

SIOP Africa Sub-Saharan Paediatric Oncology Nursing Network



Foundation Programme in Paediatric Oncology Nursing

Competency assessment tool

This competency assessment tool is part of a competency-based foundation level course for nurses new to paediatric oncology. The Sub-Saharan Nurses Network developed this course for paediatric oncology with support from SIOP Africa and the SIOP PODC nursing working group.

The competencies cover both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Knowledge competencies should be assessed through question and discussion between the trainer or assessor and the nurse who has undertaken the foundation training course. Practical competencies should be assessed in practice or through the use of an Objective Structured Clinical Assessment (OSCE) or other simulation exercises.

This competency assessment tool should be completed after at least one month of supervised clinical practice.

For institutions where there are already existing tools for competence assessment, these paediatric oncology-specific competencies can be incorporated.

The comments box should be used to provide recommendations based on competency level. Suggested recommendations for each competency rating is provided below.

Rating scale: based on a modified 5 Point Bondy Scale (see Appendix; Hawley and Lee 1991; Salehi et al 2021)

ND = Not done

1 = Not competent	Recommendation: Re-take the whole module and one month of supervised clinical practice, then re-evaluate
2 = Towards competent	Recommendation: Have a tutorial session with the facilitator to clarify low score areas. Re-evaluate after one month of supervised clinical practice.
3 = Competent	Recommendation: Congratulations on achieving the target for this course. Follow continuous education programme and periodic competency re-evaluation according to institutional guidelines.
4 = Toward proficient	Recommendation: Congratulations. Your performance exceeds requirements for the foundation level. Please avail yourself to mentor colleagues in your areas of strength. Follow continuous education programme and periodic competency re-evaluation according to institutional guidelines.
5 = Proficient	Recommendation: Congratulations. Your performance consistently exceeds requirements for the foundation level. Please avail yourself to mentor colleagues in your areas of strength. Follow continuous education programme and periodic competency re-evaluation according to institutional guidelines.

General comments:

For this foundation programme, the goal is for trainees to achieve a 'competent' score (3) in all aspects. However, we recognise that some trainees are already more knowledgeable and experienced before taking the formalised foundation course and can achieve proficiency ratings, but this is not required at this level.

Whilst the rating from 1 to 5 allows calculation of an average score indicative of the overall performance for each competency area, trainees are expected to achieve a 'competent' rating for each competency criteria.

The rating scale as prepared allows for identifying competency areas where trainees are strongest or weakest to provide support or use their strengths to support others.

While this competency assessment tool serves as a one-off assessment tool for the foundation programme, it could also be used to periodically assess colleagues' competency and observe for improvement.

COMPETENCY: DIAGNOSIS OF CANCER

DEFINITION	This includes early warning signs and symptoms and clinical diagnostic procedures	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		<i>Score /5</i>
1.	Describes the presentation and early warning signs and symptoms of common childhood cancers	
2.	Demonstrates an understanding of the common tests performed to diagnose childhood cancer	
3.	Adequately navigates patients to the laboratory, pathology, imaging and surgical departments as necessary for diagnostic procedures	
Average score/5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments/ Recommendations:

COMPETENCY: TREATMENT MODALITIES

DEFINITION	Concepts of chemotherapy and surgery.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		Score/5
1.	Demonstrates understanding of cancer treatment modalities and which modalities are applied for the various common cancers: Chemotherapy, Surgery and Radiotherapy.	
2.	Demonstrates understanding of the principles of chemotherapy, including neoadjuvant and adjuvant chemotherapy and the common cancers to which this applies	
3.	Effectively prepares the child and parent for a painful clinical procedure, including lumbar puncture and bone marrow aspiration and biopsies	
4.	Prepares the child for surgery, demonstrating effective pre-operative care	
5.	Demonstrates proper precautions to prevent infection post-surgery	
6.	Able to discuss the preparation and nursing management of a child requiring radiotherapy	
Average score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

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COMPETENCY: CHEMOTHERAPY

DEFINITION	Chemotherapy preparation, administration and safe handling.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		Score/5
1.	Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the potential risks of handling cytotoxic drugs	
2.	Demonstrates appropriate PPE precautions when caring for patients after chemotherapy is received	
3.	Demonstrates safe practice in the handling of cytotoxic agents, including spill management with a spill kit	
4.	Adequately checks prescriptions and medications before administration of cytotoxic drugs	
5.	Demonstrates accurate dose calculation (using both surface area and weight)	
6.	Demonstrates knowledge of signs and symptoms of adverse reactions and takes appropriate action	
7.	Adequately informs parents and caregivers, and children about treatment and supports them when a child is receiving chemotherapy	
8.	Effectively prepares the patient for chemotherapy with hydration and pre-medications	
9.	Identifies signs of chemotherapy extravasation and adequately intervenes to minimise symptoms and tissue damage	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

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COMPETENCY: CHEMOTHERAPY SIDE EFFECTS

DEFINITION	Identification, prevention and management of the common short term side effects of chemotherapy.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		<i>Score/5</i>
1.	Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, the principles of anti-emetic treatment and the emetogenicity of commonly used cytotoxic agents.	
2.	Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of commonly used cytotoxic agents which cause diarrhoea and constipation and outline ways to prevent and manage these effects.	
3.	Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the prevention and management of mucositis.	
4.	Identify which agents are likely to cause bone marrow suppression, and demonstrate understanding of what happens to the body in anaemia, neutropenia and thrombocytopenia.	
5.	Identify which agents are likely to cause haemorrhagic cystitis and how this can be prevented.	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

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COMPETENCY: ONCOLOGY EMERGENCIES

DEFINITION	Emergencies in paediatric oncology care	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		Score/5
1.	Promptly recognises and manages the most commonly occurring side effects and complications of treatment	
2.	Recognises signs of tumour lysis syndrome and initiates multidisciplinary action	
3.	Accurately describes possible causes, signs and initial nursing intervention for anaphylactic shock	
4.	Promptly identifies febrile neutropenia and initiate antibiotics according to institutional protocol	
5.	Identifies signs of impending or actual spinal cord compression and discusses with a multidisciplinary team	
6.	Identifies signs of impending or actual superior vena cava syndrome compression and discusses with a multidisciplinary team	
7.	Recognises signs of typhlitis and initiates prompt multidisciplinary action	
8.	Accurately describes signs of a seizure and initial intervention in accordance with the institutional protocol	
9.	Identifies a child with airway obstruction/choking and intervenes properly	
10.	Demonstrates knowledge of the steps in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) of children and neonates	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

COMPETENCY: BLOOD PRODUCT ADMINISTRATION

DEFINITION	Indications and administration of blood products.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		Score /5
1.	Demonstrates understanding of the components and functions of blood	
2.	Safely administers blood transfusions and monitors patient's hemodynamic status during transfusion	
3.	Conduct proper monitoring before, during and after blood product administration	
4.	Recognises and collaboratively manages blood transfusion reactions	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

COMPETENCY: HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT

DEFINITION	Identifying the care and support needs of the child with cancer and their family	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		<i>Score /5</i>
1.	Accurately assesses vital signs (including temperature, pulse, respiratory rate, oxygen saturation and blood pressure) and identifies signs of patient deterioration	
2.	Identifies any abnormal vital signs or assessment findings and reports findings to the medical team in a timely manner, and follows-up as appropriate with necessary intervention	
3.	Conducts comprehensive assessment of psychosocial, cultural, spiritual and environmental of each child and family assigned to the nurse	
4.	Assesses the risk of treatment abandonment is a risk and reports to the multidisciplinary team	
5.	Appropriately documents patient assessment findings and any interventions performed or actions taken	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

COMPETENCY: MANAGING PERIPHERAL ACCESS

DEFINITION	providing safe care with regards to peripheral access device?	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		<i>Score /5</i>
1.	Anticipates the need for peripheral venous access	
2.	Safely inserts and monitors peripheral venous lines	
3.	Safely conducts blood draws for laboratory investigations	
4.	Safely administers medicines through peripheral venous lines	
5.	Practices proper hand hygiene when attending to peripheral venous lines	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

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COMPETENCY: NUTRITION SUPPORT

DEFINITION	Meeting the nutritional support needs of the child	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		<i>Score /5</i>
1.	Performs appropriate assessment of the nutritional status of a child, including weight, height, mid-upper arm circumference, triceps skinfold	
2.	Carefully obtains and documents a 24-hour diet review for a child with cancer	
3.	Appropriately assesses feeding patterns and identifies the need for nasogastric tube feeding	
4.	Performs safe feeding of patients through nasogastric tubes and provides care for the nasogastric tube	
5.	Practices proper hand hygiene when conducting nasogastric tube feeding	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

COMPETENCY: CHILD AND FAMILY-CENTRED CARE

DEFINITION	Psychosocial support to the child with cancer and their family.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		<i>Score /5</i>
1.	Promotes the individualised wellbeing of the child in all areas, including spirituality, schooling, sports and play therapy. Encourages child and family to participate in activities as tolerated	
2.	Contributes adequately to the multidisciplinary counselling of the child and family on disease and treatment and reinforces counselling through respectful repetition and reminders	
3.	Demonstrates understanding and respect for people's beliefs and preferences related to cancer care treatment	
4.	Adapts the plan of care to meet the specific needs of the patient and family related to their particular values, culture and beliefs	
5.	Communicates any important elements related to the family's belief system to the multidisciplinary team	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

COMPETENCY:- QUALITY OF LIFE AND END OF LIFE CARE

DEFINITION	Support to a child and family in palliation and end-of-life.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		Score /5
1.	Demonstrates understanding of palliative care and end of life care and is aware of goals of each	
2.	Identifies pain and psychosocial suffering of the patient refers to palliative care team if available and intervenes collaboratively to reduce suffering	
3.	Contributes to the assessment and identification of patient and family preferences for end-of-life care and involves them in discussions, decision-making, and goals.	
4.	Performs a thorough pain assessment with each child assigned, using a reliable and developmentally appropriate pain scale. Addresses and takes action when pain is present and follows up after interventions have been done	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

COMPETENCY: OUTPATIENT AND FOLLOW UP CARE

DEFINITION	Promoting continuity of care following discharge post-treatment.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		
		<i>Competent</i>
1.	Identifies at-risk paediatric oncology patients at the OPD and navigates them to the paediatric oncology unit	
2.	Engages in the multidisciplinary discharge planning for patients and navigates patients through hospital discharge procedures	
3.	Explains home medications to patients and family and clarifies follow up plans and appointment dates	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

COMPETENCY: COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

DEFINITION	Roles of a paediatric oncology nurse within the multidisciplinary team for paediatric oncology care.	
TRAINEE NAME		TRAINEE ID

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		Score /5
1.	Communicates effectively via written nursing notes, verbal hand-off reports, and during any rounding sessions with the team	
2.	Participates in and communicates effectively in daily patient rounds and nursing hand-off report	
3.	Interacts and collaborates effectively and timely with the team when a patient has a change in status	
4.	Communicates respectfully and politely with all team members and patients/families	
5.	Aware when difficult discussions were had with the patient and family and can offer support or refer to oncology social worker for extra support.	
6.	Communicates effectively with the child or family, explaining what procedure/intervention will be done before performing anything on the child	
7.	Engages in educational and learning opportunities to stay up-to-date regarding paediatric oncology nursing care	
8.	Respects clients' rights to privacy and dignity	
9.	Practices within the scope of practice and own level of competencies.	
10.	Accepts responsibility for own actions and is accountable for the care provided.	
11.	Recognises and respects the different levels of accountability for a range of available personnel.	
12.	Carefully applies guidelines and standard operating procedures in the conduct of nursing duties.	
13.	Collaborates with healthcare team members to maintain a multidisciplinary approach to cancer care across the continuum of health service delivery.	
Average Score /5		
<i>Assessor Name:</i>		
<i>Date of Assessment:</i>		

Comments:

Appendix – Competency Rating Scale

Adapted 5-Point Bondy Scale*

	The following criteria describes the standard of behaviour or procedure, quality of Performance and level of Assistance required
ND- Not Done	Behaviour/ Procedure Not Done
1- Not competent	Unsafe behaviour/ procedure Unskilled Required continuous cues*
2- Towards competent	Requires guidance to ensure safety, Not completely accurate Procedure does not accomplish intended outcome Unskilled, Inefficient, excess time and energy Required frequent cues*
3- Competent	Safe, Accurate, Intended outcome mostly achieved Skilled, Hesitant, some excess time or energy noted Required occasional supportive comments**
4- Towards proficient	Safe, Accurate, Achieved intended outcome Proficient, Minimal hesitation Requires minimal supportive comments**
5- Proficient	Safe, Accurate, Achieved intended outcome Proficient, Confident, Efficient No supporting comments required

* Cue involves providing the resident with directions or prompts to guide their completion of the behaviour or procedure

** Supportive Comments involve statements of encouragement or agreement with the Resident's behaviour or completion of the procedure

1. Hawly R, Lee J. Standardised clinical evaluation using Bondy rating scale. Aust J Adv Nurs. 1991 Mar-May;8(3):6-10. PMID: 1741988.

2. Salehi R, Asamoah A, de Young S, Acquah H, Agarwal N, Aryee SE, Stevens B, Zlotkin S. Scaling up pediatric nurse specialist education in Ghana - a longitudinal, mixed-methods evaluation. BMC Nurs. 2021 Feb 16;20(1):32. DOI: 10.1186/s12912-021-00550-1. PMID: 33593320; PMCID: PMC7885484.