

EXPLANATORY NOTE STUDENTS STUDYING OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC Revised November 2021

Students studying outside Australia during COVID-19 pandemic

PURPOSE

This explanatory note supersedes the:

- Explanatory note students studying outside Australia during COVID19 pandemic. Revised April 2021
- ANMAC explanatory note entitled ‘Students studying outside Australia due to COVID19 pandemic and associated international travel restrictions’ published on 25 June 2020 and revised in October 2020.
- Joint explanatory note published by Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and ANMAC on 24 July 2020.

This explanatory note has been developed in conjunction with the NMBA to assist Australian education providers to understand the requirements and responsibilities of permitting students continuing or commencing an accredited and approved program outside Australia as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions.

There is no firm indication of when Australia’s international borders will be open to returning/commencing students. Therefore, there is no certainty about when nursing and midwifery students who are located outside Australia will be able to commence/continue their studies in Australia as per the Accreditation Standards due to COVID-19 pandemic. ANMAC and the NMBA have considered the impact this will have on students and will extend the period that students who are located outside Australia are permitted to study theoretical components of their program online until **30 June 2022**. ANMAC and the NMBA will continue to review the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions on Australian nursing and midwifery programs and will review this explanatory note accordingly. Once Australia’s international borders are opened, students will be required to undertake their studies in Australia as stipulated in the ANMAC Registered Nurse and Midwife Accreditation Standards. All education providers will be required to have comprehensive plans for refreshing students’ theoretical and practical knowledge when they re-commence their studies in Australia.

BACKGROUND

ANMAC is responsible for the accreditation and monitoring of all nursing and midwifery education providers and programs of study that lead to eligibility to apply for registration or endorsement with the NMBA.

There are provisions in both the Registered Nurse and Midwife Accreditation Standards (RNAS and MAS) that are applied to programs where the education provider wishes to offer students an opportunity to study a portion of their program offshore.

- RNAS 2012 standard 4.7 *...learning experiences undertaken outside Australia must not exceed one semester* [The ANMAC explanatory note - *Offshore components in accredited Australian programs of study for registered nurses and midwives* clarifies that for entry to practice registered nurse programs, one semester is the equivalent of one sixth of the program]
- RNAS 2019 standard 3.1 *The program of study is undertaken in Australia. Where there is an offshore component, it is required to:*
 - a) *be no more than one-sixth of the full program completed offshore*
 - b) *demonstrate equivalence of learning outcomes.*
- MAS 2014 standard 4.8 *Equivalence of theory or midwifery practice experience gained outside Australia in terms of subject learning outcomes and assessment. Learning experiences outside Australia must not exceed one-fifth of the total program.*
- MAS 2021 3.1 *The program of study is undertaken in Australia. Where there is an offshore component, the program must:*
 - a) *be no more than one-fifth of the full program completed offshore*
 - b) *demonstrate equivalence of learning outcomes.*

ANMAC has established processes in place in **normal (i.e. not during current COVID19 pandemic) circumstances** for all education providers seeking accreditation of programs of study for registered nurses and/or midwives that offer an offshore component of the program. See ANMAC's [explanatory note](#) on this subject.

ANMAC understands the need to support students who are currently located outside Australia to undertake selected theoretical components of study **during the COVID19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions**. Undertaking components of study outside Australia offers students the opportunity to continue or commence their program and minimises the potential disruption to both students and education providers. This explanatory note sets out the process in place **during the COVID19 pandemic** for applying the COVID 19 special provisions in both the Registered Nurse and Midwife Accreditation Standards.

APPLICATION

The provisions of this explanatory note are:

1. only applicable during COVID 19 pandemic when international travel restrictions are in place
2. only applicable until **30 June 2022**
3. only applicable for programs of study that lead to eligibility to apply for registration as registered nurse or midwife (i.e. **not** programs leading to registration as an enrolled nurse or endorsement as a nurse practitioner).
4. only applicable to the theoretical components of programs of study, delivered online outside Australia
5. that the theoretical components of entry to practice **registered nurse** programs of study undertaken outside of Australia do not exceed one sixth of the program for the individual student
6. that the theoretical components of entry to practice **midwife** programs of study undertaken outside of Australia do not exceed one fifth of the program for the

individual student

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation is relevant to this explanatory note:

- ANMAC Accreditation Policy and Procedure
- ANMAC Midwife Accreditation Standards (2021)
- ANMAC Midwife Accreditation Standards (2021) Essential Evidence
- ANMAC Midwife Accreditation Standards (2014)
- ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2019)
- ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2019) Essential Evidence
- ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012)

Education providers should also review relevant documentation published on the TEQSA website including COVID19 regulatory advice on managing online-learning good-practice for students.

ADVICE TO EDUCATION PROVIDERS REGARDING STUDENTS STUDYING OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Education providers can extend a student's online study beyond one semester duration if the total hours of **theoretical study for the individual student** do not exceed one sixth of the registered nurse or one fifth of the midwife entry to practice program. Education providers who use a trimester-based system can use the one sixth rule.

Students can not undertake any professional experience placements while outside Australia. Simulation lab time should not be included in theoretical hours as it cannot occur outside Australia.

The heads of discipline for nursing and/or midwifery entry to practice programs, where there are students studying outside of Australia, have been requested to sign and return a declaration form to ANMAC. The form has already been sent to all relevant education providers. This form outlines ANMAC expectations to ensure that programs remain compliant with the Registered Nurse and Midwife Accreditation Standards. The requirements outlined on this form apply to all students who commenced/will be commencing or continuing online study outside Australia in 2020, 2021, 2022.

Education providers who have not completed this form and have students continuing or commencing study in 2021/2022 outside Australia due to COVID 19-related travel restrictions should complete and sign the form and return it to accreditation@anmac.org.au If you have already sent a declaration form but the information provided has changed, please send a revised form. If you have not sent a declaration previously please do so now.

I confirm that the following measures are in place to ensure that students studying outside Australia during the COVID 19 pandemic have equivalent opportunity to achieve program outcomes as students studying inside Australia, which include:

• equivalent academic support is provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
• equivalent assessment requirements and measures to ensure integrity are in place	<input type="checkbox"/>
• equivalent support for and access to Information Technology resources is provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a clear communication strategy and decision making pathway has been developed that is informed by Australian Government COVID19 pandemic updates and is communicated with students and academic staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
• a plan has been developed to orientate students commencing their program of study outside Australia in 2020/2021/2022 and upon their arrival to Australia	<input type="checkbox"/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a plan has been developed to transition students back into their program of study upon their arrival or return to Australia 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a plan of completion has been developed for students due to complete their program of study in 2020/2021/2022 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pastoral care and support arrangements have been made for students studying outside Australia and upon arriving or returning to Australia. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students outside of Australia will only be undertaking theoretical components of the program. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total number of students studying online outside Australia:	

ANMAC will monitor the transition plans and progress of students who have been studying outside Australia.

Date for Review

30 May 2022

For any queries relating to this explanatory note please contact Accreditation Services, accreditation@anmac.org.au