS) framework supports nurses working in radiation oncology to develop the necessary knowledge and clinical skills required to safely care for patients receiving radiotherapy.

# Training Responsibilities

## Learner Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the learner to ensure that all aspects of training are completed within any agreed timeframes determined by the facility.

## Facilitator Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the facilitator (e.g. educator, manager, director) to ensure that learners are supported throughout the training process and are assessed against the standardised skills assessments provided by this framework.

## Facility Responsibilities

Facilities are responsible for overseeing all training and assessment responsibilities which pertain to this document.

# Structure

The framework incorporates 6 site specific assessment areas in which knowledge and skills are focussed:

* + - Central Nervous System (CNS), Head and Neck
      * Brain
      * Head and Neck
    - Thorax and abdomen
      * Breast
      * Chest
      * Upper Gastrointestinal (GI)
    - Pelvis
      * Genitourinary
      * Gynaecological
      * Colorectal and Anal
    - Extremity
    - Skin
    - Palliative

For each site, a combination of appropriate resources and tools may be utilised in order to assist the learner in reaching the required knowledge and skill standards. Resources and reference material selection is at the discretion of the facilitator and the institutional

or departmental model of care. Resource and tool selection should be tailored to fit with the training needs and local context of the learner.

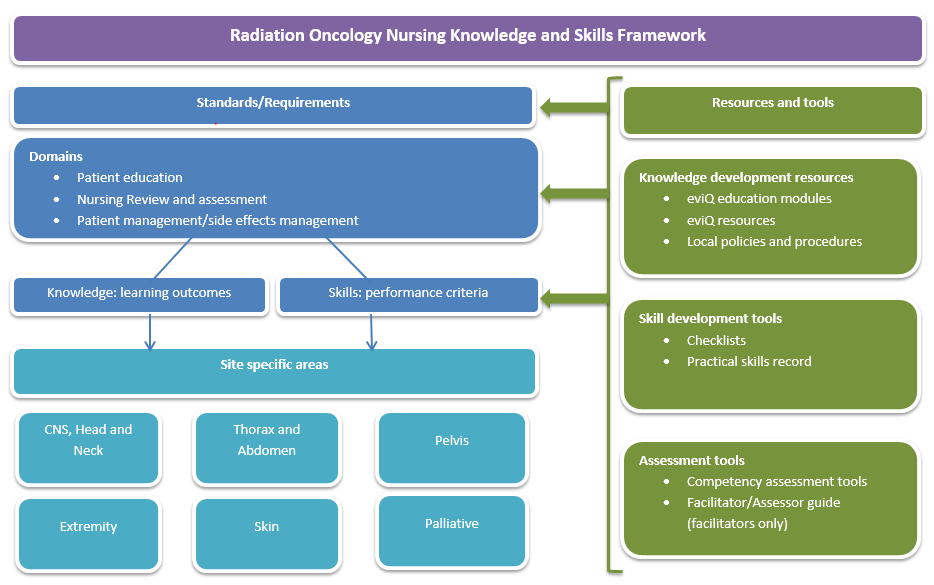
Learners are required to undergo knowledge and skills based assessments for each site specific area prior to being signed off.

Assessments include:

* agreement that learning outcomes associated with each area have been met
* satisfactory completion of all skills assessments associated with each area

It is understood that case mix will vary between facilities and therefore it is the role of the facility to determine which site specific areas require completion.

The following is a visual representation of the framework structure.



# 4.0 Training Progression

Time to completion for each site specific area assessment may vary between facilities depending upon case mix and staff availability. Training progression should be negotiated between the facilitator and the learner and understood prior to commencement of the framework.

Please see the learning pathway for knowledge and skill progression targets. Facilitators may wish to negotiate, suggest or determine timeframes for each progression target.

# Training Resources and Tools

The following tools and resources support the delivery of the framework.

## eviQ Education Modules

The Introduction to Radiation Oncology modules may be used in conjunction with this framework to support evidence based knowledge development in the context of radiation oncology in following topics:

* + - Overview of Radiation Oncology
    - Multidisciplinary care
    - Baseline assessment
    - Patient education
    - Side effects
    - Lung cancer treatment
    - Breast cancer treatment
    - Colorectal cancer treatment
    - Head and neck cancer treatment
    - Prostate cancer treatment

The Advanced Radiation Oncology modules may be used in conjunction with this framework to build an advanced knowledge of radiation oncology in topics including:

* + - Paediatric cancer treatment
    - Head and neck cancer
    - Palliative cancer treatment
    - Pelvic cancer treatment

## eviQ Resources

eviQ provides evidence based resources which support the knowledge development of best practice principles.

Radiation oncology resources are available on eviQ for the following tumour streams:

* + - Breast
    - Colorectal
    - Gynaecological
    - Haematological
    - Head and Neck
    - Neurological
    - Palliation
    - Respiratory
    - Skin
    - Upper GI
    - Urogential

Some of the different types of resources available on eviQ which may support the delivery of this framework include:

* + - Treatment protocols
    - Patient information sheets
    - Clinical resources e.g patient education checklists

## Local Policies, Procedures and Guides

Local policies and procedures may provide a suitable reference material to facilitate knowledge development regarding local techniques and guidelines.

Facilitators may direct learners to consult specific local documents in their completion of the training framework that align with the institution’s or department’s model of care.

Some of the radiotherapy centres and institutions involved in the development and review of this framework have developed local nursing guides which they have given permission to be used, shared and adapted.

For more information, or to request access to these resources please contact:

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Facilitators and assessors should use caution when utilising these guides in their own local facilities. It is the responsibility of facilitators and assessors to ensure that the practices outlined in the following documents are consistent with those performed at their local facility and with their departmental model of care. eviQ, eviQ Education and the Cancer Institute NSW do not take any responsibility for the information contained within these materials.

## Skill Checklists

Local skills checklists may also be employed to guide skill development in learners.

Some of the radiotherapy centres and institutions involved in the development and review of this framework have developed local site specific checklist which they have given permission to be used, shared and adapted.

For more information, or to request access to these resources please contact:

[Michelle.Roach@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Michelle.Roach@health.nsw.gov.au)

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Facilitators and assessors should use caution when utilising these checklists in their own local facilities. It is the responsibility of facilitators and assessors to ensure that the practices outlined in the following documents are consistent with those performed at their local facility and with their departmental model of care. eviQ, eviQ Education and the Cancer Institute NSW do not take any responsibility for the information contained within these materials.

## Practical skills record

The practical skills record may be used to record practical training sessions, skills practice and competency attempts.

## Competency assessment tools

Competency assessment tools may be used to support and record the learner’s knowledge and skills development and provide a record of competency.

## Facilitator/Assessor guides

The facilitator assessment guide contains tools for assessing both the knowledge and skills of learners.

A list of questions and expected responses are provided which can be used by facilitators to assess learner’s knowledge of those learning outcomes associated with each site specific area.

Expected skill performance outcomes are also listed next to each performance criteria to assist facilitators in assessing learner’s skills for each domain and for each site specific area.

# 6.0 Knowledge and Skill Requirements

The following describes the knowledge and skills required for independent practice as a radiation oncology nurse for each site specific area assessment.

All knowledge and skill requirements should be assessed in accordance with local standards, policies and procedures and in alignment with the facilities’ model of care.

Please see the learning pathway for a presentation of learning outcomes against progression targets.

## Domain 1: Patient education

### Knowledge

* 1. Identifies the role, responsibilities and tasks required by each member of the multidisciplinary team to deliver patient education.
  2. Describes the purpose of planning for an education session and what is involved.
  3. Identifies a range of available suitable education materials and supportive services, considers patient and treatment related factors when determining suitability.
  4. Outlines methods and resources for assessing patient/carer/family education needs, goals and priorities.
  5. Identifies appropriate time points for patient education and provides a rationale.
  6. Identifies and explains appropriate information to be included in education session. Considers education time point, treatment site, treatment intent and patient factors. Includes an accurate discussion of:
     + radiation therapy
     + treatment related side effects
     + symptom management
     + supportive services and referrals
  7. Explains documentation requirements for education session

### Skills

* 1. Practices within professional boundaries, organisation role descriptions and standards of care.
  2. Correctly plans for education session. Accesses and collects appropriate resources based on:
     + diagnosis, treatment site and treatment intent
     + treatment plan
     + health literacy, language, psychosocial and cultural considerations.
  3. Assesses the patient’s/carer’s/family’s understanding of:
     + radiation therapy treatment including treatment site and intent as well as simulation and/or treatment processes
     + treatment related side effects
     + symptom and treatment related side effect management.
  4. Assesses and identifies patient/carers/families education goals and priorities.
  5. Provides appropriate education to patients/carers/family members on:
     + radiation therapy treatment
       - treatment site
       - technique
       - intent
       - simulation and/or treatment processes
     + treatment related side effects
       - clinical presentation
       - time to presentation
     + symptom and treatment related side effects management
       - self management
       - targeted interventions
     + referrals to other health professionals.
  6. Accurately documents the education session.
  7. Identifies where multiple session are required according to patient need

## Domain 2: Patient assessment and review

### Knowledge

* 1. Identifies the role, responsibilities and tasks required by each member of the multidisciplinary team in patient review and assessment.
  2. Describes at what time points assessments are conducted and provides a rationale.
  3. Outlines what information should be reviewed prior to conducting an assessment.
  4. Identifies an appropriate tool for conducting and documenting assessments and identifies key elements of an appropriate assessment tool including:
     + validated
     + evidence based
     + structured – to identify symptom severity and associated distress
     + a universal grading tool
     + consistent – used at each assessment.
  5. Describes elements of a comprehensive assessment including:
     + physical assessment – general and treatment site specific
     + psychosocial
     + psychological
     + falls risk and infectious status
     + implanted devices
     + history
     + comorbidities
     + advanced care directive.
  6. Describes potential side effects patients may experience including clinical presentation. Considers:
     + treatment site
     + total dose
     + concurrent therapies
     + patient related factors.
  7. Describes features of various treatment related side effect grades using a universal grading system.
  8. Identifies where assessment records and documentation are stored.

### Skills

* 1. Practices within professional boundaries, organisation role descriptions and standards of care.
  2. Initiates assessment at appropriate time points
     + baseline assessment
     + subsequent – change in patient status.
  3. Reviews and interprets appropriate information prior to conducting assessment:
     + patient notes
     + prescription
     + previous assessments.
  4. Accurately selects and uses an appropriate assessment tool to conduct and record the assessment.
  5. Performs a comprehensive assessment of the patient which includes:
     + physical assessment – general and treatment site specific
     + psychosocial
     + psychological
     + falls risk and infectious status
     + implanted devices
     + history
     + comorbidities
     + advanced care directive
  6. Accurately identifies treatment related side effects, correctly assigns a grade using a universal grading tool and initiates appropriate interventions
  7. Accurately documents and stores assessment records as per departmental protocol

## Domain 3: Patient management

### Knowledge

* 1. Identifies the role, responsibilities and tasks required by each member of the multidisciplinary team in patient management.
  2. Describes the key elements of a radiation therapy care plan. Including:
     + treatment site
     + treatment intent
     + treatment dose
     + potential treatment related side effects
     + symptoms management goals
     + symptom and treatment related side effect escalation plan
     + post-treatment care.
  3. Identifies resources procedures and policies which provide information relating to side effects management.
  4. Outlines appropriate treatment related side effect management strategies.
  5. Identifies appropriate referral pathways and supportive services, consider post- treatment care.
  6. Outlines local requirements for documenting care plan, management procedures, referrals and escalation plan.

### Skills

* 1. Practices within professional boundaries, organisational role descriptions and standards of care.
  2. Formulates appropriate nursing care plan recommendations. Incorporates:
     + treatment site
     + treatment intent
     + treatment dose
     + potential treatment related side effects
     + symptoms management goals
     + symptom and treatment related side effect escalation plan
     + post-treatment care.
  3. Accesses and follows relevant policies and procedures.
  4. Selects and accurately performs appropriate treatment related side effect management procedures. Considers:
     + side effect grade/severity
     + patient distress associated with treatment related side effect
     + individual patient needs and co-morbidities.
  5. Makes appropriate referrals, considers post-treatment care.
  6. Identifies where care escalation is required and responds appropriately.
  7. Accurately documents care plan, management procedures, referrals and escalation plan according to local requirements.