



Staff Qualifications and Education (SQE)

Overview

A health care organization needs an appropriate variety of skilled, qualified individuals to fulfill its mission and to meet patient needs. The organization's leaders work together to identify the number and types of qualified staff needed based on the recommendations from department and service leaders.

Recruiting, evaluating, appointing, and retaining staff are best accomplished through a coordinated, efficient, and uniform process. It is also essential to document applicant skills, knowledge, education, and previous work experience. It is particularly important to carefully review the credentials of medical, nursing, and other clinical staff because they are involved in clinical care processes and work directly with patients. This represents the first and most important opportunity for the hospital to deliver safe care for your patients and provide a safe environment for the staff.

Orientation to the organization and programs, as well as orientation to specific duties related to the position is an important process. Health care organizations should provide staff with opportunities to learn and to advance personally and professionally. Thus, in-service education and other learning opportunities should be offered to staff.

To ensure staff physical and mental health, productivity, staff satisfaction, and safe working conditions, the organization provides a staff health and safety program that can be offered by the hospital or provided through contracted services. The program is proactive and includes matters affecting the health and well-being of staff such as initial employment health screening, control of harmful occupational exposures, preventive immunizations and examinations, safe patient handling, staff as second victims, and common work-related conditions. In addition, the higher incidence of workplace violence in the last decade has prompted hospitals to increase awareness of workplace violence and institute prevention practices that focus on safety measures such as effective workplace violence prevention systems, including leadership oversight, policies, procedures, reporting systems, data collection and analysis, post-incident strategies, training, and education to decrease workplace violence.

For the standards language in this chapter, the following terminology and associated definitions apply:

Medical Staff

All physicians, dentists, and other professionals who are licensed to practice independently (without supervision) and who provide preventive, curative, restorative, surgical, rehabilitative, or other medical or dental services to patients; or who provide interpretative services for patients, such as pathology, radiology, or laboratory services. All classifications of appointments, all types, and levels of staff (employed, honorary, contract, visiting, and private community staff members), are included. Visiting staff include those who are locum tenentes, or invited experts, "master class" teachers/tutors, and others allowed to provide patient care services temporarily. A hospital must define those other clinical staff, such as "house officers," "hospitalists," and "junior doctors," who are no longer in training, but may or may not be permitted by the hospital to practice independently.

The term *medical staff* is thus inclusive of all physicians and other professionals permitted to treat patients with partial or full independence, regardless of their relationship to the hospital (for example, employed staff or independent consultants). *Partial independence* can be defined as staff working under partial supervision awaiting the final decision for full employment, on probation “for cause,” or under medical staff granted temporary clinical privileges for a limited period of time and for circumstances as defined by hospital policy. In some cultures, traditional medicine practitioners may be permitted by law and the hospital to practice independently. Thus, they are considered medical staff members, and these standards apply in full.

Nursing Staff

Nursing professionals within an organization who are accountable for the promotion of health, the prevention of illness and the provision of quality and safe patient care within the parameters of the nursing profession. Such personnel include registered, licensed, and vocational nurses and may include others such as nursing assistants or other designated unlicensed assistive personnel, as well as advanced practice nurses. Advanced practice nurses such as nurse practitioners (NPs) and certified registered nurse anesthetists are nurses who have gained additional knowledge and skills through successful completion of an organized program of nursing education that prepares nurses for advanced practice roles, and who have been certified by the board of nursing to engage in the practice of advanced practice nursing.

Other Clinical Staff

Clinical professionals who are not licensed to practice independently (without supervision) or who are employed or permitted by the hospital to provide care or participate in patient care processes (for example, midwives, surgical assistants, emergency medical care specialists, dietitians, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians). In some countries or cultures, this group also includes traditional healers or those who provide alternative services or services that complement traditional medical practice (for example, acupuncture, herbal medicine). These individuals may not practice or provide service in the hospital; instead, they refer to the hospital or provide continuing or follow-up care for patients in the community. Many of these professionals complete training programs and receive licenses or certificates or are registered with local or national authorities. Others may complete less formal apprentice programs or other supervised experiences.

Note: Some countries allow midwives to practice independently.

Standards

The following is a list of all standards for this function. They are presented here for your convenience without their intent statements or measurable elements. For more information about these standards, please see the next section in this chapter, Standards, Intents, and Measurable Elements.

Staff Planning

- SQE.01.00** Leaders of hospital departments and services define the desired qualifications of all staff.
- SQE.01.01** The hospital defines the responsibilities for every staff member in a current job description.
- SQE.01.02** Leaders of hospital departments and services implement processes for the recruitment and retention of staff.
- SQE.01.03** The hospital evaluates staff performance.
- SQE.01.04** There is documented personnel information for each staff member.
- SQE.01.05** The hospital has the necessary staff to support the care, treatment, and services it provides.
- SQE.01.06** The hospital provides orientation for all staff.
- SQE.01.07** Staff participate in education and training.
- SQE.01.08** Staff are competent in resuscitative techniques appropriate to their role in the hospital.