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# NATIONAL IMMUNISATION EDUCATION FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION





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# P R E F A C E

This consultation is inviting public submissions on the draft *National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals* (the draft Framework). Submissions should address the content and scope of matters detailed in this document.

The draft Framework has been developed to update the *National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and Midwives* (the National Guidelines) endorsed by the National Immunisation Committee in 2000.

Redevelopment of the National Guidelines responds to the contemporary environment for immunisation education programs, which is influenced by innovative workforce arrangements, good practice in learning and teaching, new service and program delivery models, and improved health literacy.

The draft Framework has been developed to ensure a safe and effective immunisation workforce. The framework sets out the standards for practice that form the core skills and knowledge required for nationally consistent quality practice as an independent immuniser. Eligible health professionals are identified in the relevant state and territory legislation. In addition to medical practitioners, authorised health professionals may include registered nurses and midwives, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

The draft Framework was developed by the Immunisation Provider Competency Working Group established by the National Immunisation Committee to redevelop the National Guidelines. The Working Group includes representatives of Commonwealth, state and territory health authorities, and health professional associations. Drafting of the framework was informed by immunisation education and practice in Australia and other countries, and the opportunity to improve national consistency in this area.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document updates and strengthens the *National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and Midwives*, and was written in collaboration with members of the Immunisation Provider Competency Working Group, a sub-committee of the National Immunisation Committee. Membership of the Working Group during the development of this document in 2014-2015, included representatives of Commonwealth, state and territory health authorities, and health professional associations.

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The members of the National Immunisation Committee were also consulted throughout the development of this document.

**Members of the National Immunisation Committee (at time of endorsement)**

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[To be finalised for Paper 10]

A number of documents have been drawn on to contribute to the development of the *National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals*, including similar publications in other countries, in particular Canada and the UK.



PART I  
BACKGROUND AND  
INTRODUCTION

I



## BACKGROUND

Immunisation continues to be a cost-effective national public health priority in Australia, and an appropriate, skilled and quality health workforce is important in achieving higher immunisation coverage rates and contributing to successful implementation of the *National Immunisation Strategy 2013-2018* (the 'Strategy').

This document has its origins in the *National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and Midwives* (the 'National Guidelines'). The National Guidelines, endorsed by the National Immunisation Committee (NIC), were developed in response to a priority identified in the 1993 National Immunisation Strategy and the subsequent Standards for the need for education programs for health professionals and for vaccines to be administered by properly trained individuals.

The National Guidelines were designed to promote consistency across states and territories among staff involved in the implementation and application of immunisation procedures. While the National Guidelines informed the development of standardised curriculum for registered nurses and midwives, they were also utilised to supplement the education and training of other health professionals involved in immunisation, such as general practitioners, pharmacists and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers.

### Redevelopment of the National Guidelines

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Health professionals continue to play an important role towards maintaining high immunisation coverage rates and maintaining public confidence in immunisation programs through the provision of accurate and complete information about vaccines and immunisation programs.

The Strategy continues to identify an adequately skilled immunisation workforce as a priority, and the availability of a diverse network of providers as necessary to ensure equitable access to services. Key actions under the Strategy include strengthened supports for the range of providers including updated competencies, also referred to as standards for practice in this document.

The NIC established the Immunisation Provider Competency Working Group (IPCWG) with the primary purpose of reviewing the 2001 *National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and Midwives* and to assist with the development of new National Guidelines. The objective of the redevelopment was to improve national consistency in core standards for practice and training and assessment for immunisation providers. The IPCWG considered the current immunisation workforce in states and territories, the regulatory framework for immunisation providers in jurisdictions, good practice in immunisation education programs nationally and internationally and a review of the training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

To meet the objective, a literature review and key stakeholder consultations informed the development of a series of papers.

#### 1. Literature review

The literature review considered the best practice in immunisation education including theoretical and clinical assessment nationally and internationally. The review also considered an international model of Indigenous health care that contributed to increased immunisation coverage rates in their respective communities. The learnings from the review supported the need for national guidelines, a consideration for an increase in the number of immunisation providers and efforts to ensure greater national consistency in immunisation education provision.

#### 2. Regulatory framework

Review of the regulatory framework in Australia highlighted that while responsibilities for the delivery of health services and the Immunise Australia Program are shared between the Commonwealth and states and territories, legislation governing the use of drugs and poisons, and hence administration of



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vaccines, is the domain of states and territories. In this respect, provision is made for a variety of health professionals to administer vaccines. This includes medical practitioners, and in some cases nurse practitioners and midwife practitioners, registered nurses and midwives, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners. Authorisation and the categories of health professionals varies across states and territories as do the circumstances in which categories of health professionals can administer vaccines.

It was also noted that it is the responsibility for immunisation education providers to ensure that their courses meet requirements set out in state and territory legislation and other policy documents (such as the National Guidelines), and, in some cases, to apply for approval for their courses as meeting these requirements.

### **3. Training programs**

In relation to current training programs, there are nine immunisation training programs recognised by one or more states and territories. All programs are available to registered nurses, a smaller number specify entry for registered midwives, two offer entry to enrolled nurses and registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, and one specifies other health practitioners including pharmacists.

#### **Implications**

The background research undertaken to inform the redevelopment of the National Guidelines supported an approach that:

- Provided clear direction about the core areas of knowledge and skills to enable operation as an independent immunisation provider
- Recognised the current provision for a range of health professionals to be involved in the administration of vaccines and the continuing interest by new categories of health professionals not traditionally engaged in this area.

The research also identified opportunities for improving national consistency, for example, to address portability of training and its implications for a quality and sufficient workforce.

## **The National Framework for Immunisation Education for Health Professionals**

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The NIC endorsed the approach that the strengthened guidelines be viewed as appropriate to health professionals eligible to practice independently within their state or territory, and represent the core minimum curriculum for safe and effective practice as an immunisation provider. The National Guidelines have been recast as the *National Framework for Immunisation Education for Health Professionals* (the 'National Framework').

The Immunisation Provider Competency Working Group also considered other opportunities for improved national consistency of immunisation provider qualifications.

### **Structural supports promoting national consistency**

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Consistent with nationally agreed standards for practice for immunisation education, a range of supports have been nationally agreed that reflect the contemporary needs of a mobile workforce and the adoption of a national approach to the regulation of health practitioners. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of states and territories are acknowledged and the opportunity for national mechanisms to support a consistent approach has been agreed. These supports include:

#### **Minimum course content**

- Articulation of standards for practice for immunisation providers as part of the National Framework
- Incorporation of the required immunisation education course content into the National Framework as the minimum curriculum.

#### **Education provider standards**

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- Education providers delivering immunisation courses leading to independent practice as an immunisation provider are required to be either an accredited higher education provider or affiliated with an accredited higher education provider or a Registered Training Organisation.

### **Successful course completion**

- Standards for practice are incorporated into every course but it is not the sole responsibility of education providers to offer clinical practice.
- Clinical assessment is incorporated into education courses, where required, based on individual practitioner needs and prior undergraduate training. For example, in relation to individual practitioner needs, an education provider may deem it necessary for successful completion of a clinical assessment prior to issuing the individual with a certificate. In relation to undergraduate training, some education programs will require the inclusion of a clinical assessment component in their training. For example, pharmacists and Aboriginal Health Practitioners
- The education provider is responsible for issuing a certificate of successful completion of an approved immunisation course. The health professional is responsible for maintaining their authorisation.

### **Maintaining authorisation**

- To maintain authorisation the immunisation provider must provide evidence of currency of knowledge through accessing information updates and annual continuing professional development (CPD) acquisition, which is available nationally and through individual states and territories.

## **Applying the National Framework**

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The National Framework can be used as a resource by those involved in immunisation program management and education to assist with the planning and implementation of immunisation education strategies for eligible health professionals at undergraduate or post-graduate level, or through in-service modes of education.

Institutions/organisations developing immunisation courses or other training strategies for immunisation service providers should also seek endorsement of these courses/strategies from the appropriate professional organisation.

Educational organisations may wish to contact their State or Territory Immunisation Coordinators to discuss this document.



# INTRODUCTION TO THE USE OF THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of the National Framework is to outline core areas of knowledge and skills encompassing the theoretical foundations of immunisation and the clinical theory and practice. Satisfactory completion of both theoretical and clinical assessment should lead to a level of competence that would enable operation as an independent immunisation provider.

The National Framework is informed by current national standards, guidelines and strategies, most notably the current edition of *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*. The National Framework has been approved by the National Immunisation Committee (NIC) and provides the minimum curriculum for immunisation education to support consistency in quality and effective immunisation programs in Australia.

## Structure

The National Framework is divided into domains of learning and areas of standards for practice. The following domains, domain topics and standards for practice are described in the National Framework.

### DOMAIN 1 THE GLOBAL AND AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT FOR IMMUNISATION

#### 1.1 Public health and immunisation

*Standard for practice:* Demonstrates an understanding of the impact of immunisation programs.

#### 1.2 The Immunise Australia Program and the National Immunisation Program Schedule

*Standard for practice:* Demonstrates knowledge of the Immunise Australia Program and the National Immunisation Program Schedule.

### DOMAIN 2 THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AND IMMUNISATION

#### 2.1 The immunological principles of immunisation

*Standard for practice:* Demonstrates knowledge of the immune response and how vaccines work.

#### 2.2 Vaccine preventable diseases and epidemiology

*Standard for practice:* Demonstrates knowledge of the key features of vaccine preventable diseases.

#### 2.3 Vaccine types and components

*Standard for practice:* Demonstrates and applies knowledge of the various vaccine types and their components.

### DOMAIN 3 THE LAW, ETHICS AND IMMUNISATION

#### 3.1 Legal and ethical considerations for immunisation practice

*Standard for practice: Demonstrates and applies knowledge of the current legal and ethical issues related to immunisation.*

## **DOMAIN 4 IMMUNISATION PRACTICE**

### **4.1 Information resources and communicating risk**

*Standard for practice: Demonstrates knowledge of the risks and benefits of vaccination and utilises relevant information resources.*

### **4.2 The management of storage, handling and transport of vaccines**

*Standard for practice: Demonstrates knowledge of the cold chain and implements the current national guidelines when storing, handling and transporting vaccines.*

### **4.3 Vaccine safety**

*Standard for practice: Demonstrates knowledge, management and reporting of adverse events following immunisation.*

### **4.4 Vaccine administration**

*Standard for practice: Demonstrates the knowledge of the requirements for the delivery of a safe immunisation service.*

### **4.5 Documentation and reporting**

*Standard for practice: Demonstrates the principles of accurate documentation and reporting in accordance with national and state/territory guidelines, policies and procedures.*

### **4.6 Strategies for improving immunisation coverage rates**

*Standard for practice: Demonstrates knowledge of strategies and resources to improve immunisation coverage rates in Australia.*



PART II  
CORE STANDARDS FOR  
PRACTICE AND  
LEARNING OBJECTIVES  
FOR IMMUNISATION  
PROVIDERS

II

DOMAIN

THE GLOBAL AND AUSTRALIAN  
CONTEXT FOR IMMUNISATION

1

TOPIC

**1.1 Public health and immunisation**STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE**Demonstrates an understanding of the impact immunisation programs have had as a public health measure.****Learning objectives**

On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Describe the public health aims of immunisation programs and explain why immunisation is an effective and safe public health strategy
2. Explain the concept of herd immunity
3. Explain why we need to continue to vaccinate even when diseases are no longer a problem in Australia
4. Explain how the effectiveness of immunisation programs is measured

## TOPIC

## 1.2 Immunise Australia Program and the National Immunisation Program Schedule

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STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE

**Demonstrates knowledge of the Immunise Australia Program and the National Immunisation Program Schedule.**

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### Learning objectives

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On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Identify the strategic priorities of the National Immunisation Strategy
2. Describe the Immunise Australia Program and the role of the key stakeholders
3. Describe how service delivery occurs across Australia
4. Discuss the eligible groups and the specific vaccine recommendations listed on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule
5. Identify the different state and territory schedule variations and explain their rationale
6. Assess national and state/territory vaccine coverage rate reports against national targets

DOMAIN

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AND  
IMMUNISATION

2

TOPIC

**2.1 The immunological principles of vaccination**STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE**Demonstrates knowledge of the immune response and how vaccines work.****Learning objectives**

On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. List and differentiate between the various types of immunity
2. Explain and differentiate between the primary and secondary immune response
3. Discuss the immune response to vaccines
4. Explain conditions that affect the immune response to vaccines
5. Describe the rationale behind the placement of vaccines on the National Immunisation Program



## TOPIC

**2.2 Vaccine preventable diseases and epidemiology**

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STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE**Demonstrates knowledge of the key features of vaccine preventable diseases.**

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**Learning objectives**

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On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Describe the causative agent, transmission, epidemiology, clinical features and complications of each vaccine preventable disease listed in the current edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook
2. Identify the rationale for vaccine recommendations for each of the vaccine preventable diseases

## TOPIC

**2.3 Vaccine types and components**

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STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE

**Demonstrates and applies knowledge of the various vaccine types and their components.**

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**Learning objectives**

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On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Discuss the types of vaccines available, as listed in the current edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook, and identify key differences between each type
2. Define the terms vaccine efficacy, immunogenicity and vaccine effectiveness
3. Describe the individual components in vaccines and identify the purpose of each component

DOMAIN


 THE LAW, ETHICS AND  
IMMUNISATION

3

TOPIC

**3.1 Legal and ethical considerations for immunisation practice**STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE**Demonstrates and applies knowledge of the current legal and ethical issues related to immunisation.****Learning objectives**

On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Outline the legal requirements that relate to obtaining valid consent
2. Identify the state and territory legislation relevant to the practice of immunisation
3. Identify the national legislation relevant to the practice of immunisation
4. Discuss the professional accountability in immunisation practice as per the relevant codes and standards of practice, for regulated health practitioners included under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)
5. Discuss the key ethical issues that affect immunisation practice

DOMAIN

IMMUNISATION PRACTICE

4

TOPIC

## 4.1 Information resources and communicating risk

STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE

**Demonstrates knowledge of the risks and benefits of vaccination and utilises relevant information resources.**

### Learning objectives

On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Discuss the effects of each vaccine preventable disease compared with the side effects of the vaccines
2. Identify credible sources of information appropriate to individual needs
3. Identify factors influencing an individual's decision making process to vaccinate
4. Recognise and respond to the different communication needs of culturally diverse populations

## TOPIC

**4.2 The management of storage, handling and transport of vaccines**

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STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE

**Demonstrates knowledge of the cold chain and implements the current national guidelines when storing, handling and transporting vaccines.**

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**Learning objectives**

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On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Identify the principles of safe vaccine storage management
2. List the key recommendations for inclusion in a vaccine management protocol
3. Identify the steps involved in responding to a cold chain breach
4. Apply the current state and territory policies, protocols and procedures for management of a cold chain breach

## TOPIC

**4.3 Vaccine safety**

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**STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE****Demonstrates knowledge, management and reporting of adverse events following immunisation.**

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**Learning objectives**

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On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Define the term Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI)
2. Identify and discuss the management of common and uncommon events following immunisation
3. Differentiate between a vasovagal episode and anaphylaxis
4. Discuss the management of anaphylaxis
5. Discuss future vaccination recommendations following an AEFI
6. Describe the national and state/territory policies and procedures for documenting and reporting an AEFI

## TOPIC

**4.4 Vaccine administration**STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE**Demonstrates the knowledge of the requirements for the delivery of a safe immunisation service.****Learning objectives**

On completion of this topic the health professional should be able to:

1. Discuss the pre-vaccination screening process and identify conditions or circumstances that require specific action
2. List the steps to correctly select, prepare and administer vaccines appropriate for the individual
3. Identify situations where vaccines are overdue and develop a catch-up schedule in accordance with the recommendations from the current Australian Immunisation Handbook
4. Identify true contraindications for all vaccines and the common false contraindications
5. List the recommendations for post-vaccination care
6. Identify the Workplace Health and Safety requirements that relate to delivering an immunisation encounter

## TOPIC

**4.5 Documentation and reporting**

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STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE

**Demonstrates the principles of accurate documentation and reporting in accordance with national and state/territory guidelines, policies and procedures.**

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**Learning objectives**

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On completion of this topic the health professional will be able to perform the following:

1. Identify and list the recording requirements relating to the provision of immunisation services
2. Describe the process of submitting information to the immunisation registers
3. Discuss the impact of inaccurate and delayed reporting to immunisation registers



## TOPIC

**4.6 Strategies for improving immunisation coverage rates**

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STANDARD  
FOR PRACTICE

**Demonstrates knowledge of strategies and resources to improve immunisation coverage rates in Australia.**

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**Learning objectives**

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1. Identify areas of low coverage and discuss potential barriers
2. Describe current national programs aimed at improving immunisation coverage rates
3. Identify recent immunisation promotional activities that aim to improve immunisation coverage rates



## ABBREVIATIONS

AEFI	Adverse Events Following Immunisation
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
IPCWG	Immunisation Provider Competency Working Group
NIC	National Immunisation Committee
NIP	National Immunisation Program