Qualifications of Academic Staff Teaching into Nursing & Midwifery Programs of Study

1. PURPOSE

This explanatory note has been prepared to assist education providers seeking accreditation by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) for an entry to practice nursing or midwifery program of study. Education providers must comply with all relevant accreditation standards.

2. BACKGROUND

ANMAC is responsible for the accreditation of all nursing and midwifery education providers and programs of study leading to registration and endorsement in Australia.

The safety and quality of care provided to people in the health care system is reliant on nurses and midwives possessing the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours and developing their capacity for critical thinking and clinical judgment. This is achieved by ensuring national consistency and quality in nursing and midwifery education through a robust assessment process using contemporary Accreditation Standards. The qualifications, expertise and ongoing professional development of staff teaching into a nursing or midwifery program of study are regarded as critical aspects of this assessment process.

3. APPLICATION

This explanatory note applies to all education providers seeking accreditation of programs of study for Enrolled Nurse (initial registration), Registered Nurse (initial registration), Registered Midwives (initial registration) and Nurse Practitioners. For relevant documentation - Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses Leading to Registration, Enrolment, Endorsement and Authorisation in Australia - please visit the ANMAC website¹.

4. **EXCLUSIONS**

The following staff involved with the education of nurses or midwives are excluded from the application of the relevant accreditation standard pertaining to the qualifications of teaching staff and therefore this explanatory note:

Staff employed by a health organisation or health facility and not employed by the education provider e.g. a clinical facilitator or nurse supervisor/mentor.

Staff employed by the education provider who teach on an ad-hoc basis or are a guest lecturer for specialty topics.

5. **RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION**

In addition to the relevant Accreditation Standards detailed in Section 3 this explanatory note should be read in conjunction with the following:

a) [Australian Qualifications Framework, January 2013](#)

b) [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency – Higher Education Threshold Standards, 2011](#)

6. **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

All current ANMC Accreditation Standards contain a criterion requiring that academic/teaching staff:

...hold a qualification that is higher than the qualification for which the students they educate are studying (or justification of where exceptions to this criterion should be made).

Following the 2011-12 review of the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards for the accreditation of programs leading to registration this criterion was revised to align with the TEQSA Provider Course Accreditation Standards published in 2011 and requires education providers to ensure that:

*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. For staff teaching in an entry to practice Masters program, this requires a relevant post-graduate qualification or equivalent professional experience.*

All other ANMC Accreditation Standards will be updated in time to align with the intent of this revised standard as it relates to the program of study being accredited.

It is therefore expected that academic staff will normally hold a qualification that is one level higher than the program being taught. However, in special circumstances, such as the teaching of subjects such as pharmacy, law, specialty areas of nursing, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health for example, it may be reasonable that the teacher has an equivalent qualification to that being taught AND extensive professional experience in their area(s) of teaching. Similarly, academic staff teaching into a graduate-entry accredited nursing or midwifery program are expected to have, or be studying for, a relevant post-graduate qualification. However, in special circumstances it may be reasonable for an academic staff

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2 The majority of Accreditation Standards were published by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) prior to that organisation being appointed as the independent accreditation authority for nursing and midwifery and changing its name to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC). These Standards will be successively updated by ANMAC.
Academic staff are defined as teaching staff employed under ongoing or contractual arrangements by the education provider who have a key educational role with students. Higher qualifications are not limited to the discipline of nursing or midwifery and may include relevant qualifications in education, health, science, arts, allied health, public health, or health promotion, for example.

Academic staff currently teaching into an accredited nursing or midwifery Bachelor or Diploma program of study who do not have a qualification at least one level higher than that being taught (see Australian Qualifications Framework[^1]) or an equivalent qualification and the required professional experience as described above, are provided with a grace period of five (5) years to upgrade their qualifications. After this time, they will be ineligible to teach into an accredited nursing or midwifery program of study. This period of grace commences from 1 January 2012 and will expire on 31 December 2016. New appointments to the academic staff during this period must meet the requirements of the relevant Standards or be enrolled in a program of study that confers the qualification required by the Standard.

It is also a requirement of all ANMC/ANMAC Accreditation Standards that the Head of Discipline and staff teaching and assessing nursing and/or midwifery practice related subjects hold current registration (with APHRA from 1 July 2010).

Readers of this explanatory note are referred to the relevant set of Accreditation Standards for further details concerning Standards relating to teaching staff.

### Table 1: Table of Amendments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Short Description of amendment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V1.0</td>
<td>October 2012</td>
<td>First explanatory note following revision of Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2012</td>
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