

Policy

Updated March 2015

Exemptions from continuing professional development for nurses and midwives

Scope

This policy applies to all nurses and midwives who hold general registration.

Nurses and/or midwives who hold non-practising registration are not required to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) while they hold this type of registration.

Nurses and/or midwives who change their registration type during a registration period (such as moving from practising to non-practising) are required to complete CPD for the period that they hold general registration (that is, on a pro rata basis). This also applies to nurses and/or midwives who obtain general registration part way through a registration period.

Summary

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the National Board/NMBA) has a registration standard on CPD approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council in accordance with the Health Practitioner National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The registration standard states that the Board reserves the right to give exemptions in individual cases.

The NMBA has delegated the responsibility for individual registrant matters to the state and territory boards of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.

Individual applications for exemptions from CPD requirements will be assessed by the state and territory offices of AHPRA and the state and territory boards within the policy framework determined by the NMBA.

Exemptions

The NMBA believes the range of activities and the time frame provided to meet the CPD requirements is broad and flexible enough for all nurses and/or midwives to meet the requirements. However, the NMBA also appreciates that there are times when exceptional circumstances may make this difficult. In this case a nurse and/or midwife may apply in writing to the Board for an exemption.

The exceptional circumstances for exemptions will be limited and would only be considered where there is compelling evidence that the circumstances have created a significant obstacle to the nurse and/or midwife's ability to complete CPD requirements. Each case would be considered on its merits and, depending on the particular circumstances, the NMBA may decide upon a full, partial or complete exemption. The Board will also consider the requirements of its recency of practice standard in any application.

As a general principle, maternity leave is not considered an example of exceptional circumstances. In addition, financial hardship or remote location are not adequate grounds

for a partial exemption as there are sufficient CPD activities in a range of formats available to overcome these obstacles. Evidence of a history of undertaking CPD activities will be taken into account by the Board when assessing applications for exemption.

The Board will only consider an exemption in one year of any four-year period. The Board is of the view that where a nurse and/or midwife is able to practise the profession, they also need to complete the CPD requirements. More information on CPD requirements is available in the CPD Fact sheet on the [NMBA website](#).

Applying for a CPD exemption

Nurses and/or midwives seeking a CPD exemption due to exceptional circumstances must submit a request in writing to the AHPRA office in their capital city. Evidence to support the request for an exemption may include a letter from a treating health practitioner.

Definitions

Exceptional circumstances

Consideration of exemptions from the NMBA's CPD requirements may include, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:

Significant ill health of the practitioner.

This may occur when a nurse and/or midwife has been unable to undertake CPD due to a serious mental and/or physical illness.

Providing care or support to a member of the immediate family or household, because of significant illness or injury affecting the immediate member of the family or household.

This may occur where a nurse and/or midwife has had a significant and extended disruption to their ability to undertake CPD as a result of having to provide total care for, or total support to, an immediate family member or household member because of that person's serious injury or illness.

Pro rata

Pro rata CPD applies to nurses and/or midwives who hold general registration for part of the year only. Pro rata CPD is calculated according to the number of months that a nurse and/or midwife holds general registration during the registration period (1 June to 31 May).

If a nurse and/or midwife works part time for the full registration period they are required to complete the full CPD required relevant to their registration. The NMBA does not grant exemptions due to reduced work hours, casual work or part-time work.