

Re-entry to practice policy - consultation draft

14 June 2011

Re-entry to practice

Summary

This consultation paper seeks feedback on a policy for re-entry to practice for nurses and midwives. The draft policy sets out the requirements that would apply to each category of registration as well as the requirements for nurses registered with a sole qualification in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing.

Following public consultation, the Board will finalise the policy, taking into account the consultation comments, and publish the policy on the Board's website.

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) as in force in each state and territory.

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*.

Submissions

Interested parties are invited to make written submissions on this draft policy for consideration by the Board.

If you wish to provide comments on this draft paper, please provide written comments in electronic form, at nmba-consultations@ahpra.gov.au by close of business on **09/08/2011**.

Your submission will be published on the Board's website unless you request otherwise.

Draft Re-entry to practice policy

Introduction

The role of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the Board) is to protect the public by ensuring that any person who is registered is safe and competent to practise.

A key requirement to practise is that the nurse or midwife is able to demonstrate that he or she meets the relevant competency standards. All applications for registration are assessed against these standards.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Board's registration standard on recency of practice.

Scope of application

This policy applies to people who were previously registered as a nurse and/or midwife who are:

- a) seeking registration following a lapse in practice of five (5) years or more or
- b) who have held non-practising registration for five (5) years or more and are seeking general registration or
- c) nurses and midwives from NSW only who may still hold registration but do not meet the recency of practice requirements; this is a transitional measure and will cease on 31 May 2012.

It does not apply to recent graduates from nursing or midwifery programs in Australia applying for registration for the first time or persons holding student registration.

Requirements

A nurse or midwife who no longer holds registration **or** holds non practising registration who:

- a) has not practised within the last five (5) years and does not meet the recency of practice standard must demonstrate successful completion of a re-entry program approved by the Board or
- b) has not practised between five (5) and ten (10) years must demonstrate successful completion of a re-entry program approved by the Board
- c) has not practised for ten (10) years or more must demonstrate successful completion of an Board approved entry to practice pre-registration program.

Specific requirements for nurses who are not eligible for general registration

A nurse who was registered on the basis of a sole qualification in mental health nursing, paediatric nursing and disability nursing and no longer holds registration **or** holds non practising registration and who:

- a) has not practised within the last five (5) years and does not meet the recency of practice standard must demonstrate successful completion of a re-entry program in the area of mental health, paediatric or disability nursing, as appropriate, approved by the Board or

- b) has not practised between five (5) and ten (10) years must demonstrate successful completion of a re-entry program in the area of mental health, paediatric or disability nursing, as appropriate, approved by the Board
- c) has not practised for ten (10) years or more must demonstrate successful completion of a Board approved entry to practice pre-registration program with a Board-approved education provider

Successful completion of a programme approved by the Board

This may be either:

- a) a re-entry program accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMAC) and approved by the Board **or**
- b) completion of all or part of a relevant program of study accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council and approved by the Board for registration as a nurse or midwife. It is the responsibility of the accredited education provider to determine how much recognition of prior learning the applicant will be given.

Nurses with a post graduate qualification in mental health nursing

Nurses who held general registration with a post graduate qualification in mental health nursing are required to complete a general re-entry to practice program prior to up skilling in mental health.

Definitions

Entry to practice pre-registration program means- a course that enables the student to meet the Board's requirements for registration or enrolment.

Re-entry program means- a course accredited by the ANMAC and approved by the Board as preparation for nurses and midwives for re-entry to the register/roll after a lapse in practice and removal from the register/roll for a period exceeding the regulatory recency of practice requirement. It contains both a theoretical and a clinical component.

Recency of practice means- that a practitioner has maintained an adequate connection with, and recent practice in, the profession since qualifying or obtaining registration.

Recent graduate means- a person applying for registration for the first time whose qualification for registration was awarded not more than two years prior to the date of application for registration.

Non practising registration means- this type of registration is available to practitioners who have previously held general or specialist registration in a profession, but who do not wish to practise the profession during the registration period. The National Law states that a practitioner who holds non-practising registration in a profession **must not practise** the profession.

Recognition of prior learning means- a process that assesses the individual's formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of a qualification.

References

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia Recency of Practice Registration Standard (2010)

National competency standards for the registered nurse (2006)

National competency standards for the midwife (2006)

National competency standards for the enrolled nurse (2002)

National competency standards for the nurse practitioner (2006)

Review

This standard will commence on xx/xx/ 2011. The Board will review this standard at least every three years of operation.