

Fact sheet: Bridging programs for internationally qualified nurses and midwives

Updated March 2020

Who should read this fact sheet?

This is important information for internationally qualified nurses and midwives (IQNMs) who have been referred to an NMBA-approved bridging program.

Registration applications posted to Ahpra between 1 October 2019 and 21 February 2020 by IQNMs who hold relevant but not substantially equivalent qualifications (and who meet the mandatory registration standards) were given the choice to be referred to an NMBA-approved bridging program or to the NMBA's outcomes-based assessment (OBA) which comprises the multiple-choice question (MCQ) exam and the Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE).

In addition, from 1 October 2019, IQNMs who held a current referral to a bridging program were able to contact Ahpra to request a referral to the OBA instead.

The new model of assessment for IQNMs launched on 2 March 2020. Referral to bridging programs have therefore ended. All IQNMs seeking registration with the NMBA must now complete the Self-check to be advised of the assessment stages that must be successfully complete to be eligible to apply for registration (See [Completing the Self-check](#) for more information).

1. What is a bridging program?

A bridging program is a program of study approved by the NMBA that enables internationally qualified nurses and midwives who do not qualify for registration under section 53(b) of the National Law to meet the requirements under section 53(c) by completing further study and assessment against the NMBA's [standards for practice](#). To be eligible, international applicants must be referred to a bridging program by the NMBA.

2. Are there alternatives to bridging programs?

Applicants who do not wish to undertake a bridging program can either participate in the NMBA's OBA, or upgrade their current nursing or midwifery qualification either in Australia or overseas. If you upgrade your qualification outside Australia, you must make sure that the country you are upgrading in meets the accreditation requirements of criterion 2.

See also:

[Meeting the registration requirements](#)

3. What bridging programs are available for registered nurses?

All NMBA-approved [bridging programs for registered nurses](#) are listed under [Approved programs of study](#). Entry to a bridging program of study for registration first requires a letter of referral from the NMBA.

Bridging programs are offered by independent education providers. The pricing and availability of the programs are determined by the education provider, not the NMBA.

4. What bridging programs are available for midwives?

All NMBA-approved [bridging programs for midwives](#) are listed under [Approved programs of study](#). Entry to a bridging program of study for registration first requires a letter of referral from the NMBA.

There are currently no approved bridging programs for internationally qualified midwives. As an alternative to a bridging program, midwives can upgrade their qualifications by:

- enrolling in a NMBA-approved program of study leading to registration as a midwife in Australia, and
- seeking credit for previous study. The decision to recognise previous study is made by the education provider. The NMBA does not influence this decision.

5. What bridging programs are available for enrolled nurses?

All NMBA-approved [bridging programs for enrolled nurses](#) are listed under [Approved programs of study](#). Entry to a bridging program of study for registration first requires a letter of referral from the NMBA.

Bridging programs are offered by independent education providers. The pricing and availability of the programs are determined by the education provider, not the NMBA.

6. Why do bridging programs cost so much?

Education providers who run bridging programs determine the cost of each program. The NMBA approves programs and providers but does not determine the cost of the programs.

7. Why can't there be more options for bridging programs in each state or territory?

Education providers who run bridging programs determine the location of each program. The NMBA approves programs and providers but does not determine the availability of the programs.

8. What happens to my application if I am referred to a bridging program?

Once the NMBA refers you to a bridging program, we will close your application. After you successfully complete a NMBA-approved bridging program, you are then eligible to make a new application for registration. This means a new application form with relevant fees and documentation.

9. Will I have to resubmit all my documentation once I have completed the bridging program?

You will only need to resubmit any documentation that has expired. As we will still have record of your previous documentation, you can refer to it without needing to resubmit it.

10. How do I make a new application for registration after completing the bridging program?

The NMBA will assess any future application you make based on the legislative requirements and registration standards in place at the time that your application is received, such as the successful completion of a NMBA-approved program of study.

We strongly advise that you check the NMBA website for the latest information prior to lodging your new application. You can find more information about the [registration standards](#), [criminal history checks](#) and the [application process for international applicants](#) on the Ahpra and NMBA websites.

We also recommend that you include a cover letter with your application that states that you are making a new application after successfully completing a bridging program.

Required documentation: post-bridging

- You must complete and submit an [AGBP-40 application form](#) and make all declarations required in the form.
- You must pay the registration and application fees when making a new application after completion of a bridging program.
- You must provide a copy of your course completion certificate from the bridging program.
- You must provide all identification requirements (as detailed in the [Proof of Identity fact sheet](#)) not previously provided.
- You must arrange for a new Certificate of Good Standing or Certificate of Registration Status to be sent to Ahpra directly from the relevant authority.

Some applicants may need to provide additional information:

- If your work history has changed since you initially applied for registration, you must:
 - provide an updated Statement of Service from your employer(s) covering the time since you initially applied
 - submit a new curriculum vitae that describes your full practice history and any training undertaken in accordance with the Information and definitions section of the AGBP-40 application form.

- You will be required to apply for an [international criminal history check](#) if you:
 - declare a criminal history outside Australia, and/or
 - have lived in a country/countries other than Australia for six consecutive months or more since the age of 18.

- If applicable, you must provide details of any impairment that affects your capacity to practice.

- If your NMBA-approved English language test has expired, you must provide:
 - a new certificate, or
 - evidence that you have been continuously enrolled in a program of study taught and assessed in English and approved by the recognised nursing and/or midwifery regulatory body in any of the countries listed in the English language registration standard.

Upon review of the submitted documentation, you may be requested to provide additional documentation.

All documentary evidence must meet the [Ahpra certification requirements](#).

Will completing a bridging program guarantee my registration?

You will only be registered if you have successfully completed the NMBA-approved bridging program and meet all the NMBA's other registration requirements.

If you complete a bridging program that is not approved by the NMBA, your application for registration will be refused.

If you complete a bridging program and have not first been assessed and referred by the NMBA, you may be refused registration even if you have successfully completed the bridging program. This is because the program of study may not cover specific requirements that you need to be eligible for registration as a nurse or midwife.

11. Where do I get more information?

- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)
- For more information on the requirements for IQNMs: visit the [Internationally qualified nurses and midwives](#) page of the NMBA website.
- [Application form for IQNMs](#)
- [Accreditation](#)
- [Approved programs of study](#)