

Framework

Updated July 2015 (Effective 1 September 2015)

Assessment of nursing and midwifery applicants for re-entry to practice

Assessing nursing and midwifery applicants who have not practised for a period of five to ten years

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) has approved this framework for assessing nursing and midwifery applicants for re-entry to practice. The framework is part of a number of supporting documents for:

- applicants seeking to re-enter the nursing and/or midwifery professions after a five (5) to 10-year period of not practising, and
- assessors of those applications.

The purpose of this framework is to assist in determining the most appropriate pathway for re-entry. This document should be read in conjunction with the following NMBA-approved documents available on the [NMBA website](#):

- the [Re-entry to practice policy](#),
- the [Recency of practice registration standard](#) and
- the [Fact sheet on re-entry to practice](#).

Background

In accordance with the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory ([the National Law](#)), the NMBA has approved a number of registration standards, two of which are the *Recency of practice* and the *Continuing professional development (CPD)* registration standards for nurses and midwives, available on the [NMBA website](#).

The *Recency of practice registration standard* applies to all nurses and midwives when they apply for renewal of registration each year. Nurses and midwives who were previously registered, but have not practised in their respective profession for a period of between five (5) and 10 years, are required to undergo an individual assessment of their application. The *Re-entry to practice policy* (revised in July 2015) sets out the processes to be followed when nurses and/or midwives do not meet the re-entry to practice requirements.

When a person who has not practised for a period of between five and ten years applies for re-entry to the profession the NMBA's relevant state or territory board or registration committee makes the decision to direct the person to either:

- a NMBA-approved period of supervised practice (Pathway 1) or
- a NMBA-approved re-entry to practice program (Pathway 2).

Each case is decided on its own merits incorporating three key elements to ensure national consistency in decision making: professional competence, confidence, and capability. The main underlying principle for re-entry decisions is the safety of the health practitioner to practise in the profession.

Decision-making principles

This document elaborates the framework that underpins re-entry decisions. It is based on **four** considerations:

- the individual's qualifications, work, and registration history
- length of time away from practising in the profession/s
- continuing professional development (CPD) activities in this time, and
- plans for future professional practice.

These considerations are looked at as a whole, not judged in isolation. This document includes an explanation of the principle and the type of evidence that will assist in demonstrating the principle (see Table 1). It also provides an example of a candidate for each pathway.

Considerations

The NMBA considers two types of applicants who have not practised for a period of time between five and ten years:

- those who appear to have maintained competence – these applicants need to demonstrate their competence through supervised practice, and
- those who are unable to demonstrate that they have maintained competence – these applicants are required to undertake a NMBA-approved re-entry to practice program to re-establish and confirm competence.

It is important to note that supervised practice and re-entry to practice programs cannot be considered equivalent to each other. Supervised practice is intended to consolidate and confirm existing knowledge. If it is determined that the applicant has insufficient current knowledge they should be directed to complete a re-entry to practice program.

Table 1:

Framework for determining whether an applicant who has not practised for five (5) to 10 years will undertake a NMBA-approved period of supervised practice or a re-entry to practice program

Timeline	Principle	Content of principle	Evidence of principle
Up to 5 years	Meets registration standard		
5 to 10 years	The individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of relevant nursing and/or midwifery practice • Extent of nursing and/or midwifery post graduate education • Extent of nursing and/or midwifery CPD • Ability to meet relevant nursing and/or midwifery competencies/standards for practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary evidence of practice providing evidence of consolidation of practice using the relevant competency standards/standards for practice • Documentary evidence of postgraduate qualifications • Documentary evidence of CPD in nursing and/or midwifery • Portfolio prepared to demonstrate ability to meet all relevant nursing and/or midwifery competencies, which may include documentary evidence above
	Experience during 5- to 10-year period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience related to CPD, paid employment, voluntary work, experience in personal life • Length of time not practising in relation to the 5- to 10-year period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual may make a submission to demonstrate how their CPD and work undertaken is relevant to their application • Documentary evidence of any relevant experience as defined above
	Plans for future professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for re-entering the profession/s • Plan for re-entry in terms of knowledge and understanding of contemporary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompanying submission to address the three principles • Provide evidence of employment offer where available

		<p>practice in the profession/s today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indication of plans for future professional practice 	
Greater than 10 years	Complete requisite studies within a NMBA-approved entry to practice program of study leading to initial registration, as identified by a NMBA-approved education provider following recognition of the individual's prior learning.		

Examples of what a candidate for the two pathways may look like

(1) Candidate for a period of supervised practice (Pathway 1)

Candidate for a NMBA-approved period of supervised practice (documented evidence provided of maintenance of competence. The applicant is still required to demonstrate the competence)

1. Extensive experience in nursing and/or midwifery practice prior to lapse in professional practice.
2. Relevant, contemporary, and appropriate postgraduate education with a period of consolidation in professional practice.
3. Relevant, contemporary, and appropriate engagement in CPD activities.
4. Able to clearly demonstrate that they can meet the relevant competencies/standards for nursing and/or midwifery.
5. Able to clearly demonstrate that their previous experience is relevant to their application.
6. A smaller proportion of the person's previous 5 to 10 years of work experience was spent non-practising.
7. Able to provide evidence and understanding of contemporary practice in the profession/s.
8. Able to provide evidence of an offer of employment.

(2) Candidate for re-entry to practice program (Pathway 2)

1. Minimal experience in nursing and/or midwifery practice prior to lapse in professional practice.
2. Little or no relevant, contemporary and appropriate postgraduate education with little or no period of consolidation in professional practice.
3. Little or no appropriate engagement in relevant and contemporary CPD activities.
4. Unable to demonstrate how they can meet the relevant competencies/standards for nursing and/or midwifery.
5. Unable to demonstrate that their previous experience is relevant to their application.

6. A larger proportion of the person's previous 5 to 10 years of work experience was spent non-practising.
7. Unable to provide evidence of understanding of contemporary practice in the profession/s.
8. Unable able to provide evidence of an offer of employment.

Definitions

Re-entry to practice program means a program of study accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC), and approved by the NMBA. It prepares nurses and midwives for re-entry to the register after a lapse in practice for a period exceeding the requirement in the *Recency of practice registration standard*. It contains both a theoretical and a clinical experience component.

Supervised practice means a period of practice under direct supervision, equivalent to the minimum amount of practice required to demonstrate recency of practice (three months' full-time equivalent). Where supervised practice is required, it is the responsibility of the applicant to arrange a placement that meets the requirements of the NMBA.

Supervised practice must take place in a health setting that provides clinical experience placements for education providers delivering Board-approved programs of study leading to registration as a nurse or midwife.