OFFSHORE COMPONENTS IN ACCREDITED AUSTRALIAN PROGRAMS OF STUDY FOR NURSES AND MIDWIVES

1. PURPOSE
This explanatory note has been prepared to assist education providers within Australia seeking to conduct a subject or a component of a subject in an accredited program of study offshore. Education providers must also 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.

This explanatory note applies to all education providers seeking accreditation of programs of study for nurses and midwives. For relevant documentation - Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Programs Leading to Registration and Endorsement in Australia - please visit the ANMAC website.

3. APPLICATION
This explanatory note only applies to Australian education providers offering components of accredited programs offshore. This may be theoretical and/or professional experience components of the program.

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4. RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

In addition to the relevant Accreditation Standards detailed in Section 3 this explanatory note should be read in conjunction with the Australian Qualifications Framework which may be accessed at AQF 2nd Edition January 2013

5. EXPLANATORY NOTE

ANMAC supports in principle the opportunity for a student in an approved nursing or midwifery program of study to undertake a component of that study as an offshore experience. Undertaking a component of study offshore has the potential to enrich the student’s practice through exposure to diverse cultural and educational experiences and to enhance a program of study through the development of mutually beneficial relationships between the Australian education provider and the offshore host organisation(s).

Following the 2011-12 review of the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards for the accreditation of programs leading to registration the revised Standards require education providers to ensure that:

   Equivalence of theory or workplace experience gained outside Australia in terms of subject objectives, learning outcomes and assessment. Learning experiences undertaken outside Australia must not exceed one semester².

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.

The length of the time that the student spends in offshore study to complete core units must not exceed more than one semester of a three year bachelor. If the program is shorter or longer than three years, the time the student spends offshore should be calculated on a pro rata basis. That is, no more than one sixth of a student’s total program of study and no greater than one sixth of a student’s total professional experience hours may be undertaken in an offshore setting and be counted towards the student’s qualification.

For the professional experience component of entry to practice midwifery programs, regardless of the extent of the experience undertaken by a midwifery student offshore, all continuity of care birth experiences must be undertaken in Australia. Up to a fifth of the remaining experiences may be undertaken offshore to be counted towards satisfying the current approved Midwifery Accreditation Standards.

EVIDENCE REQUIRED

Accredited education providers of programs of study for nursing and midwifery students in Australia who elect to offer a component of the program offshore are required to submit to ANMAC the following evidence.

5.1 RATIONALE

Education providers must articulate a clear rationale for the inclusion of the offshore component of study. It must be clearly stated whether the component is an observational, theoretical and/or a clinical experience. The intended learning outcomes of the study

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experience must be clearly outlined with the teaching, learning and assessment strategies that will be utilised in the offshore setting included and supported.

For all subjects where students have the opportunity to engage in either the theoretical, and or clinical component outside Australia, the education provider must demonstrate:

- Whether the subject is a core or elective subject in the program of study.
- How the subject of study relates to the philosophical and conceptual framework of the program.
- How equivalence between subjects has been determined (including the clinical component where applicable).
- Evidence of how the subject of study satisfied the relevant accreditation standards.
- In which semester the offshore component of study is undertaken and why – demonstrating scaffolding of learning and appropriate preparation of students.

### 5.2 CULTURAL AND PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

The education provider must demonstrate a robust selection process for students seeking to undertake a component of study offshore. The selection process must be based on the principles of equity, fairness and quality.

The education provider must demonstrate evidence of the processes for the cultural and professional preparation of students and academic staff prior to the offshore experience that is relevant and sensitive to the destination. The professional preparation must ensure a sound understanding of the scope of practice for nurses and midwives in the host country and evidence the student has awareness of the students own scope of practice in this context. Examples of how this could be presented to students include workshops or self-directed study.

Evidence of how students will demonstrate understanding of cultural and professional preparation should be submitted that includes but is not limited to:

- Host country culture, including appropriate dress and religious, social, communication and other cultural observances.
- Host country health service culture, scope of practice for the nurse or midwife and relevant regulatory requirements.

### 5.3 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The education provider must demonstrate evidence of a robust organisational risk management framework that clearly articulates processes for assessing and ensuring the safety of students and academic staff while offshore. This should include but is not limited to:

- The students and academic staff are adequately prepared prior to departure.
- Pre departure health check and vaccination schedule.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) advisories.
- Requirements for health and travel insurance.
- Indemnity in the context of clinical practice (This will vary depending on destination and should be clearly articulated, including evidence of any MOU’s describing reciprocal arrangements in place).
- Pastoral support arrangements.
• Designated point of contact in both Australia and the host country in case of emergency; tested prior to departure.

• Personal safety awareness with a clear communication and decision making pathway in the event of an emergency, up to and including evacuation procedures.

5.4 EQUIVALENCE AND ASSESSMENT
Where the student receives credit for the offshore experience, either theoretical and/or clinical, the education provider must have a process of mapping to demonstrate the curriculum, learning outcomes and assessment strategies of the subject are equivalent to the onshore accredited subject and align with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The rigor of assessment and timeline for achievement of the related experience should be mapped for equivalence prior to credit transfer being granted for the offshore experience.

For the use of an Australian assessment tool in an offshore setting there should be evidence of orientation of host country staff to the tool. If an offshore assessment tool is to be utilised there should be evidence of mapping to Australian standards for equivalence.

The education provider must be assured that the host country academic supervisors are suitably qualified and adequately prepared to support students. For clinical experience undertaken in an offshore setting, the education provider must demonstrate that the students will be supervised by a registered nurse or a registered midwife who has current and relevant experience in the areas of supervision. If supervisory equivalence is unable to be mapped, the education provider should provide an adequately prepared academic staff member to accompany the students.

Table 1: Table of amendments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Short description of amendment</th>
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</table>
| V2             | 3 May 2013  | Amended reference to midwifery programs to include all entry to practice midwifery programs  
Amended student midwife to midwifery student |

Date of ANMAC Standards, Accreditation and Assessment Committee Determination
11 February 2013

Date for Review
1 February 2015

Responsible Director: Director of Accreditation Services