

## Registration standard: Recency of practice

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Effective from **X XX XXX**.

### Summary

This registration standard sets out the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) minimum requirements for recency of practice for enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives. The NMBA regulates the practice of both the nursing profession and the midwifery profession in Australia, which are recognised as two distinct health professions. Given the requirements of recency are consistent across both professions, this standard applies to both.

### Does this standard apply to me?

This standard applies if you are:

- applying for registration as an enrolled nurse, registered nurse or midwife
- applying to renew your registration as an enrolled nurse, registered nurse or midwife
- currently registered as an enrolled nurse, registered nurse or midwife,
- currently endorsed or applying for endorsement (registered nurse, nurse practitioner or midwife).

It does not apply if you are:

- applying for or holding non-practising registration, or
- a student of nursing or midwifery enrolled in an NMBA-approved program of study

### What must I do?

To meet the requirements of this registration standard for recency of practice you must be able to demonstrate an adequate connection with the profession and complete a minimum of:

- a. 300 hours of practice in the previous two years, or
- b. 450 hours of practice in the previous three years, or
- c. 750 hours of practice in the previous five years

If you are a recent graduate you must complete a minimum of 300 hours of practice within two years of completing your program of study that lead to registration as a nurse or midwife.

Meeting the NMBA minimum requirements for recency of practice does not automatically satisfy your professional and ethical responsibilities. Your responsibilities include ensuring that you recognise and work within your scope of practice to which you are educated, authorised and competent to perform and provide safe and effective care. The [Code of conduct for nurses](#) and the [Code of conduct for midwives](#) set out the legal requirements, professional behaviour and conduct expectations for each profession in all practice settings, in Australia.

The NMBA *Guidelines: Recency of practice* provide more information about how to meet this registration standard and the re-entry to practice pathways (if any) that are available if you do not meet this registration standard.

## What does this mean for me?

### At application for registration

When you apply for registration as an enrolled nurse, registered nurse or midwife, you must meet the requirements of this registration standard. This includes nurses or midwives who are applying for new or additional types of registration, such as changing from non-practising to general registration or applying for an endorsement.

### At renewal of registration

When you apply for registration renewal, you are required to declare that you have maintained an adequate connection with the profession and that you have complied with the minimum practice requirements of this registration standard and guidelines.

### During the registration period

Your compliance with this registration standard may be audited from time to time. It may also be checked if the NMBA receives a notification (complaint) about you.

## Evidence

To demonstrate recency of practice you need to have evidence that shows you have maintained an adequate connection with the profession and comply with the minimum practice requirements of this registration standard and guidelines.

You must retain records for five years as evidence that you meet the requirements of this NMBA registration standard.

### Nurse practitioners

As a nurse practitioner, you are required to demonstrate the minimum practice requirements of this registration standard, at an advanced practice level, that meets and complies with the NMBA [Nurse practitioner standards for practice](#) and have direct clinical contact relevant to the endorsement that you hold.

### Endorsed midwives

As a midwife with an endorsement for scheduled medicines, you are required to demonstrate the minimum practice requirements of this registration standard relevant to your endorsement.

### Endorsed registered nurses

As a registered nurse with an endorsement, you are required to demonstrate the minimum practice requirements of this registration standard, relevant to your endorsement.

## Are there exemptions to this standard?

There are no exemptions to this standard. The section below, 'What happens if I do not meet this standard?', explains what you need to do if you do not meet this standard and wish to continue or return to practice.

## What happens if I do not meet this standard?

If you want to continue to practise, or return to practice after taking a break, and you do not meet the requirements of this standard, you will need to provide information to help the NMBA decide whether you are able to continue, or return, to practise. This includes:

- if you are applying for registration for the first time and you do not meet the definition of recent graduate, the NMBA will determine which pathway, if any, applies to you
- if you are currently registered but you do not meet the requirements of this standard and guidelines, you will need to declare this at the time of registration renewal

- if you want to return to the national register, and you do not meet the requirements of this standard, you need to make an application for registration to the NMBA. The NMBA will determine which re-entry to practice pathway you must complete.

The pathways, as detailed in the *Guidelines: Recency of practice* are:

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

People who have not practised as a nurse or midwife for 10 years or more are unlikely to have an adequate connection with the professions of nursing or midwifery to meet the requirements specified in this registration standard and will not be eligible for general or provisional registration via Pathway 1 or Pathway 2.

### Other possible consequences

The National Law establishes other possible consequences if you do not meet the requirements of this standard, including that:

- the NMBA can refuse to grant or renew your registration if you do not meet a requirement in approved registration standards for the profession (sections 82 and 112 of the National Law)
- the NMBA has discretion to impose a condition or conditions on your registration, if your failure to meet a requirement in an approved registration standard for the profession can be addressed by imposing conditions which are necessary and desirable in the circumstances (section 83 of the National Law), and
- registration standards, codes or guidelines may be used in disciplinary proceedings against you as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional practice or conduct for the profession (section 41 of the National Law).

## Authority

This registration standard was approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on XX  
XXX XXXX

Registration standards are developed under section 38 of the National Law and are subject to wide-ranging consultation.

## Definitions

**National Law** means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

**Non-practising registration** is a registration type granted to practitioners who hold or have previously held general or specialist registration in a profession, who do not wish to practise the profession but wish to remain registered. Some practitioners choose to hold non-practising registration so that they may use a protected title for the profession.

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

**Practice** means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. Practice in this context is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge (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 the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

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

adequate connection with their profession, a nurse or midwife will need to show how they have used their skills and knowledge as a nurse or midwife in the way they have carried out the functions of their practice role.

**Recent graduate** means a person who completed their program of study leading to registration as a nurse or midwife not more than two years ago.

**Re-entry to practice program** is a program of study approved by the NMBA as preparation for nurses or midwives for re-entry to the register after a lapse in practice and/or removal from the register for a period of between five to 10 years. It contains both a theoretical and a clinical experience component.

**Scope of practice** is the full spectrum of roles, functions, responsibilities, activities and decision-making capacity that individuals within that profession are educated, competent and authorised to perform. Some functions within the scope of practice of any profession may be shared with other professions or other individuals or groups.

The scope of practice of all health professions is influenced by the wider environment, the specific setting, legislation, policy, education, standards and the health needs of the population.

The scope of practice of an individual is that which the individual is educated, authorised and competent to perform.

The scope of practice of an individual nurse or midwife may be more specifically defined than the scope of practice of their profession. To practise within the full contemporary scope of practice of the profession may require individuals to update or increase their knowledge, skills or competence. Decisions about both the individual's and the profession's practice can be guided using the [Decision-making framework for nursing and midwifery](#) (DMF). When making these decisions, nurses and midwives need to consider their individual and their respective profession's scope of practice.

**Supervised practice** is 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* or *indirect* according to the nature or context under which the practice is being supervised. It is the responsibility of the nurse or midwife to arrange a placement that meets the approval and 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 minimum requirements listed in the [Supervision guidelines for nurses and midwives](#)
- 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).

## Review

This registration standard will be reviewed from time to time as required. This will generally be at least every five years.

**Last reviewed: XX XX XXXX**

**This standard replaces the previous registration standard dated 1 June 2016.**