

Policy

Updated December 2023

Re-entry to practice for nurses and midwives

Who this policy is for

This policy applies to people with current general or non-practising registration or have previously held registration as a nurse¹ or a midwife in Australia, who are seeking to return to clinical and/or non-clinical **practice** (see definitions of [practice](#) in the Glossary) but do not meet the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#).

This includes those who:

- have had a lapse in practice of five years or more, or
- have held non-practising registration for five or more years, or
- have never held registration and/or
- have never practised and no longer meet the definition of recent graduate, or
- are no longer on the register.

This policy does not apply to:

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

Summary

The role of the NMBA is to protect the public by ensuring that anyone who is registered as a nurse or midwife is safe and competent to practise.

A key requirement is that the nurse or midwife can demonstrate that they meet the relevant NMBA-approved standards for practice and registration standards. The NMBA [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#) and [Registration standard: Continuing professional development](#) apply to nurses and midwives who are seeking to re-register, or renew their registration each year, and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Application and assessment categories

1. People who are no longer on the register and have not practised for a period of between five to 10 years

People who have not practised as a nurse or midwife for between five and 10 years and who are not registered, are required to lodge an application for **provisional registration**. The assessment of the application will determine whether the applicant will be required to complete:

- a period of supervised practice approved by the NMBA (Pathway 1), or
- an NMBA-approved re-entry to practice program (Pathway 2)

(see the definitions for supervised practice and NMBA-approved programs of study).

2. Nurses and midwives holding non-practising registration who have not practised for between five to 10 years seeking general registration as a registered nurse, enrolled nurse, or midwife

A nurse or a midwife with non-practising registration who has not practised for between five years and

¹ Nurse includes registered nurse and enrolled nurse

10 years and is seeking general registration, is required to lodge an application for **general registration**. The assessment of the application will determine whether the nurse or midwife will be required to complete:

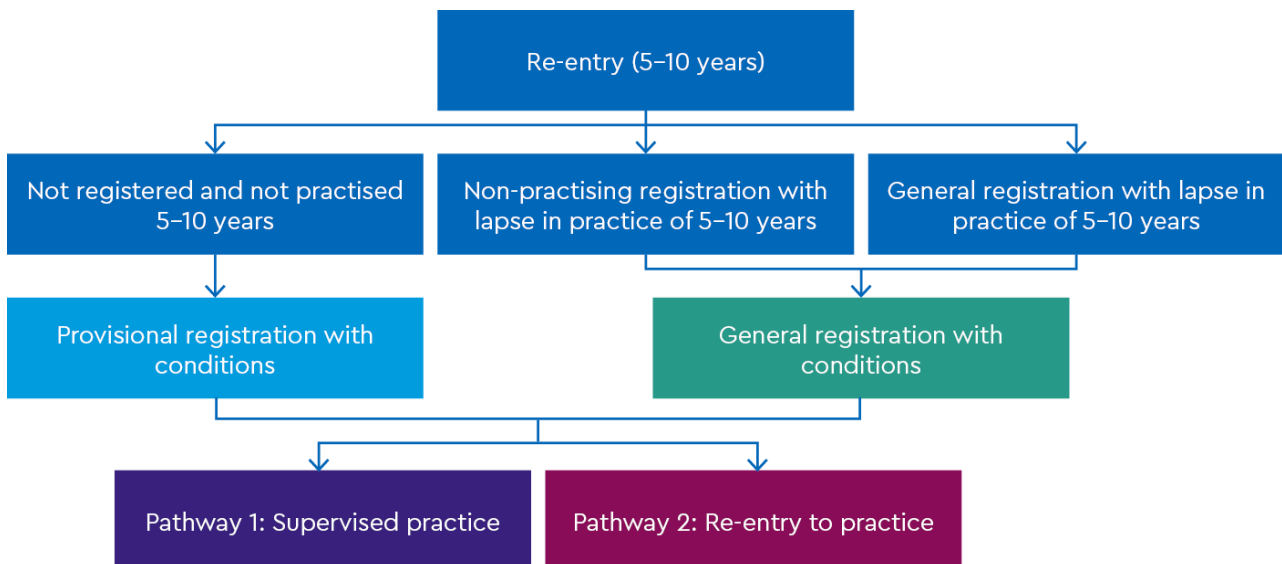
- a period of supervised practice approved by the NMBA (Pathway 1), or
- an NMBA-approved re-entry to practice program (Pathway 2)

3. Nurses and midwives with general registration who have not practised for between five and 10 years

A nurse or a midwife with general registration and has not practised for between five and 10 years can contact Ahpra directly or must declare at registration renewal that they do not meet the requirements of the [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#). The assessment of the application will determine whether the nurse or midwife will be required to complete:

- a period of supervised practice approved by the NMBA (Pathway 1), or
- an NMBA-approved re-entry to practice program (Pathway 2)

Figure 1: Re-entry pathways for nurses or midwives who have not practised for a period of between five and 10 years



4. People who have not practised for a period of between 10 to 15 years

People who have not practised as a nurse or midwife for between 10 and 15 years and who are not currently on the register are required to lodge an application for **provisional registration**.

A nurse or a midwife with general registration and has not practised for between 10 and 15 years must contact Ahpra directly.

A nurse or midwife with non-practising registration who has not practised for between 10 and 15 years is required to lodge an application for **general registration**. The assessment of the application will determine whether the applicant will be required to complete an NMBA-approved re-entry to practice program (Pathway 2). See Figure 2 below.

5. People who have never practised

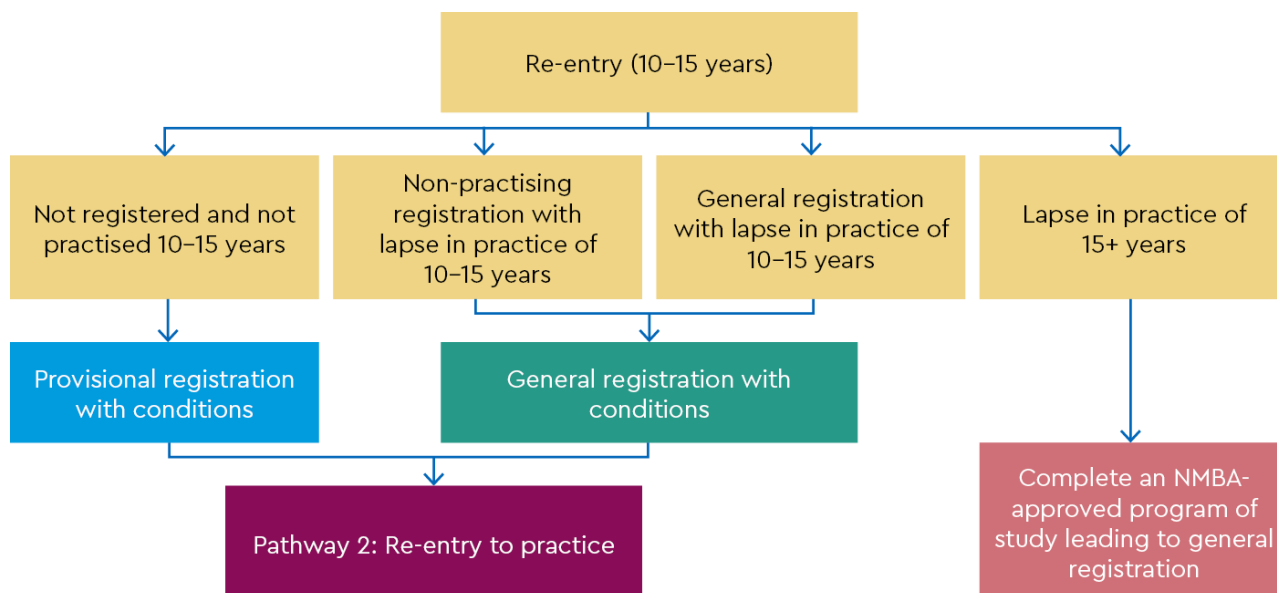
People who have never held registration and are not a recent graduate, may lodge an application for **provisional registration**.

A nurse or a midwife who has previously held registration and has never practised and may lodge an application for **provisional registration**.

Internationally qualified nurses and midwives assessed as a Stream A pathway, and who do not meet recency of practice may lodge an application for **provisional registration**.

Applicants in these cohorts will have their application assessed on an individual basis to determine their eligibility for registration. Information considered may include whether there has been any ongoing connection to the profession, any preparation for entering practice and any related professional development.

Figure 2: Re-entry pathways for people who have not practised as a nurse or a midwife for a period of between 10 and 15 years



As a part of the application process, all applicants in categories one to four above will be required to provide mapping against the relevant NMBA standards for practice. Templates for the mapping can be found [here](#).

Registration as a nurse and midwife (dual registration)

If a person is seeking registration as both a nurse and a midwife, evidence is needed that supports recent practice within the person's context/scope, knowledge and skills in **each** profession. Any common elements of practice should be determined using the respective standards for practice. See also the [Fact sheet: Registration as a nurse and a midwife \(dual registration\)](#).

Returning to non-clinical practice

If a person is intending to return to practice in a non-clinical role, following assessment of their application, they may be required to complete continuing professional development, submit a professional development plan and/or complete a period of supervised practice within their scope of practice, demonstrating competence against the respective standards for practice.

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 assessed to determine whether the person will be required to complete:

- 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 relevant area of the mental health, paediatric or disability nursing.

Once 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 website.

A person who holds a sole qualification in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing, who has not practised as a nurse in their relevant area (mental health, paediatric or disability nursing) for 15 years or more, will be required to demonstrate successful completion of an approved program of study leading to general registration. They will be required to apply directly to an [NMBA-approved education provider](#) for entry to the program. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and identification of the requisite studies as part of an approved program of study leading to general registration are at the discretion of the education provider.

Definitions

ANMAC: The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) is the independent accreditation authority for nursing and midwifery 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 the NMBA website.

Approved program of study: a program of study accredited by ANMAC and approved by the NMBA and may be either:

- a re-entry to practice program for registration as a nurse or midwife, or
- a pathway for re-entry to practice for persons solely qualified in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing, or
- completion of all, or part of, a nursing or midwifery undergraduate program of study that leads to registration as a nurse or midwife

The successful completion of these approved programs of study leads to general registration as a nurse or midwife once all other registration requirements are met.

Clinical practice: when the nurse or midwife is involved in providing direct clinical care or providing oversight of direct clinical care of patients or is directly involved in clinical education of either pre-registration or post-registration students, including bridging programs.

General registration: a type of registration held by practitioners who have graduated from a Board-approved, accredited program of study in the profession and completed any required period of supervised practice or they have demonstrated equivalence of their overseas qualifications.

Non-clinical practice: when a nurse or midwife is not directly involved in providing direct clinical or oversight of direct care of patients; is not directly involved in the clinical education of pre or post registration students.

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 means 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.

Provisional registration: a type of registration granted to practitioners to enable them to complete a period of supervised practice to be eligible for general registration. This type of registration is intended for practitioners who have previously completed an NMBA-approved, accredited qualification in the profession, and are seeking to re-enter practice.

Re-entry to practice 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/or removal from the register for a period exceeding the requirement in the [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#). It contains both a theoretical and a clinical experience component.

Recency of practice: that a health practitioner has maintained an adequate connection with, and recent practice in, the profession since qualifying for 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): or advanced standing, is the acknowledgement by an education provider of formal and informal learning and work experience. An assessment is made by the education provider to determine the extent to which an individual’s previous learning and experience is equivalent to the required learning and competency outcomes specified in a particular qualification.

Supervised practice: a period of practice under supervision. It is a formal process of professional support and learning which allows a nurse or midwife (supervisee) to develop knowledge and competence, assume responsibility for their own practice and enhance public protection and safety. Supervision may be *direct*, *indirect* or *remote* according to the nature of context under which the practice is being supervised. It is the responsibility of the nurse/midwife to arrange a placement that meets the requirements of the NMBA for re-entry to practice, including that:

- the practice setting must give the maximum opportunity to demonstrate the full spectrum of the respective standards for practice
- the supervisor meets the requirements as outlined in the [Supervised practice framework](#)
- the nurse or midwife will not engage with an employment agency for supervised practice, and
- the NMBA does not allow for supervision in private practice (where a nurse or midwife is working as sole practitioner, in partnership or in self-employed models or working on their own account).

Document history

Approved by: Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Date commenced: February 2019 (revised version)

Next review due: February 2028

Policy history: Is this a new policy? **N**

Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? **Y**

If so which version **v2.2**

Does this policy replace another policy with a different title? **N**

Approval date	Version	Reason for change
December 2023	v2.3	Addition of information regarding re-entry to practice pathway for people who have held registration or have never held registration and are not a recent graduate. Information for IQNMs assessed as Stream A pathway
December 2022	v2.2	Addition of information regarding re-entry to practice pathway for people who have not practised for a period of 10 to 15 years
February 2022	v2.1	New document template and update to reflect commencement of <i>Supervised practice framework</i> (replaces previous <i>Supervised practice guidelines</i>)
February 2019	v2.0	Document review and update providing clarification regarding re-entry to practice pathways
June 2016	v1.1	Editorial changes to reflect document coming into effect (from previous advanced copy)
September 2015	v1.0	