# How to read Business Diagrams

In the picture below you can see an example of a business diagram showing the registration process in a hospital's reception. The two players that participate in this process are the nurse and the patient. The process consists of passing the form to the patient, filling in the form, handing the filled in form back to the nurse, checking if the form is filled in correctly and possibly returning the form to the patient to correct it. The process ends when the nurse finds no errors in the form.
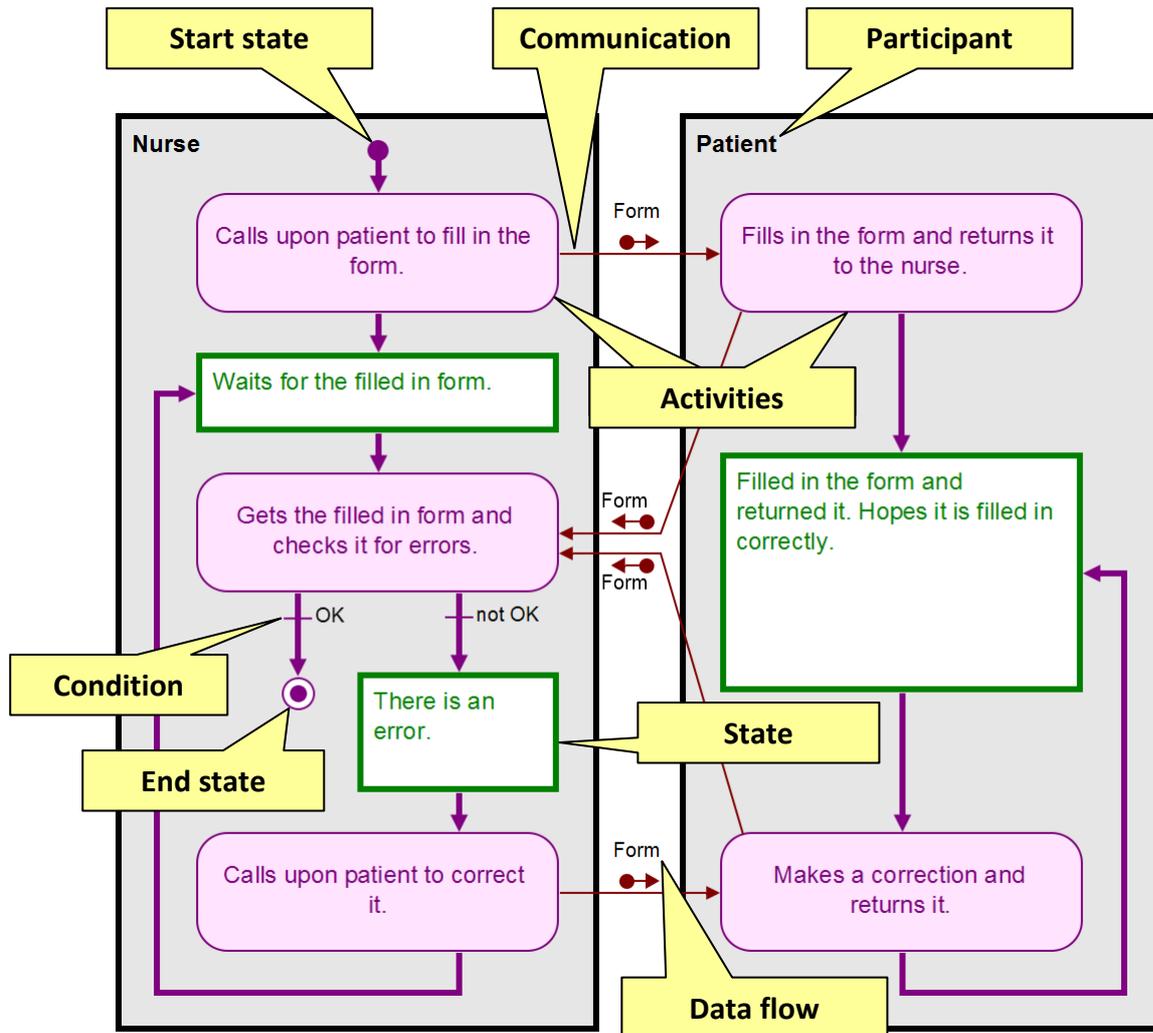
In C.C method terminology, players who act in a process are called *participants*. Each participant performs some *activities* and after each activity he/she is placed into a *state*. Participants communicate with each other through *communication*. The communication can bear a *data flow*. When there is more than one possibility on how to continue the process, there are more arrows ascending from an activity or state, each of them bearing a *condition*. In the example above you can find two conditions: "OK" and "not OK".

Participant (large grey rectangle) is a person or a thing that performs some actions. Sometimes you can refer to the participant as a player, an actor or a role. Participants should not be called by their own names (e.g. Mr. Scott), but by their occupation (e.g. nurse) or role in the particular process (e.g. applicant, customer, patient). Machines or software systems can also be participants.

Activity (pink rounded rectangle) is a small but compact piece of work performed by some participant in a given process. The activity should not be too small (e.g. the pressing of a key), but also not too large (the whole process). If an activity is described in more detail in other business diagrams, there is a ▣ symbol in the lower right corner of the activity.

State (green-white rectangle) describes a situation, which a participant is in after performing a particular activity. Notice that the activities and states alternate. The state is often described by a passive sentence. In fact, the state is more important than the activity – the activity is just a way to move from one state to the other. It is not important to show great activity but to have some tasks done (the result of these activities).

Start and End States (violet spot or double spot) are special types of states. In the start state the whole process starts, and in the end state the process ends. The process must start with at least one start state and it often ends with more results, so there are often multiple end states. Either one participant bears the start and end states, or every (or nearly every) participant bears its start state and a couple of the end states.

Communication (thin arrow between two activities) is every type of interaction occurring between two participants. A communication is an active act, so it is a link only between two activities, each of them executed by a different participant. Communication starts at the activity of the participant who initiates the interaction (e.g. questioner, incomer) and points to the activity of the participant who will be affected by this communication. A communication can often bear **data flows** (small arrows ●→ with a label). Data flows can flow either in the direction of the communication (e.g. question, call), or in the opposite direction (e.g. answer). Data flows are sometimes omitted – they are usually used only for emphasising certain important data or documents.

Condition (line or arrow overstrike with a label) is a point where the process splits into more branches. Each branch is specified by a condition. The condition does not take the form of a question (e.g. "Did the accused appear before a court?"), but the form of the answer to that question (e.g. "The accused appeared before a court.", "The accused did not appear before a court."). The semantics of the condition are: if the condition is true, the process goes through that line or arrow, if the condition is not true, the process doesn't go through that line or arrow. Conditions are mostly used on transitions (thick violet line or arrow connecting an activity with a state), but sometimes they can be used on communications as well.