

# Accreditation Standards for Re-entry to the Register – Registered Nurse 2013

FINAL CONSULTATION

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# Acknowledgements

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# 1. Preamble

## 1.1. Background to the development of the Accreditation Standards Re-entry to the Register - Registered Nurse

The Australian regulatory environment in which nurses are registered, and programs of study accredited and delivered, has undergone significant change in the past few years. Higher education regulation and quality assurance have also undergone major transformation. Further, national reforms in health policy, governance and funding are being implemented and have further implications for nursing education. These changes formed the basis for reviewing and creating the *Accreditation Standards for Re-entry to the Register - Registered Nurse* outlined in this document.

There are now four pathways leading to Registration as a Registered Nurse in Australia.

- Completion of an accredited entry to practice program, (three year Bachelor of Nursing as a minimum)
- A prescribed period of supervised practice as determined by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)
- A Re-entry to Practice program for those who have previously been registered in Australia but who have not been registered for between five and ten years, as determined by the NMBA OR
- Completion of an accredited and approved Entry Program for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses.

## 1.2. Review of the existing ANMAC Accreditation Standards

In 2011, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) undertook an extensive review of the standards leading to initial registration as a nurse and released the *Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2012*. These Standards are now the basis for accreditation of approved programs of study for initial entry to the Australian health practitioners register as a Registered Nurse educated in Australia. They have therefore appropriately formed the foundation document for the review of all ANMAC accreditation standards which lead to registration as a Registered Nurse, either by re-entry or for nurses educated overseas. i.e. *Accreditation Standards for Re-Entry to the Register - Registered Nurse* and the *Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified – Registered Nurse*. The new Standard for re-entry replaces the existing *ANMC Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses: Re-entry to the Register Standards Registered Nurses (2010)*<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.3. Recency of practice requirements

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2010, the NMBA sets registration standards as well as professional codes, standards and guidelines that underpin safe and competent practice. The

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Nursing Midwifery Council (2010) Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses : re - entry to the Register Standards Registered Nurses.  
<http://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/Standards%20and%20criteria%20for%20the%20accreditation%20of%20nursing%20and%20midwifery%20courses%20-%20Re%20Entry%20to%20the%20Register%20Standards%20-%20RN%20May%202010.pdf> viewed 4 September 2013.

NMBA's *Recency of practice registration standard* was approved on 31 March 2010. Under the standard, nurses must have undertaken sufficient practice to demonstrate competence in their profession within the preceding five years. The NMBA also determines pathways to practice for those who either do not meet the recency practice requirements or who have previously held registration as a nurse in Australia. Previously registered nurses who have let their registration lapse for between five and ten years may be eligible to re-enter the register upon the successful completion of an approved program of study known as a Registered Nurse Re-Entry Program. Registered Nurses who fall outside the five to ten year period have other pathways for their re-entry to practice as determined by the NMBA.

#### **1.4. Rationale for the implementation of the Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards**

The guiding principle for implementing the Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards is to promote an increase in the availability of accredited programs and to ensure a more flexible and cost effective pathway for applicants seeking re-entry to practice following a lapse in registration as nurse from 5 to 10 years. Individualised assessment and referral of applicants by the NMBA into any of the pathways leading to registration as a nurse will ensure that accredited education and health service providers of Registered Nurse Re-entry programs are not disadvantaged by the *Standard for Registered Nurse Re-entry 2013* and may also engage in the supervised practice pathway for re-entry.

#### **1.5. Regulatory impact assessment of Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards**

During the development of the Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards, ANMAC undertook a regulatory impact assessment.<sup>2</sup> The Australian Government Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) requires national standard setting agencies such as ANMAC to consider the impact of regulation, standards and other quasi-regulation before approving such instruments. The regulatory impact statement was developed by ANMAC to assist the Standards Accreditation and Assessment Committee (SAAC) and the ANMAC and NMBA Boards to approve the proposed accreditation standards.

This assessment was undertaken in accordance with COAG's *Best Practice Regulation—A Guide for Ministerial Councils and National Standard Setting Bodies 2007*. It considered such matters as the costs and benefits of introducing the new accreditation standards, the business compliance costs and the impact on competition.

The assessment concluded that the regulatory impact of the proposed Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards would be minimal. It was concluded that those most affected would be the private providers who will be required to become an approved higher education provider or establish a partnership through a governance relationship with such a provider if they continue to offer programs. The ability to partner is a cost effective option for health services and registered training organisations (RTOs) should they wish to continue to offer programs. In contrast, the benefits which accrue from certain and consistent standards include:

- removal of unregulated providers
- improvements to the quality of education provided in Re-entry-RN programs
- more consistency for employers in the outcomes of these programs
- improved outcomes for students in terms of value for money

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (2013) *Regulatory Impact Statement – EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards*, July 2013.

- potential to attain a nationally recognised qualification

## 1.6. Ratification and approval of Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards

The EAG and SAAC reviewed the final draft of the accreditation standards before presentation to ANMAC's Board.

While ANMAC is responsible for developing the accreditation standards, the NMBA is responsible for approving them under the National Law. This same dual regulatory function applies to the accreditation of individual programs of study leading to registration or endorsement as a nurse or midwife.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards

The Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards contain the minimum requirements to be met by education providers seeking accreditation of their program of study by ANMAC. TEQSA-approved higher education providers must seek, and ultimately attain, accreditation for their nursing program of study. Under section 49(1) of the National Law, graduates of programs cannot register unless their program of study is accredited by ANMAC with accreditation approved by NMBA.

### 2.2. Education providers seeking accreditation to offer a Registered Nurse Re-Entry Program

As the Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards are embedded within the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2012 and/or Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified – Registered Nurse, the program can only be offered as all or part of an accredited program by an accredited education provider who elects to offer a program to applicants seeking re-entry onto the Australian register. The nine Re-entry RN Accreditation Standards are listed in Figure 1 with associated criteria.

**Figure 1 Accreditation Standards for Re-entry to the Register - Registered Nurses**

<b>STANDARD 1: GOVERNANCE</b>	The education provider has established governance arrangements for the nursing program of study that develop and deliver a sustainable, high-quality education experience for students, to enable them to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse
<b>STANDARD 2: CURRICULUM CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b>	The program provider makes explicit, and uses a contemporary conceptual framework for the nursing program of study that encompasses the educational philosophy underpinning design and delivery and the philosophical approach to professional nursing practice.
<b>STANDARD 3: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURE</b>	The program of study is developed in collaboration with key stakeholders reflecting contemporary trends in nursing and education; complying in length and structure and complies with the Australian Qualifications Framework for the qualification offered and enabling graduates to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse. Workplace experience is sufficient to enable safe and competent nursing practice by program completion.

<b>STANDARD 4: PROGRAM CONTENT</b>	The program content delivered by the program provider comprehensively addresses the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse and incorporates Australian and international best practice perspectives on nursing as well as existing and emerging national and regional health priorities.
<b>STANDARD 5: STUDENT ASSESSMENT</b>	The curriculum incorporates a variety of approaches to assessment that suit the nature of the learning experience and robustly measure achievement of required learning outcomes, including a summative assessment of student performance against the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
<b>STANDARD 6: STUDENTS</b>	The program provider's approach to attracting, enrolling, supporting and assessing students is underpinned by values of transparency, authenticity, equal opportunity and an appreciation of social and cultural diversity
<b>STANDARD 7: RESOURCES</b>	The program provider has adequate facilities, equipment and teaching resources, as well as staff who are qualified, capable and sufficient in number, to enable students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
<b>STANDARD 8: MANAGEMENT OF WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE</b>	The program provider ensures that every student is given supervised workplace experiences conducted in an environment(s) providing suitable opportunities and conditions for students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
<b>STANDARD 9: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	The program provider is able to assess and address risks to the program, its outcomes and students, and has a primary focus on continually improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience for students and the competence of graduates.

## 3. Applications for Accreditation

### 3.1. Alignment with the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards and/or EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards

ANMAC will not be accrediting stand alone RN Re-entry programs, rather an application for accreditation of registered nurse re-entry programs must be submitted using one of the following two pathways using either the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards and/or EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards.

#### **PATHWAY 1 – Aligned to the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards**

Education providers seeking accreditation to deliver an RN Re-entry program using pathway 1 must address all Standards and Criteria within the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards including the following variation within:

##### **Standard 1: Governance**

1.3 Up to the full qualification of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements for the award of Bachelor degree.

##### **Standard 3: Program Development and Structure:**

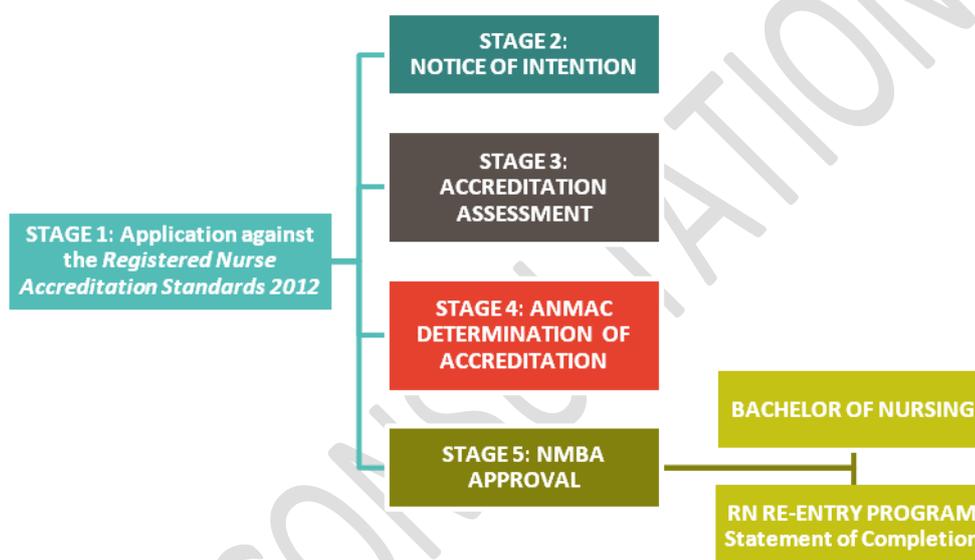
3.6 A workplace experience from 80 to 240 hours, not inclusive of simulation activities, incorporated into the program.

### Re-entry to the Register

The approved RN Re-entry program accredited against this pathway will provide graduates with either a:

- Bachelor of Nursing
- or**
- Statement of Completion

**Figure 2 – Pathway 1 Application for accreditation in accordance with the RN Accreditation Standards**



### PATHWAY 2 – Aligned to Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified – Registered Nurses

Education providers seeking accreditation to deliver an RN Re-entry program using pathway 2 must address all Standards and Criteria within the Accreditation Standards for EPIQ –RN including the following variations within:

#### Standard 1: Governance

1.3 Up to the full qualification of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements for the award of Graduate Certificate (level 8), to be titled Graduate Certificate in Nursing (RN Re-entry).

#### Standard 3: Program Development and Structure

3.6 A workplace experience from 80 to 240 hours, not inclusive of simulation activities, incorporated into the program.

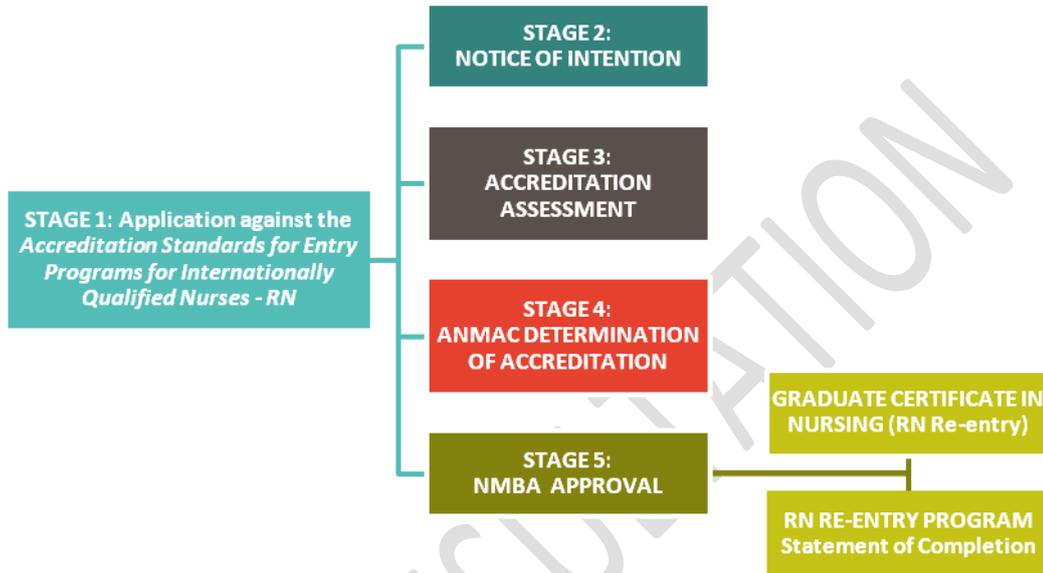
### Re-entry onto the Register

The approved RN Re-entry program accredited against this pathway will provide graduates with either a:

- Graduate Certificate in Nursing (RN Re-entry)

- or
- Statement of Completion

**Figure 3 – Pathway 2 Application for accreditation in accordance with the Accreditation Standards for EPIQ – RN**



### 3.2. Resources for the Accreditation of a Registered Nurse Re-entry Program

In addition to the requirements outlined within these Accreditation Standards for RN Re-entry, education providers seeking accreditation to deliver a Registered Nurse Re-entry Program must review the following resources via the:

**I. ANMAC website - <http://www.anmac.org.au/>**

- ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2012.
- ANMAC Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified – Registered Nurse 2013
- ANMAC National Guidelines for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Programs Leading to Registration and Endorsement in Australia 2012
- ANMAC Support Tool for Education Providers 2012

**II. NMBA website - <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/>**

- NMBA Recency of Practice Standard 2012
- NMBA Re-entry to Practice Policy 2010

## 4 Glossary and Abbreviations

**ANMAC**—the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council is the independent accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. ANMAC sets standards for accreditation and accredits nursing and midwifery programs leading to registration and endorsement; and the providers of those programs.

**ANMC**—the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council evolved into ANMAC following approval as the accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery. ANMC authored the original set of Accreditation Standards as well as the National Competency Standards for nursing and midwifery.

**AQF**—the Australian Qualifications Framework is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

**AQF qualification**—the result of an accredited complete program of learning leading to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

**COAG**—the Council of Australian Governments is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia, comprising the Prime Minister, state premiers, territory chief ministers and the president of the Australian Local Government Association.

**Competence**—the combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities underpinning effective and/or superior performance in a profession or occupational area (from the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse).

**Competent**—when a person is competent across all the domains of competencies applicable to the nurse or midwife, at a standard judged to be appropriate for the level of nurse being assessed (from the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse).

**Criteria**—rules or tests on which a judgement or decision in relation to compliance with the Accreditation Standards can be based.

**Curriculum**— the full outline of a program of study, usually built around a conceptual framework with the educational and professional nursing or midwifery philosophies underpinning the curriculum and includes: the philosophy for the program; the program structure and delivery modes; subject outlines; linkages between learning outcomes and their assessment, and national competencies; teaching and learning strategies; and a workplace experience plan.

**Education provider**—university, or other higher education provider, responsible for a *program of study*, the graduates of which are eligible to apply to the NMBA for nursing or midwifery registration or endorsement.

**Entry to practice program** - An NMBA approved three year program of education for entry to the register as a Registered Nurse For registration as a registered nurse, the minimum qualification must be a Bachelor degree (or where relevant, a postgraduate qualification) offered by a university of higher education provider and the minimum length of the course is equivalent to six semesters' full-time study.

**Equivalent professional experience**—successful completion of a qualification equivalent to that being taught and sufficient post-graduate professional experience<sup>3</sup> in the discipline being taught to demonstrate competence in applying the discipline’s principles and theory.

**Governance**—framework, systems and processes supporting and guiding the organisation towards achieving its goals and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements.

**Graduate competency outcomes**—knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes possessed by graduating students in accordance with the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

**Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (National Law)**—contained in the Schedule to the Act. This second stage legislation provides for the full operation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions from 1 July 2010 and covers the more substantial elements of the national scheme, including registration arrangements, accreditation arrangements, complaints, conduct, health and performance arrangements, and privacy and information-sharing arrangements. The purpose is to protect the public by establishing a national scheme for regulating health practitioners and students undertaking programs of study leading to registration as a health practitioner. The National Law is legislated in each state and territory.

**Higher education provider**—tertiary education provider who meets the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) as prescribed by the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* and is currently registered with TEQSA.

**Internationally Qualified Registered Nurse** – for the purposes of this document an Internationally Qualified Registered Nurse is defined as a registered nurse who obtained their nursing education outside of the destination country where they work or intend to work.

**National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse**—core competency standards by which performance and professional conduct is assessed to obtain and retain registration as a Registered Nurse.<sup>4</sup>

**NMBA**—the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia is the regulator of nurses and midwives in Australia. Its functions are supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and include registering nursing and midwifery practitioners and students; developing standards, codes and guidelines for the nursing and midwifery professions; handling notifications, complaints, investigations and disciplinary hearings; assessing overseas trained practitioners who wish to practice in Australia; and approving accreditation standards and accredited programs of study.

**Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR)**—The office administers the Australian Government’s regulatory impact analysis requirements. It has a number of roles, including: assisting agencies in preparing regulation impact statements through training and guidance; monitoring and reporting on the government’s regulatory impact analysis requirements; and administering COAG guidelines for regulation making by national bodies.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> To be read in the context of the *Recency of practice registration standard*, NMBA. Accessed at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx> on 19 June 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia *Registered Nurse Competency Standards 2006*. Accessed at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx> on 19 June 2013.

<sup>5</sup> The role of the OBPR is formally set out in a charter available at: <http://www.finance.gov.au/obpr/about/charter.html>. Accessed on 2 August 2013.

**Program or program of study**—the full program of study and experiences that must be completed before a qualification recognised under the AQF, such as a Bachelor or Masters of Nursing, can be awarded.

**Program provider**—school or faculty responsible for the design and delivery of a program of study in nursing leading to the award of a Bachelor Degree in nursing as a minimum.

**Recognition of prior learning**—an assessment process for the students formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that they have achieved required learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards for entry to and/or partial or total completion of a qualification.

**Registered nurse (RN)**—a person with appropriate educational preparation and competence for practice, who is registered by the NMBA to practise nursing in Australia.

**Regulatory impact statement (RIS)**—a key component of the Australian Government’s best practice regulation process is a regulation impact statement, containing seven elements setting out:

1. problems or issues that give rise to the need for action
2. desired objectives
3. options that may achieve the desired objectives (at a minimum a regulatory option, a non-regulatory or light-handed regulatory option, and a do-nothing option)
4. assessment of impact (costs, benefits and, where relevant, levels of risk) of options for consumers, business, government and the community
5. consultation
6. recommended option
7. strategy to implement and review the preferred option.

The purpose of a regulatory impact statement is to:

- give decision makers a balanced assessment based on the best available information
- inform interested stakeholders and the community about the likely impact of the proposal and the information decision makers took into account.<sup>6</sup>

**Standard**—level of quality or attainment.

**Subject**—unit of study taught within a program of study.

**Student assessment**—process to determine a student’s achievement of expected learning outcomes. May include written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

**Workplace experience**—component of nursing education allowing students to use judgement when applying theoretical knowledge in an actual practice setting. Includes the concept of ‘clinical training’ as embodied in the National Law.

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<sup>6</sup> Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) (2013) *Best Practice Regulation Handbook*. Accessed at: <http://www.finance.gov.au/obpr/proposal/handbook/Content/01-productivity-evidence-based-policy.html> on 12 August 2013.