

Review of Accreditation Standards: Registered Nurse Re-entry to the Register Programs and Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses Seeking Registration in Australia

Second Consultation Paper

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Register Programs and Entry
Programs for Internationally
Qualified Registered Nurses
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Project jointly funded by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.

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Aim of the Review

The aim of the project to review the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses: Re-entry to the Register Standards Registered Nurses (2010) (RN Re-entry) and development of accreditation standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses (EPIQ – RN) is to ensure the accreditation standards meet the objectives of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) as outlined in the National Law¹ and reflect the outcomes of the recent review of the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012).

The work of each of the jurisdictions in developing the current RN Re-entry accreditation standards is recognised and valued and the review of these accreditation standards seeks to build on this platform. The process undertaken for the successful review leading to the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) provides the model for conducting the review and development of the RN Re-entry and EPIQ-RN accreditation standards. Utilising this model will ensure previous learning benefits the current process and uphold consistency across all accreditation standards development.

Constructive and respectful engagement was the hallmark of the review and development of the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) and this process is underpinning the review and development of these standards. The review is being conducted in consultation with all key stakeholders to ensure that the Accreditation Standards are contemporary, comprehensive, clearly articulated and nationally consistent.

The existing Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses: Re-entry to the Register Standards Registered Nurses (2010) can be accessed via the following web link: [RN Re-entry to the Register Accreditation Standards](#) .

Currently there are no accreditation standards to enable assessment of programs for internationally qualified nurses seeking to register in Australia, with ANMAC having to utilise the entry and re-entry standards for assessment of these programs. This has proved unsatisfactory (inadequate?) and not sensitive to the very specific needs of nurses who have not worked in the Australian Health and aged care systems as a Registered Nurse.

Objectives of the Review

The objectives of this review are to develop Accreditation Standards that:

- Align with the recently revised ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012).
- Are contemporary and consistent with emerging research, policy and relevant industry guidance.
- Ensure the graduates are exposed to theoretical and practical program elements necessary to meet the national competency standards required for registration.
- Are underpinned by the ANMAC principles and protocol for accreditation standards.
- Provide confidence for the community that the first objective of the National Law is met:

Provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered.

¹ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (QLD) accessed at <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications/Legislation.aspx> 27 May 2013.

Purpose of this Consultation Paper

This second consultation paper follows on from the first consultation paper of the Review which was distributed in March 2013 and is available from the following link: [Review of Accreditation Standards: Registered Nurse Re-entry to the Register and Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses Seeking Registration in Australia. First Consultation Paper](#). The first consultation paper outlined the case for, and regulatory environment of, the Review and posed a range of questions for stakeholders' consideration and response to. Sections of the first consultation paper are included in this paper for information.

This second consultation paper builds on the outcomes from the first round of consultation and proposes the draft Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses Accreditation Standards 2013.

For the review to be effective, it is essential that the critical input of organisations and agencies with an interest in the education and therefore the practice standards of registered nurses is optimised. This document will be distributed to organisations and agencies that have an interest in the Accreditation Standards and who wish to contribute to this review. Under the National Law ANMAC has responsibility for the review and development of Accreditation Standards and intends to synthesise and translate all feedback into refining and improving the Accreditation Standards so as to continue to safeguard and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of those Australians requiring nursing care.

ANMAC is undertaking a regulatory impact assessment as part of the accreditation standards review and development process utilising the Office of Best Practice Regulation framework. This process will include a risk analysis, cost benefit analysis and the use of a broad consultation strategy to identify the potential impact and the benefits and burdens of the development and implementation of the new accreditation standards.

Context of the Review

As the independent accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery programs of study, ANMAC has responsibility for maintaining and developing the integrity of accreditation standards for professions under its mandate. In addition Section 46(2) of the National Law is explicit in articulating that wide ranging consultation must be undertaken as part of the accreditation standards review and development process.

Under Section 49(1) of the National Law, graduates of programs of study will not be eligible for registration or endorsement unless the program of study undertaken is accredited by an approved accreditation authority and that the accredited program is approved by the NMBA as meeting the education requirements that provide the qualifications for registration as a Registered Nurse.

In October 2011 ANMAC commenced the review of the Registered Nurse Standards and Criteria leading to Registration and Endorsement in Australia (2009). The review process was underpinned by extensive stakeholder and other consultation. The NMBA endorsed the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) in October 2012. The NMBA has final responsibility for approving programs of study leading to registration as a nurse or midwife, and has supported this process of review and development and will ultimately approve or not approve the revised accreditation standards (see Section 47 of the National Law).

The current accreditation standards for RN re-entry were developed by key industry stakeholders including professional bodies, regulators and academics in 2010 and subsequently adopted by the NMBA. In light of the review and development of the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards in 2012

it is imperative that the RN re-entry standards are updated to provide assurance to NMBA, the community and all other stakeholders that graduates of these programs are competent to practice, meeting at a minimum the entry level competency standards for registration. The current registered nurse re-entry accreditation standards are notably inconsistent in important areas with the accreditation standards for entry programs leading to registration as a registered nurse in Australia and raise serious questions relating to a primary objective of the National Law as outlined in Section 3²:

...to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered.

Currently there are no accreditation standards to enable assessment of programs for internationally qualified nurses seeking to register in Australia, with ANMAC having to utilise the entry and re-entry standards for assessment of these programs. The RN Re-entry Accreditation Standards have been utilised as they are most relevant to programs for nurses who have practiced previously, but whose competence in the contemporary Australian health care environment is unknown. The current RN Re-entry Accreditation Standards are not appropriate standards against which to assess the programs that provide for internationally qualified nurses seeking to register in Australia in any ongoing way. However, without specific standards for these internationally qualified nurses, the re-entry standards are the only ones available for use. This emphasises the immediate need for the development of these accreditation standards.

The community, ANMAC and the NMBA must be assured that nurses seeking re-entry to the register undertake an accredited program that ensures a sound theoretical and practical framework to support a safe and competent return to contemporary practice. There should be recognition that nurses undertaking these programs require a flexible, responsive framework of study and practicum that acknowledges their scope of practice and meets their individual needs while addressing gaps in their skills, knowledge and experience.

The accreditation standards for programs for registered nurse re-entry to the register will be the standards against which education providers and programs will be assessed by ANMAC. The programs will provide preparation for registered nurses for re-entry to professional practice after a lapse in practice and removal from the register for a period exceeding the regulatory recency of practice requirement³.

The community, ANMAC and the NMBA must be assured that internationally qualified nurses seeking to register in Australia meet the relevant competency standards to safely practice in the Australian environment. Currently there are no accreditation standards for programs that provide for internationally qualified nurses seeking to register for the first time in Australia.

The accreditation standards for entry programs for internationally qualified registered nurses seeking to register in Australia will be the standards against which education providers and programs will be assessed by ANMAC as assuring internationally qualified nurses undertake an approved program of study to prepare for practice in Australia.

The objective of the RN Re-entry and EPIQ-RN programs is to ensure graduates are able to meet the NMBA approved national competencies to practice in the context of the current Australian health

² Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (QLD) accessed at <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications/Legislation.aspx> 14 November 2012

³ NMBA Recency of Practice Policy accessed at http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard/recency_of_practice_policy on 25 January 2013.

environment. Therefore it is reasonable that the accreditation standards must articulate at a minimum, the desired competency outcomes of the entry level graduate programs.

Relevant Health and Education Policy and Reform

The review and development of the Accreditation Standards for programs for re-entry to the register and for entry programs for internationally qualified nurses seeking initial registration in Australia must be undertaken in the context of the current national and international health policy environment.

The implementation of a number of major reforms in the governance, funding and provision of health services are underway at the present time^{4 5}. In addition, a number of new national agencies⁶ have been formed over the past 3 years, in particular Health Workforce Australia (HWA), resulting in a developmental and ongoing influence upon the role and number of registered nurses within the broader system of professional health services delivery.

While the full impact of these reforms is still evolving, the policy intent, at least at the Commonwealth level, is relatively clear. There is a demand for all health professionals to be more involved in physical and mental health promotion and early intervention to prevent illness or its progression. A greater emphasis on primary and sub-acute care settings is required along with the need for stronger inter-professional awareness, collaboration and communication to better support people with complex illness and those who have the capacity to self-care. Facilitating transition from one health care setting to another is critical to the success of the reforms; as is familiarity with health informatics, including person-controlled and electronic health care records.

Consequently, to practice in the contemporary Australian environment, programs of study leading to registration as a registered nurse require a greater emphasis on understanding the cost drivers of health care as well as enhanced knowledge of and accountability for quality and safety and its improvement, performance measurement, care coordination and practising and promoting an environment of cultural safety. Broader experience and knowledge of complex care, community, primary and sub-acute health care settings are all indicated while not losing sight of the contemporary role of the nurse. Superior communication skills and teamwork, delegation and supervision capabilities are increasingly essential pre-requisites in the emerging health care environment; along with the capacity to innovatively use information technology and electronic resources both in care delivery and to research the growing evidence base for prevention, improved care and treatment methods.

Re-entry to practice has been identified by successive state and territory governments as a key strategy to building a sustainable and suitably skilled nursing workforce with the Federal government estimating between 25 000 - 30 000 qualified nurses in Australia who are not currently practicing in the profession⁷. There are a number of state/territory based initiatives as well as national initiatives that articulate strategies such as scholarships, subsidised programs for re-entry to practice and financial

⁴ National Health & Hospitals Reform Commission 2009 accessed at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/nhhrc/publishing.nsf/Content/nhhrc-report-on-17February2013>.

⁵ HWA - National Health Workforce Innovation and Reform Strategic Framework for Action 2011–2015. <http://www.hwa.gov.au/sites/uploads/hwa-wir-strategic-framework-for-action-201110.pdf>

⁶ For example: Independent Hospital Pricing Authority – IHPA; National Performance Authority – NPA; Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care - ACSQHC; Australian National Preventive Health Agency – ANPHA; Health Workforce Australia – HWA.

⁷ Nursing and Midwifery Workforce 2011 Report – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare accessed at [Nursing and Midwifery Workforce 2011 - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) on 4 January 2013.

incentives paid to both re-entering practitioners and their employers⁸. The Productivity Commission reported on the success of a number of these initiatives in the Report Australia's Health Workforce in 2025⁹. However, what remains little spoken of are the challenges that Governments faced when these nurses and midwives sought to re-enter the workforce¹⁰.

Significant challenges identified as facing registered nurses seeking to return to practice after a period out of the work force include:

- Socialisation to the contemporary professional nursing role.
- Re-development of workplace competence, both clinical and organisational.
- Incorporating the concept of evidence based or research informed practice into nursing care.
- The availability of support systems and resources.
- The cost and availability of re-entry programs^{11 12}.

An increasing reliance on skilled migration to meet essential workforce requirements – with Australia having a high level of dependence on internationally recruited health professionals relative to most other OECD¹³ countries, has resulted in increased demand for programs for international nurses and midwives seeking to register in Australia¹⁴. Recent changes to include Enrolled Nurses on the Consolidated Sponsored Occupations (CSO) list have highlighted the requirement for ANMAC to undertake the development of EPIQ-EN Accreditation Standards in the near future. International migration of health care professionals is a significant component of globalised labour markets¹⁵. The impact is multifaceted and the issues for both the health care professionals and the countries involved are complex. Australia must balance the ethical recruitment of international nurses, not denying them the opportunity to live and professionally flourish in Australia, with the global obligation to ensure a sustainable local supply of nurses. Australia should strive to develop strategies to develop the local nursing workforce through effective workforce planning, education and training and retention¹⁶.

Challenges identified both in Australia and overseas for internationally qualified nurses seeking registration are similar to the challenges that face nurses seeking to re-enter practice after a protracted period away from the profession. Both groups have practiced as nurses previously with their current competency in the contemporary Australian health environment an unknown. In addition, for internationally qualified nurses, the literature identifies communication in the health care setting as a critical issue, with a demonstrated proficiency at the current required level as not necessarily ensuring safe and mutually effective communication. In particular, the complexities of the technological and

⁸ Department of Health and Aging 2008 accessed at [Bringing Nurses Back to the Workforce](#) on 12 January 2013.

⁹ Health Workforce 2025 Doctors, Nurses and Midwives - Vol 1(2012) accessed at www.hwa.gov.au/health-workforce-2025 on 29 November 2012.

¹⁰ Adrian, A; *Protecting the Community Balancing Safety and Risk – Re-entry to Practice for Nurses and Midwives in Australia* 2009.

¹¹ Long J, West S; *Returning to Nursing after a Career Break – Elements of Successful Re-entry* AJAN 2007 accessed at [Returning to Nursing after a Career Break - Elements of Successful Re-entry](#) on 20 January 2013.

¹² Adrian A; *Protecting the Community Balancing Safety and Risk – Re-entry to Practice for Nurses and Midwives in Australia* 2009.

¹³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

¹⁴ Health Workforce 2025 Doctors, Nurse and Midwives - Vol 1 viewed at www.hwa.gov.au/health-workforce-2025, on 29 November 2012

¹⁵ Hawthorne L, *Health Workforce Migration to Australia Policy Trends and Outcomes 2004-2010*; cleared for circulation May 2012.

¹⁶ WHO, World Health Organisation 2010, Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, accessed at http://www.who.int/entity/hrh/migration/code/code_en.pdf on 20 February 2013.

specialised language used by nurses together with the nuances of spoken communication have been identified by patients, employers and international nurses themselves as problematic¹⁷.

The literature describes a number of barriers confronting internationally qualified nurses and found that sustained migration of international nurses has resulted “in a dramatic ethnic diversification of the Australian nursing profession”¹⁸. Studies have identified that non English speaking internationally qualified nurses had to overcome numerous barriers prior to employment including qualification recognition and language assessment. English speaking internationally qualified nurses are more readily accepted into the profession, while non-English speaking internationally qualified nurses may be confronted with feelings of disadvantage and rejection by peers, including experiences of racism and discrimination¹⁹.

In the United States, local nurses identified a number of issues when working with international nurses, including communication and differences in decision making, behavioural norms and role expectations²⁰. International nurses identify a number of factors affecting adjustment to working in the US, such as variations in health care systems, language competency, integrating into nursing practice in the US, knowledge of medications and pharmacology, and proficiency in technology²¹.

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools in Canada identified the major challenges facing international nurses practising outside their own country. The key themes that emerged were differences in language, culture and the practice of nursing, with particular issues regarding telephone interactions and engaging with health care professionals, patients and their families²².

In a case study of internationally recruited nurses in Ireland, the most prevalent themes related to competency, education, and racial and social integration issues. It emerged that the level of competency required for the provision of quality care was not standard and scope of practice varied across nationalities.

The themes identified throughout the literature both in the Australian and the international context articulate communication, competency, education, and racial and social integration as the most common issues and suggest six major and often overlapping areas that must be addressed in any program for internationally qualified nurses seeking registration in Australia:

- Socialisation to the contemporary Australian professional nursing role
- Acquisition of English language and other communication skills
- Adapting to the Australian style of interpersonal and inter and intra professional relationships
- Development of workplace competence, both clinical and organisational
- Provision of culturally congruent care to diverse populations

¹⁷ Kingma M, *Nurses on the Move: Diversity and the work environment* 2008 accessed at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed on 20 January 2013.

¹⁸ Hawthorne L, *The Globalisation of the Nursing Workforce: Barriers Confronting Overseas-qualified Nurses in Australia*. *Nursing Inquiry* 2001

¹⁹ Deegan Dr J. Simkin Dr K *Expert to Novice: Experiences of Professional Adaptation Reported by Non-English Speaking Nurses in Australia* http://www.ajan.com.au/Vol27/AJAN_27-3.pdf#page=32

²⁰ Davis CR 2005 *Characteristics of International Practical Nurses Graduates in the United States Workforce — 2003–2004*. Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools Report.

²¹ Davis CR. 2005 *Crossing Borders International Nurses in the US Workforce* accessed at [http://www.intlnursemigration.org/assets/pdfs/Davis on 20 January 2013](http://www.intlnursemigration.org/assets/pdfs/Davis%20on%20January%202013.pdf).

²² Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (2005)

2004 Think Tank Monograph: Building Global Alliances II: The Evolving Healthcare Migration. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

- Availability of culturally safe support systems and resources^{23 24 25}.

As with healthcare policy, higher education has undergone significant policy change in recent times. The Australian Government's response to the Review of Australian Higher Education (the Bradley Review)²⁶ in December 2008 heralded a period of transformation in post-secondary education in this country. The report highlighted the importance of the education sector as a key determinant in Australia's ability to compete effectively in a global context and it called for an 'outstanding, internationally competitive higher education system'. The review pointed to the need for structural reform and increased funding, as well as improved quality, equity and access.

The Australian Government's response to the Bradley Review included an increased focus on quality to build Australia's reputation in tertiary education. In May 2011, the Government announced the establishment of an independent national body to regulate and assure the quality of all types of higher education - The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). The Government also committed to ensuring that growth in the higher education sector will be underpinned by a robust quality assurance and regulatory framework, which places a renewed emphasis on student outcomes and the quality of the student experience²⁷.

A government initiative arising from the Bradley Review has been the publication in July 2011 of a revised Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). This has been updated by the publication of Australian Qualifications Framework 2013 in January 2013. The AQF 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 which comprises 10 levels of qualification from Certificate 1 to Doctoral Degrees at level 10, with a Bachelor Degree sitting at level 7. The AQF articulates the learning outcomes expected within each level of education in relation to knowledge, skills and the application of both. The purpose of the criteria is to ensure the integrity of qualifications and standardisation across a range of education providers, settings and delivery modes. The AQF Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities²⁸ lists every AQF qualification and the organisations authorised to issue those qualifications.

It is essential that any review of the current ANMAC standards for program accreditation recognises these policy changes within education as well as their context, given the history of nursing education in Australia.

Australian nursing education followed a global trend from 1984 onwards when the Commonwealth announced its in-principle support for the transfer of registered nurse educational preparation from the

²³ Deegan Dr J. Simkin Dr K *Expert to Novice: Experiences of Professional Adaptation Reported by Non-English Speaking Nurses in Australia* http://www.ajan.com.au/Vol27/AJAN_27-3.pdf#page=32

²⁴ Denton, S. 2009 Nation-to-nation: Challenges to addressing the effects of emerging global nurse migration on health care delivery. *Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice* accessed at http://ppn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/7/3_suppl/76s on 10 January 2013.

²⁵ Hawthorne LA. *The Globalisation of the Nursing Workforce: Barriers Confronting Overseas-qualified Nurses in Australia*. *Nursing Inquiry* 2001

²⁶ Australian Government (2008), *Review of Australian Higher Education – Final Report*. Viewed at: http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Review/Documents/PDF/Higher%20Education%20Review_one%20document_02.pdf on 15 December 2012.

²⁷ Australian Government (2009), *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*. Viewed at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Documents/TransformingAusHigherED.pdf> on 15 December 2012.

²⁸ The AQF Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities accessed at www.aqf.edu.au on 15 December 2012.

hospitals into the higher education sector. This transfer was a staged process with states and territories changing at different times, but the transfer was essentially complete by the end of 1993²⁹.

Globally, research is increasingly demonstrating that a more highly educated nursing workforce not only improves patient safety and quality of care but also reduces mortality³⁰. The Global Standards for the initial education of professional nurses and midwives, developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), establish educational criteria and outcomes that are based on evidence and competency, promote the progressive nature of education and lifelong learning and ensure the employment of practitioners who are competent and who, by providing quality care, promote positive health outcomes in the populations they serve³¹. The global standards promulgate that the minimum qualification for a registered nurse should be a bachelor level qualification undertaken in a higher education setting.

In Australia, registered nurses must have undertaken a Bachelors Degree with an Australian university or other accredited higher education provider before they are able to apply for entry to the Register. Nurses who are qualified overseas must have a minimum qualification of a Bachelor degree, or a qualification combined with experience that is comparable in duration and content to the nationally agreed minimal educational standard for nursing in Australia if they wish to apply to enter the Register.

Currently in Australia RN Re-entry and EPIQ – RN programs are provided in a number of settings across the education and training sector – higher education, Vocational Education and Training (VET) as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs); and in the private and public sectors. Given this diversity, it is vital to ensure the Accreditation Standards are comprehensive, evidence based, founded in best practice and articulate attainment of a level of professional competency to assure the community that accredited programs of study will graduate students who meet or exceed the relevant entry to practice National Competency Standards for the contemporary Australian environment.

There is currently variation in the qualifications awarded to graduates of RN re-entry programs ranging from a non-qualification award; a certificate of attainment; to the award of a Bachelor of Nursing. A number of the VET sector “bridging” and health service delivered programs are non-award programs – providing graduates with certification to provide to the NMBA as evidence as a qualification for registration. These programs are generally around 480 hours, combining theory and clinical practice experience - many with the option of early exit after 240 hours for re-entry and 280 hours for EPIQ -RN. A small number of universities offer the award Bachelor of Nursing (re-entry). These programs are twelve months in length and are available to nurses who have been previously registered as registered nurses regardless of initial qualification.

The length and content of these programs is consistent with RN re-entry programs and EPIQ- RN offered in other developed countries. In the United States and Canada there is a further requirement for nurses to pass a theoretical exam prior to being granted registration.

The award of a qualification on successful completion of a program of study leading to re-entry to the register or EPIQ-RN requires careful consideration. The objective of these courses is to enable nurses to graduate who meet the entry level standard to practice as a registered nurse, while recognising that

²⁹ Department of Education, Science and Training, *National Review of Nursing Education* – Jointly Commissioned by the Minister for Health and Ageing and the Minister for Education, Science and Training. Viewed at: <http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/highered/programmes/nursing/paper1.htm#top> on 15 December 2012.

³⁰ WHO World Health Statistics, 2007. Geneva World Health Organisation 2007.

³¹ Global Standards for the Initial Education of Professional Nurses and Midwives, World Health Organisation 2009 accessed at [Global Standards for the Initial Education of Professional Nurses and Midwives](#) on 13 December 2012.

these students bring a wide spectrum of knowledge and experiences. In Australia there is a principle that a qualification generally cannot be awarded twice for the same course of study. For those wishing to re-enter the Australian Register and who are required by the NMBA to undertake a program of study, the question arises as to whether a further award should be offered upon successful completion as a qualification for registration? If so, then at what level should this qualification be awarded?

Key Aspects of the Accreditation Standards Requiring Consideration by Stakeholders

The process of reviewing and developing the accreditation standards requires a number of iterative steps to ensure that the final outcome is one which is well supported and robust. It is critical to assess whether the accreditation standards are complete and with sufficient evidence to underpin all the domains necessary to assure the community, ANMAC and the NMBA that a graduate of an accredited RN re-entry-to-practice program or EPIQ-RN is fit to be registered and can practice in a safe and competent manner. Each of the current accreditation standards and accompanying criteria must also be assessed for accuracy to ensure their continued validity given the rapidly moving health and education environment in Australia. It is necessary to assess the rigour of each accreditation standard and its accompanying criteria to ensure that the expectation of education providers is neither too high nor too low. Finally, the accreditation standards must align with the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) to facilitate consistency.

While the accreditation standards for these two categories of nurses seeking to register or re-register are not necessarily identical, there are certain synergies in the requirements that programs providing for these graduates must address. A primary focus on contemporary practice in the Australian context including suitable content on the health issues specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is critical.

Identified areas of challenge for registered nurses either re-entering the profession after a period of time away from practice or for a program of study that leads to an internationally qualified nurse meeting the NMBA requirements for registration include, inter alia:

- Provision of comprehensive nursing care in contemporary health care settings in Australia with a focus on the National Health Priorities.
- Fostering the development of critical reasoning and reflection, conceptualisation, innovative thinking and the ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new and novel situations.
- Communicating with influence in the setting of contemporary Australian practice.
- Development of a deep understanding of the history, health and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Delivery of safe and respectful cultural practice.
- Use of a range of information technologies.
- Knowledge of the Australian social, cultural, political and economic context in which health services operate and where graduates are employed.
- Development of the skills for independent study and a commitment to lifelong learning and encouragement of graduates to take responsibility for the development of nursing as a discipline and profession.

There are additional challenges that face international nurses in the transition to safe and professionally fulfilling practice in Australia. These include communication in the Australian healthcare context and autonomous practice for nurses whose cultural and professional experience may have been undertaken in a more hierarchical model.

The Review to Date

Following the decision to review the Accreditation Standards, an Expert Advisory Group was established by the ANMAC Board comprising the following people:

Professor Bob Meyenn – ANMAC Board, Chair Expert Advisory Group

Professor Jill White—Chair, ANMAC Board

Ms Joanna Holt – Chief Executive NSW Kids and Families, ANMAC Community Board member

Dr Rosemary Bryant - Commonwealth Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer, ANMAC Board

Clinical Professor Fiona Stoker - Chief Nursing Officer Tasmania, ANMAC Board

Professor Wendy Cross – Monash University School of Nursing and Midwifery

Professor Eimear Muir-Cochrane – Chair of Nursing (Mental Health Nursing) Flinders University

Ms Yvonne Chaperon—Assistant Federal Secretary, Australian Nursing Federation

Ms Amanda Adrian—CEO ANMAC

Ms Donna Mowbray—Director of Accreditation Services, ANMAC

Ms Melissa Cooper—Accreditation Manager, ANMAC

Dr Susan Bragg—Accreditation Manager, ANMAC

Ms Kate Jackson – A/g Manager Accreditation Services ANMAC

The first consultation paper was drafted with input from the EAG and distributed broadly to known stakeholders and made available on the ANMAC website. Three first round consultation forums have been held, one each in:

- Melbourne – 24 April 2013
- Perth – 30 April 2013
- Brisbane – 7 June 2013.

In addition, submissions via email were invited and an electronic survey was available for stakeholders to provide their responses to the questions outlined in the first consultation paper.

A total of 64 stakeholders attended the forums, including representatives from:

- Australia and New Zealand Council of Chief Nurses
- Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Authority(AHPRA)
- Australian Nursing Federation (ANF)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery Australia and New Zealand
- Health services and hospitals.
- National Advisory for Tertiary Education, Skills & Employment (NATESE)

- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority (TEQSA)
- Universities, higher education providers, and Registered Training Organisations (RTO's).

To date ANMAC has also received 25 responses to the on-line survey tool and three submissions.

The EAG has met and synthesised the findings from the consultation process to date to inform the development of the draft Accreditation Standards set out in this second consultation paper.

Ongoing Consultation Process

This second Consultation Paper will be distributed widely to all known stakeholders and be made available on the ANMAC website. Feedback is invited from any interested organisation, group or individual. Feedback will be through:

- Submissions by direct email to: Standardsreview@anmac.org.au by 26 June 2013.
- A forum of invited stakeholder groups to be held in Sydney in July 2013.

Re-Entry to Practice

The first consultation paper and stakeholder input identified similarities and differences between the requirements for programs of study for both re-entry to practice for domestically qualified nurses and the entry to practice in Australia for internationally qualified nurses. There was broad support that the standard for entry to the register for registered nurses should be the same as the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012). That is the standard for entry to the register as a registered nurse is the same regardless of the pathway in getting there. There are currently three pathways to registration for registered nurses:

- Having undertaken approved program of study leading to registration as a registered nurse. Eg Bachelor of Nursing, Master of Nursing (Entry)
- Internationally qualified nurses having had their overseas qualification assessed by the NMBA and required to undertake an approved program of study to prepare for practice in Australia
- Previously registered nurses who have had a lapse of registration.

Currently the NMBA is undertaking preliminary consultation on proposed changes to define and support a clear and transparent process to support in a safe and effective manner the re-entry of individuals who:

- previously held registration as a nurse and/or a midwife in Australia
- do not meet the recency of practice requirements in the NMBA registration standard to practice.

The consultation is seeking to explore three pathway options for these previously registered nurses and includes:

1. A NMBA approved supervised practice program (Pathway 1)
2. A NMBA approved re-entry to practice program (Pathway 2); or
3. Requisite studies in a re-entry to practice pathway within a NMBA approved entry to practice program of study leading to initial registration, as identified by a Board-approved education provider following recognition of the individual's prior learning (Pathway 3).

The details around each pathway, particularly the new NMBA approved supervised practice program, will be known once the NMBA's work is complete. In light of this consultation, the EAG has decided to ensure that the accreditation must be consistent with, and reflect any NMBA policy changes. Therefore the final accreditation standards for re-entry to practice programs for previously registered nurses will follow.

Entry to Practice for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses

The Accreditation Standards for EPIQ-RN will be the standards against which education providers and programs will be assessed by ANMAC as assuring internationally qualified nurses undertake an approved program of study to prepare for practice in Australia.

The objective of the EPIQ-RN programs is to ensure graduates are able to meet the NMBA approved national competency standards for registered nurses to practice in the context of the current Australian health environment. Therefore it is reasonable that the accreditation standards must articulate at a minimum, the desired competency outcomes of the entry level graduate programs.

The EAG proposes that the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards align with the revised Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) with modifications as identified through the Review to support the requirements of these students.

Modifications to the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) for EPIQ-RN programs need to take into account the evidence articulated in the literature and the consensus view of stakeholders. As detailed in the first consultation paper the themes identified throughout the literature both in the Australian and the international context articulate communication, competency, education, and racial and social integration as the most common issues for internationally qualified nurses seeking registration. The literature suggests there are six major and often overlapping areas that must be addressed in any program for internationally qualified nurses seeking registration in Australia:

- Socialisation to the contemporary Australian professional nursing role
- Acquisition of English language and other communication skills
- Adapting to Australian style of interpersonal and professional relationships
- Development of workplace competence, both clinical and organisational
- Provision of culturally congruent care to diverse populations
- Availability of culturally safe support systems and resources^{32 33 34}.

In recognition of these six areas and cognisant that the EPIQ-RN has already undertaken studies leading to registration in their home country, a number of key areas within the Registered Nurse Accreditation standards (2012) need amendment in order to be suitable as the standards for Entry to Practice for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses. These are:

- Length of the program
- Workplace practice requirements
- What award or qualification, if any, is appropriate
- Program content.

³² Deegan Dr J. Simkin Dr K *Expert to Novice: Experiences of Professional Adaptation Reported by Non-English Speaking Nurses in Australia* http://www.ajan.com.au/Vol27/AJAN_27-3.pdf#page=32

³³ Denton, S. 2009 Nation-to-nation: Challenges to addressing the effects of emerging global nurse migration on health care delivery. *Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice* accessed at http://ppn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/7/3_suppl/76s on 10 January 2013.

³⁴ Hawthorne LA. *The Globalisation of the Nursing Workforce: Barriers Confronting Overseas-qualified Nurses in Australia*. *Nursing Inquiry* 2001

Each of these issues is discussed below.

Length of the Program

The length of the program needs to balance existing knowledge, cost and workforce requirements with the time needed to gain the required knowledge and sufficient opportunity to become competent against the Registered Nurse Competency Standards and to be socialised to the Australian health context.

The length of programs currently provided for internationally qualified nurses seeking to enter the Register vary considerably. There was also wide variation in views from stakeholders expressed through the consultation process. Most identified 12 weeks as being appropriate, although responses ranged from 6 - 52 weeks.

It is proposed that the standards stipulate 12 weeks.

Given the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) are for a three year program, there are a number of areas where it would be inappropriate to require the same criteria in a 12 week program. There are, therefore, a number of criteria that have been deleted or amended. These are not discussed in this consultation paper as they are considered to have a minor impact.

Stakeholders are encouraged to review the draft standards in full.

Workplace Practice Requirements

Workplace practice requirements were agreed by all stakeholders as being the critical element of these programs. It is during the workplace practice placements where not only competence can be assessed and confidence built; but just as importantly the socialisation and integration into the culture and context of the Australian health care system occurs.

There were strong views expressed by stakeholders that it was not essential that a variety of workplace practice settings be provided. It is acknowledged that many contemporary workplace practice settings provide opportunity to meet a broad range of nursing practice requirements that would facilitate attainment of the Registered Nurse Competency Standards. In many cases for internationally qualified nurses being able to undertake workplace practice requirements in one workplace setting limits the disadvantages of having to move between and become oriented to multiple settings thus potentially making the experience more valuable.

It is proposed that a minimum of 240 hours of workplace experience, not inclusive of simulation activities, be required by programs. It is also proposed that there be no requirement for this to occur across a variety of settings; however it is proposed that the standards will articulate that the workplace experience must be able to provide opportunity for the student to meet all the National Competency Standards for the registered nurse.

Award /Qualification

There was a diversity of views expressed as to whether undertaking a formal program of study leading to registration for internationally qualified nurses should result in a formal award or qualification, and if so at what level. Various views included:

- The provision of non-award courses is not specifically regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). While ANMAC will be responsible for the accreditation of the actual program, it is important that the provider falls under a discrete, relevant educational regulatory system, as well as meeting the ANMAC accreditation requirements under the National Law.

- There is a notable amount of new learning for these nurses and that this should be recognised in the award of a formal qualification.
- Providing a formal award would facilitate progression into further study for interested nurses.
- Providing the course at a Bachelor level or above would ensure an appropriate level of consistency of learning and assessment with the entry level Bachelor of Nursing programs.
- The quantum of learning required is equivalent to that required of a Graduate Certificate at a minimum.
- Internationally qualified nurses graduating from these programs of study would value an Australian qualification.
- The attainment of a qualification may have implications in the nursing career structure in some jurisdictions; and may require further discussion to address the possibility and implications of attracting an allowance under State and Territory Industrial Instruments.

Having carefully considered the issues it is proposed that programs for Entry to Practice for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses be listed on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) National Registry for the award of Graduate Certificate (level 8) as a minimum.

It is understood that this potentially will mean some current providers, particularly Registered Training Organisations and health services, will be ineligible to deliver a Graduate Certificate independently. Consequently it is also proposed to include in the standards the ability of an organisation to develop formal governance arrangements with higher education providers for the purposes of delivering a program where appropriate and where all other accreditation standards have been met.

Content

Stakeholders expressed varying perspectives on the inclusion of additional content for these programs. There was agreement that the program standards should not be so prescriptive that they potentially become prematurely out-dated. However there was also broad agreement that there needed to be explicit inclusion of some additional content areas. Current program providers identified consistent weaknesses in internationally qualified nurses in the areas of support for personal hygiene and activities of daily living, infection control, and understanding the Australian health care system and their obligations as a Registered Nurse.

It is proposed to include the additional content areas of:

- essentials of patient care
- professional culture and behaviour in the Australian health care context
- delegation and supervision
- infection control
- legal and ethical obligations, responsibilities and issues in health care and research.

Draft Standards

Accompanying this document are the draft Accreditation Standards – Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses Accreditation Standards 2013 (Draft). These draft Standards highlight the changes made to the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) to make them appropriate and relevant for programs for internationally qualified registered nurses seeking registration in Australia. Stakeholders are encouraged to review the Draft Accreditation Standards in full, and provide feedback

on their utility, appropriateness and comprehensiveness as standards for approved programs of study leading to registration in Australia for internationally qualified nurses.

Conclusion

The aim of this review of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Registered Nurse Re-entry and EPIQ – RN Standards and Criteria is to update the accreditation standards in light of the move to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme and recent changes in higher education and health policy. The consultation process is critical to ensuring that the new Accreditation Standards are consistent, contemporary, comprehensive, clearly articulated and respected by the profession, relevant education providers and the community as a whole to safeguard and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of those Australians requiring nursing care.

The ANMAC Board will oversee the process of review which will be coordinated by the Board appointed Expert Advisory Group and led by ANMAC's Director of Accreditation - Ms Donna Mowbray. This process is expected to be completed by August 2013 with the intention of providing an updated set of accreditation standards, acceptable to the professions and relevant education providers, for the approval of the Nursing and Midwifery Board Australia in September 2013.

Glossary and Abbreviations

AHPRA the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is the organisation responsible for the implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme across Australia. AHPRA supports the National Health Practitioner Boards in implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

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 and providers.

ANMC the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council was the peak national body responsible for the facilitation of a national approach to nursing and midwifery regulation prior to the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme in 2010. The ANMC worked with the state and territory Nursing and Midwifery Regulation Authorities in evolving standards for statutory nursing and midwifery regulation, the development of national competency standards and codes of conduct and ethics for nurses and midwives.

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.

AUQA Australian Universities Quality Agency has been subsumed by the newly established Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

COAG 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.

Education provider is a university or other higher education institution, or a recognised training organisation (RTO) that is responsible for a program the graduates of which are eligible to apply for nursing or midwifery registration or endorsement.

EPIQ Entry program for internationally qualified nurses seeking initial registration in Australia

Health Practitioner Regulation (Administrative Arrangements) National Law Act 2008 administrative arrangements established under the first stage of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions (Act A).

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009, or the National Law. The National Law is contained in the Schedule to the Act. This second stage legislation provides for the full operation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the 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 of the National Law is to protect the public by establishing a national scheme for the regulation of health practitioners and students undertaking programs of study leading to registration as a health practitioner.

HWA Health Workforce Australia is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments. It was established to meet the future challenges of providing a health workforce that responds to the needs of the Australian Community.

NMBA Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia works in partnership with AHPRA to protect the public and guide the professions of Nursing and Midwifery. The functions of the NMBA 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.

NRAS National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development promotes policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world by providing a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change.

Program is the full program of study and experiences that are required to be undertaken before a qualification, recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), such as a Bachelor of Nursing can be awarded to a graduate who successfully completes the program.

TEQSA the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency which was established in July 2011 to regulate and assure the quality of Australia’s large, diverse and complex higher education sector. From January 2012 the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency will register and evaluate the performance of higher education providers against the new Higher Education Standards Framework. TEQSA will undertake both compliance assessments and quality assessments.

Appendix A

Key stakeholders in the review of accreditation standards for registered nurse re-entry to the register programs and entry programs for internationally qualified nurses.

PRINCIPAL AGENCIES	STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION	EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia	Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council Board	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) Board representative
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia	ANMAC Board representative
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	Health Professions Accreditation Councils' Forum	Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery representative
Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council	Consumer Health Forum of Australia	Australia and New Zealand Council of Chief Nurses representative
Health Workforce Australia	Commonwealth Chief Nurse	Australian Nursing Federation representative
Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council	Australian & New Zealand Council of Chief Nurses	ANMAC Chief Executive Officer
Australian & New Zealand Council of Chief Nurses	Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery Australia & New Zealand	ANMAC Director of Accreditation Services
Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment	Health Workforce Australia	ANMAC Accreditation Managers
Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing	Australian Nursing Federation	ANMAC Standards Development & Review Coordinator (SDRC)
Health Workforce Principal Council	Australian College of Nursing	
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council	
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	Congress of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Nurses	
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	Coalition of National Nursing Organisations	
Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education	TAFE Directors Australia	
	Australian Council for Private Education and Training	
	National Rural Health Alliance	
	Australian Private Hospitals Association	
	Nursing Council of New Zealand	
	Midwifery Council of New Zealand	
	Interested Education Providers	

Appendix B

Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards

Thank you for reviewing the draft Accreditation Standards in full. Please follow the link to comment on each of the draft Accreditation Standards and if you have any other benefits or burdens you would like to identify.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QXM6SKV>

Standard 1: Governance

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.

Criteria

The education provider must provide evidence of:

- 1.1. Current registration by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) as an Australian university or other higher education provider³⁵ or an organisation with a formal governance arrangement with a higher education provider.
- 1.2. Current accreditation of the nursing program of study by the university (or TEQSA for non-self-accrediting higher education providers) detailing the expiry date and recommendations, conditions and progress reports related to the school.
- 1.3. Listing on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) National Registry for the award of Graduate Certificate (level 8) or credit towards such a program as a minimum.
- 1.4. Registered as a Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) provider.
- 1.5. Current, documented academic governance structure for the university (or other higher education provider) and the program provider that ensures academic oversight of the program and promotes high-quality teaching and learning, scholarship, research and ongoing evaluation.
- 1.6. Terms of reference for relevant program advisory committee demonstrating partnership with key stakeholders, including partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals and communities.
- 1.7. Staff delegations, reporting relationships, and the role of persons or committees in decision making related to the program.
- 1.8. Governance arrangements between the university or higher education provider and the program provider that ensure responsiveness to accreditation requirements for ongoing compliance with accreditation standards.
- 1.9. Policies relating to credit transfer or the recognition of prior learning that are consistent with AQF national principles and the graduate's ability to meet the National Competency Standards for professional registration.

³⁵ For explanation of provider categories see: Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency (2011), *Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards) 2011 Legislative Instrument, Chapter 2*. Viewed at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/higher-education-standards-framework> on 7 March 2012.

Standard 2: Curriculum Conceptual Framework

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.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 2.1 A clearly documented and explained conceptual framework for the program, including the educational and professional nursing philosophies underpinning its curriculum.
- 2.2 The incorporation of contemporary Australian and international best practice teaching, learning and assessment methodologies and technologies to enhance the delivery of curriculum content, stimulate student engagement and promote understanding.
- 2.3 A program of study that is congruent with contemporary and evidence-based approaches to professional nursing practice and education.
- 2.4 Teaching and learning approaches that:
 - a. enable achievement of stated learning outcomes
 - b. facilitate the integration of theory and practice
 - c. scaffold learning appropriately throughout the program
 - d. encourage the application of critical thinking frameworks and problem-solving skills
 - e. engender deep rather than surface learning
 - f. encourage students to become self-directed learners
 - g. embed recognition that graduates take professional responsibility for continuing competence and life-long learning
 - h. instil students with the desire and capacity to continue to use, and learn from, emerging research throughout their careers
 - i. promote emotional intelligence, communication, collaboration, cultural safety, ethical practice and leadership skills expected of registered nurses
 - j. incorporate an understanding of, and engagement with, intraprofessional and interprofessional learning for collaborative practice.

Standard 3: Program Development and Structure (NOTE: Will need to be revised if not offered as a graduate certificate)

The program of study is developed in collaboration with key stakeholders reflecting contemporary trends in nursing and education; complying in length and structure with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) 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.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 3.1 Consultative and collaborative approaches to curriculum design and program organisation between academic staff, those working in health disciplines, students, consumers and other key stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals.
- 3.2 Contemporary nursing and education practice in the development and design of curriculum.
- 3.3 A map of subjects against the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse which clearly identifies the links between learning outcomes, assessments and required graduate competencies.
- 3.4 Descriptions of curriculum content and the rationale for its extent, depth and sequencing in relation to the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of students.
- 3.5 Opportunities for student interaction with other health professions to support understanding of the multi-professional health care environment and facilitate interprofessional learning for collaborative practice.
- 3.6 **A minimum of 240** hours of workplace experience, not inclusive of simulation activities, incorporated into the program.
- 3.7 Content and sequencing of the program of study prepares students for workplace experience and incorporates opportunities for simulated learning.
- 3.8 Workplace experience in Australia to consolidate the acquisition of competence and facilitate transition to practice. A summative assessment is made against all National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse in the clinical setting.
- 3.9 Equivalence of subject outcomes for programs taught in Australia in all delivery modes in which the program is offered (subjects delivered on-campus or in mixed-mode, by distance or by e-learning methods).
- 3.10 Where the structure of the program allows for multiple entry pathways for which students receive block credit or advanced standing (other than on an individual basis), evidence that each pathway meets the Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards.

Standard 4: Program Content

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.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

4.1 A comprehensive curriculum document structured around the conceptual framework that includes:

- a. program structure and delivery modes
- b. subject outlines
- c. linkages between subject objectives, learning outcomes and their assessment, and national competencies
- d. teaching and learning strategies
- e. a workplace experience plan.

4.2 The central focus of the program is nursing practice, comprising core health professional knowledge and skills and specific nursing practice knowledge and skills that are evidence based, applied across the human lifespan and incorporate national and regional health priorities, health research, health policy and reform. This should include but not be limited to:

4.2.1 Social determinants of health and well being

Promotion and maintenance of health and prevention of illness

Rural and remote health

Mental Health

Chronic disease and self-management

Primary health care

Acute and critical health care

Evidence-based health care

Infection control

Quality use of medicines

Health professional regulation and health policy issues

Health assessment

Interprofessional collaborative practice

Human anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology

Identification and treatment of disease

National and regional health priorities.

4.2.2 Nursing professional knowledge and skills including but not limited to:

Personal care

Documentation and communication

Promotion of self-care

Fluids and nutritional management

Clinical monitoring and management

Recognition of and response to the deteriorating health of the patient

Clinical interventions including wound management

Preventing risk and promoting safety.

4.3 Nursing research and evidence-based inquiry underpins all elements of curriculum content and delivery.

4.4 Program content supports the development and application of knowledge and skills including but not limited to:

a. critical thinking, analysis and decision making

b. essentials of patient care

c. professional culture and behaviour in the Australian health care context

d. delegation, supervision and leadership

e. quality improvement methodologies

f. research appreciation and translation

g. legal and ethical obligations, responsibilities and issues in health care and research

h. health informatics and health technology.

4.5 Inclusion of subject matter that gives students an appreciation of the diversity of Australian culture, develops their knowledge of cultural respect and safety, and engenders the appropriate skills and attitudes.

4.6 Inclusion of discrete subject matter specifically addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, health, wellness and culture. Health conditions prevalent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also appropriately embedded within the curriculum.

Standard 5: Student Assessment

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.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 5.1 A consistent approach to student assessment across teaching sites and modalities that is periodically reviewed and updated.
- 5.2 Clear statements about assessment and progression rules and requirements provided to students **at the commencement of the program.**
- 5.3 The level, number and context of assessments are consistent with determining the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.
- 5.4 Both formative and summative assessment types and tasks exist across the program to enhance individual and collective.
- 5.5 A variety of assessment approaches to evaluate competence in the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours required for professional nursing practice.
- 5.6 Assessment of student communication competence and English language proficiency before undertaking workplace experience.
- 5.7 Validated instruments are used in workplace experience assessment to evaluate student knowledge, skills, behaviours and competence.
- 5.8 Ultimate accountability for assessing students in relation to their workplace experience.
- 5.9 Assessments include the appraisal of competence in **the quality use of medicines.**
- 5.10 Evidence of procedural controls, fairness, reliability, validity and transparency in assessing students.
- 5.11 Processes to ensure the integrity of online assessment.
- 5.12 Collaboration between health service providers (where relevant) and teaching staff in selecting and implementing assessment methods.
- 5.13 A summative assessment of student achievement of competence against the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse is conducted by a registered nurse (registered by the NMBA and **who has demonstrated current experience in assessing the summative assessment of Bachelor of Nursing students**) in an Australian clinical context before program completion.

Standard 6: Students

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.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 6.1 Applicants are informed of the following before accepting an offer of enrolment:
 - a. specific requirements for entry to the program of study including English language proficiency
 - b. education providers will, under the National Law, register students with the NMBA and notify the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency if a student undertaking clinical training has an impairment that may place the public at risk of harm
 - c. specific requirements for right of entry to health services for workplace experience (including fitness for practice, immunisation and criminal history)
 - d. requirements for registration as required and approved by the NMBA including, but not limited to, the explicit registration standard on English language skills.
- 6.2 Students are selected for the program based on clear, justifiable and published admission criteria.
- 6.3 Students have met the NMBA English language proficiency and demonstrate communication skills to be able to successfully undertake academic and workplace experience requirements throughout the program.
- 6.4 Students are informed about, and have access to, appropriate support services including counselling, health care and educational advisory services.
- 6.5 Processes to enable early identification and support for students who are not performing well.
- 6.6 All students have equal opportunity to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse. The mode or location of program delivery should not influence this.
- 6.7 Processes for student representation and feedback in matters relating to governance and program management, content, delivery and evaluation.

Standard 7: Resources

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.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 7.1 Staff, facilities, equipment and other teaching resources are sufficient in quality and quantity for the anticipated student population and any planned increase.
- 7.2 Students have sufficient and timely access to academic and clinical teaching staff to support their learning.
- 7.3 A balance of academic, clinical, technical and administrative staff appropriate to meeting education commitments.
- 7.4 Staff recruitment strategies are culturally inclusive and reflect population diversity in Australia
- 7.5 Documented position descriptions for teaching staff, clearly articulating roles, reporting relationships, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- 7.6 The head of program is a registered nurse with no conditions on their registration relating to conduct, who holds a relevant post-graduate qualification.
- 7.7 Staff teaching and assessing nursing practice related subjects are Registered Nurses and have relevant clinical and academic experience.
- 7.8 Academic staff are qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching, to at least one qualification standard higher than the program of study being taught or with equivalent professional experience.
- 7.9 In cases where an academic staff member's tertiary qualifications do not include nursing, their qualifications and experience are relevant to the subject areas they are teaching.
- 7.10 Processes to ensure academic staff have a sound understanding of contemporary scholarship and professional practice in the subject areas they teach.
- 7.11 Teaching and learning takes place in an active research environment where academic staff are engaged in research and/or scholarship and/or generating new knowledge. Areas of interest, publications, grants and conference papers are documented.
- 7.12 Policies and processes to verify and monitor the academic and professional credentials of current and incoming staff and to evaluate their performance and development needs.

Standard 8: Management of Workplace Experience

The program provider ensures that every student is given supervised workplace experience conducted in an environment(s) providing suitable opportunities and conditions for students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 8.1 Constructive relationships and clear contractual arrangements with all health providers where students gain their workplace experience and processes to ensure these are regularly evaluated and updated.
- 8.2 Risk management strategies in all environments where students are placed to gain their workplace experiences and processes to ensure these are regularly reviewed and updated.
- 8.3 Workplace experiences **are appropriate for the attainment of** the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.4 Each student is provided with workplace experiences reflecting the major health priorities and **contemporary** nursing practice. Opportunities are provided for intraprofessional and interprofessional learning and the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours for collaborative practice.
- 8.5 Clearly articulated models of supervision, support, facilitation and assessment are in place so students can achieve required learning outcomes and current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.6 Academics, nurse clinicians and other health professionals engaged in supervising and supporting students during workplace experiences are adequately prepared for this role and seek to incorporate contemporary and evidence-based Australian and international perspectives on nursing practice.
- 8.7 Assessment of nursing competence within the context of the workplace experience is undertaken by an appropriately qualified **and prepared** registered nurse.
- 8.8 Appropriate resources are provided, monitored and regularly evaluated to support students while on workplace experience.

Standard 9: Quality Improvement and Risk Management

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.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 9.1 Responsibility and control of program development, monitoring, review, evaluation and quality improvement is delegated to the nursing school with oversight by the academic board or equivalent.
- 9.2 Regular evaluation of academic and clinical supervisor effectiveness using feedback from students and other sources; systems to monitor and, where necessary, improve staff performance.
- 9.3 Professional and academic development of staff to advance knowledge and competence in teaching effectiveness and assessment.
- 9.4 Feedback gained from the quality cycle incorporated into the program of study to improve the experience of theory and practice learning for students.
- 9.5 Regular evaluation and revision of program content to include contemporary and emerging issues surrounding nursing practice, health care research and health policy and reform.
- 9.6 Students and staff are adequately indemnified for relevant activities undertaken as part of program requirements.