

## Policy for re-entry to practice for nurses and midwives

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Effective 1 September 2015 (updated 1 June 2016)

### Who this policy is for

This policy applies to people who hold, or have previously held, registration as a nurse and/or a midwife in Australia, who are seeking general registration but do not meet the Recency of practice registration standard, including those who:

- have had a lapse in practice of five years or more
- have held non-practising registration for five or more years, or
- are no longer on the register

This policy does not apply to:

- recent graduates from NMBA-approved entry to practice nursing or midwifery programs in Australia who are applying for registration for the first time, or
- people holding student registration.

Those who have a sole qualification in mental health nursing or paediatric nursing or disability nursing and no longer hold registration will have their application for registration assessed on an individual basis against the NMBA's registration standards.

For persons who have not practised as a nurse or midwife for ten years or more, applications will be individually assessed to determine whether an NMBA-approved entry to practice program of study needs to be completed.

### Summary

The role of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) is to protect the public by ensuring that anyone who is registered as a nurse and/or midwife is safe and competent to practise.

A key requirement is that the nurse and/or midwife is able to demonstrate that he or she meets the relevant NMBA-approved *Standards for practice* (formally known as *National competency standards*).

The NMBA-approved registration standards, [Recency of practice registration standard](#), and [Continuing professional development registration standard](#) apply to nurses and midwives when they apply for registration renewal each year and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

### How is practice defined?

The NMBA has defined 'practice' as:

*...any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a nurse or midwife ...practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes working in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession and/or use of their professional skills*

### **Assessment for applicants seeking general registration as a registered nurse, enrolled nurse, or registered midwife**

A nurse and/or a midwife who no longer holds registration, or who has held non-practising registration for more than five years in Australia, will have their application for registration assessed on an individual basis against the NMBA registration standards. This assessment will be based on their:

- professional practice history, and
- length of time away from practising in the profession/s.

The assessment determines the most appropriate approach to demonstrating competence and eligibility for registration.

For further information on assessment, see the [Framework for the assessment of nursing and midwifery applicants for re-entry to practice](#).

### **Assessment for persons who have not practised for a period of five to ten years**

For persons who have not practised as a nurse or midwife for between five and ten years, the assessment will determine whether the person will be required to demonstrate successful completion of:

- a period of supervised practice approved by the NMBA, or
- a re-entry to practice program approved by the NMBA. See below for further information under 'Successful completion of a program of study approved by NMBA'.

### **Assessment outcome**

The outcome of this assessment will determine whether the person is required to complete one of the following NMBA-approved re-entry to practice pathways:

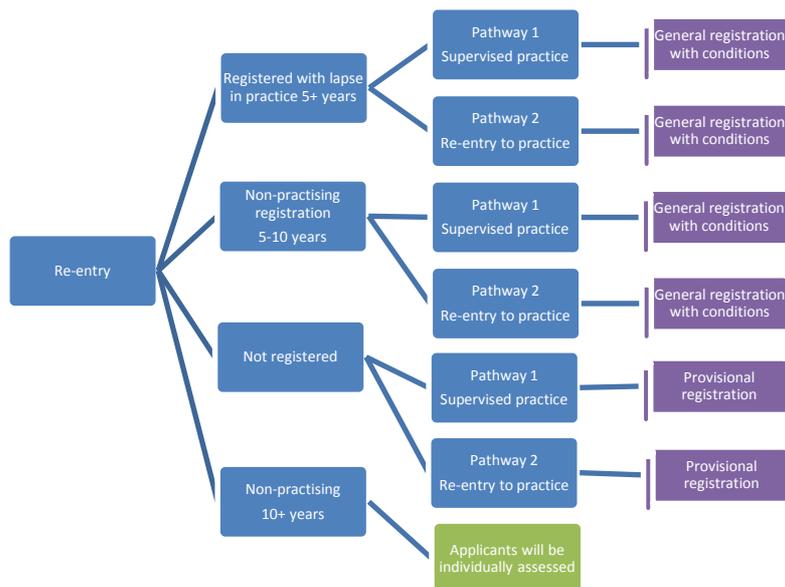
- Pathway 1 - supervised practice or;
- Pathway 2 - re-entry to practice program.

Following the assessment, the person will either be eligible for general registration with conditions, or provisional registration, to complete a period of supervised practice or completion of a re-entry to practice program.

### **Assessment for persons who have not practised for a period of ten years or more**

For persons who have not practised as a nurse or midwife for ten years or more, the assessment will determine whether they need to demonstrate the successful completion of a NMBA-approved entry to practice program of study, leading to initial registration.

The applicant will be required to apply directly to a NMBA-approved education provider for recognition of prior learning (RPL). The education provider will identify the requisite studies in an accredited re-entry to practice pathway. The requisite studies must be part of a NMBA-approved entry to practice program of study leading to registration.



### Specific requirements for previously-registered nurses who hold a sole qualification in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing

A person who was registered on the basis of a sole qualification in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing, and no longer holds registration or has held non-practising registration for more than five years in Australia, will have their application for registration assessed on an individual basis against the NMBA's registration standards. This assessment will be based on the person's:

- qualifications (including both undergraduate and postgraduate nursing studies)
- professional practice history, and
- length of time since practising the profession

The assessment will determine the most appropriate approach to demonstrating competence and eligibility for registration.

Based on this assessment, it will be determined whether the person will be required to demonstrate successful completion of:

- a period of supervised practice in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing approved by the NMBA, or
- a re-entry to practice program approved by the NMBA that includes an accredited pathway in the area of the mental health, paediatric or disability nursing. See below for further information under 'Successful completion of a program of study approved by NMBA'.

After successfully completing either the NMBA-approved supervised practice or re-entry to practice program of study that includes an accredited pathway in the relevant area (mental health, paediatric or disability nursing), a person will be eligible for registration in that area.

When becoming registered with the NMBA, a notation will be applied to the person's registration stating: *solely qualified in the area of mental health nursing/paediatric nursing/disability nursing*. This notation will appear on [the public register](#), which is accessible from the NMBA's website.

Those who hold a sole qualification in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing, and have not practised as a nurse in their relevant area (mental health, paediatric or disability nursing) for 10 years or more, will be required to demonstrate successful completion of a NMBA-approved entry to practice program of study leading to general registration. They will be required to apply directly to a [NMBA-approved education provider](#) for recognition of prior

learning (RPL) and identification of the requisite studies as part of a NMBA-approved entry to practice program of study leading to general registration.

### NMBA-approved programs

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) is the independent accreditation authority for nursing and midwifery, which undertakes the accreditation function (in accordance with the National Law). ANMAC is responsible for accrediting the nursing and midwifery entry and re-entry programs of study and recommending these to NMBA for approval. A list of approved programs of study is available from [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au), under *Accreditation, Approved programs of study*.

### Successful completion of a program of study approved by NMBA

‘Successful completion’ of a program of study approved by the NMBA may be either:

- a re-entry to practice program accredited by ANMAC and approved by the NMBA for registration as a nurse or midwife, or
- completion of all, or part of, a nursing or midwifery entry to practice program of study accredited by ANMAC and approved by the NMBA that leads to registration as a nurse or midwife. It is the responsibility of the NMBA-approved education provider to determine the amount of recognition of prior learning the applicant will be given in accordance with recognised best practice standards.

The successful completion of these NMBA-approved programs of study leads to general registration as a nurse or midwife, once all other registration requirements are met. Where these programs are used as a pathway for re-entry to practice for persons solely qualified in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing, the pathway must be accredited by ANMAC and approved by the NMBA.

### Definitions

**Direct supervision:** the supervisor is actually present and personally observes, works with, guides and directs the person who is being supervised.

**Entry to practice pre-registration program:** a program of study accredited by ANMAC and approved by the NMBA that enables the student to meet the NMBA’s educational requirement for registration or enrolment.

**Level 1 - Direct supervision:** the supervisor takes direct and principal responsibility for the nursing or midwifery care provided (e.g. assessment and/or treatment of individual patients/clients).

**Level 2 - Indirect supervision:** the supervisor and supervisee share the responsibility for individual patients. The supervisor is easily contactable and is available to observe and discuss the nursing or midwifery care the supervisee is delivering.

**NMBA approved program of study:** a program of study accredited by ANMAC and approved by the NMBA.

**Non-practising registration:** a type of registration available to practitioners who have previously held general 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.

**Practice:** any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a nurse or midwife...practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes working in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession and/or use of their professional skills.

**Re-entry program:** a program of study accredited by ANMAC and approved by the NMBA as preparation for nurses and midwives for re-entry to the register after a lapse in practice and removal from the register for a period exceeding the requirement in the *Recency of practice registration standard*. It contains both a theoretical and a clinical experience component.

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

**Recent graduate:** 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.

**Recognition of prior learning (RPL):** a process by which the individual's formal and informal learning is assessed 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.

**Supervised practice:** a period of practice under level 1 or 2 supervision that is equivalent to the minimum amount of practice required to demonstrate recency of practice (minimum of 450 hours of practice within the past five years). Where supervised practice is required, it is the responsibility of the applicant to arrange a placement that meets the requirements of the NMBA, which are identified in the supervised practice guidelines.

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