

Fact sheet

May 2020

Advanced nursing practice and specialty areas within nursing

Advanced practice

In 2019 the NMBA consulted on definitions of advanced practice and nurse practitioner with the definitions below approved by the NMBA in August 2019.

Advanced practice: Nurses practising at an advanced practice level incorporate professional leadership, education, research and support of systems into their practice. Their practice includes relevant expertise, critical thinking, complex decision-making, autonomous practice and is effective and safe. They work within a generalist or specialist context and they are responsible and accountable in managing people who have complex healthcare requirements.

Advanced practice in nursing is demonstrated by a level of practice and is not by a job title or level of remuneration.

Advanced practice for the purpose of the nurse practitioner endorsement requires 5,000 hours clinically-based advanced practice in the past six years.

Nurse practitioner: A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse endorsed as a nurse practitioner by the NMBA. The nurse practitioner practices at an advanced level, meets and complies with the *Nurse practitioner standards for practice*, has direct clinical contact and practices within their scope under the legislatively protected title 'nurse practitioner' under the National Law.

Speciality areas within nursing

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) undertook research in 2014 into which explored the need for regulation of speciality areas within nursing.

Findings from the *Specialist registration for the nursing profession* project identified that:

- a variety of mechanisms are employed internationally to recognise and regulate speciality practice, including licensure, endorsement, credentialing, validation and certification;
- formally regulating speciality groups for purposes of registration did not reduce risk to the public; and
- there was a lack of significant evidence that regulation of speciality practice improves patient/client outcomes.

The project further identified that organisations representing speciality nursing groups in Australia have developed processes for recognising speciality practice. This provides a sufficient means of acknowledging specialist nursing practice in Australia, and may be recognised by employers and the health industry at large.

There are also guidelines released by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC), titled [Approval of specialties under section 13 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act, Guidance for National Board submissions to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council](#).

The NMBA has therefore concluded that current systems in Australia provide an appropriate level of public protection, whilst ensuring a dynamic, flexible and responsive workforce.

For more information

- [Registration standard: Endorsement as nurse practitioner](#)
- [Guidelines for nurses applying for endorsement as a nurse practitioner](#)
- [Fact sheet: Scope of practice of nurse practitioners](#)
- [Nurse practitioner standards for practice](#)
- Visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)

Document control

Approved by	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
Date approved	29 September 2019
Date commenced	October 2016
Notes	This document contains information previously contained within the following retired documents – <i>Position statement: Specialist recognition and the nursing profession</i> and <i>Fact Sheet: Advanced practice nursing</i>