

Authority

This standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 17 February 2011 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* (2009) (the National Law) with approval taking effect from 4 April 2011.

Background

From 1 July 2010, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the Board) has been responsible for the registration and regulation of nurses and midwives under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law). A link to the National Law is available at www.ahpra.gov.au under *Legislation and Publications*.

Registration standards

Section 38 of the National Law empowers the Board to develop, and recommend to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council, registration standards about issues relevant to the eligibility of individuals for registration in the nursing and midwifery professions or the suitability of individuals to competently and safely practise the profession.

The Board has developed and consulted on a range of registration standards previously that have now been approved by the Ministerial Council. The approved standards can be accessed at www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Registration Standards*.

Summary

An applicant seeking to be endorsed as a nurse practitioner must be able to demonstrate:

- general registration as a nurse with no conditions on registration relating to unsatisfactory professional performance or unprofessional conduct
- the requisite amount of experience in advanced practice nursing **and**
- a Board-approved nurse practitioner qualification at Master's level or education equivalence as determined by the Board.

Scope of application

This registration standard applies to all applicants seeking endorsement as a nurse practitioner.

Requirements

To be eligible for endorsement as a nurse practitioner, the registered nurse must be able to provide evidence to demonstrate all the following:

- a). current general registration as a registered nurse with no conditions on registration relating to unsatisfactory professional performance or unprofessional conduct
- b). the equivalent of three (3) years' full-time experience in an advanced practice nursing role, within the past six (6) years from the date when the complete application seeking endorsement as a nurse practitioner is received by the Board
- c). successful completion of a Board-approved nurse practitioner qualification at Master's level or education equivalence as determined by the Board
- d). compliance with the Board's *National Competency Standards for the Nurse Practitioner* which can be accessed from the Board's website at www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Codes and guidelines* and
- e). compliance with the Board's registration standard on continuing professional development.

Definitions

Advanced practice nursing defines a level of nursing practice that uses extended and expanded skills, experience and knowledge in assessment, planning, implementation, diagnosis and evaluation of the nursing care required. Nurses practising at this level are educationally prepared at postgraduate level and may work in a specialist or generalist capacity. However, the basis of advanced practice is the high degree of knowledge, skill and experience applied in the nurse-patient/client relationship to achieve optimal outcomes through critical analysis, problem solving and accurate decision-making (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) 2006).

Competency standards are those standards outlined in the *National Competency Standards for the Nurse Practitioner* (ANMC 2006).

General registration as a nurse means a person whose name is entered on the Register of Nurses in the division of registered nurses in the general category.

Nurse practitioner means a nurse whose registration has been endorsed by the Board as a nurse practitioner under section 95 of the National Law. A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse who is educated and endorsed to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role. The nurse practitioner role includes

assessment and management using nursing knowledge and skills. The role may include, but is not limited to, the direct referral of patients to other healthcare professionals, prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic investigations. The role is grounded in the nursing profession's values, knowledge, theories and practice, and provides innovative and flexible health care delivery that complements other health care providers (*National Competency Standards for the Nursing Practitioner*, ANMC 2006).

Qualification means a Master's degree approved by the Board under section 49 of the National Law and included in the Board-approved list of programs of study for endorsement as nurse practitioners.

Education equivalence as determined by the Board means that registered nurses, who have completed a program of study successfully at Master's level that is relevant, clinically, to the context of their advanced practice nursing, for which they are seeking endorsement as a nurse practitioner, and who have undertaken appropriate supplementary education, will be able to present evidence for assessment against the *National Competency Standards for the Nurse Practitioner*.

Further information will be included in the Board's guidelines on endorsement as a nurse practitioner and published on the Board's website at www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Codes and guidelines*.

References

ANMC (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council) (2006):
Competency Standards for the Nursing Practitioner.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2010):
Guidelines for Endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner.

Review

This standard will commence on 4 April 2011. The Board will review this standard following twelve months of operation i.e. March 2012.