

Updated ANMAC communication to education providers 1 September 2020

Professional experience placement during COVID 19 pandemic

ANMAC continues to receive queries from education providers about what changes they can make to their programs including, approved professional experience placement arrangements, to allow flexibility yet still continue to meet the accreditation standards during COVID-19 restrictions.

On 16 March 2020, ANMAC sent a communication to all education providers outlining what changes could be made immediately to program delivery and structure. It is timely for ANMAC to re-visit the essential information in the communication.

As in the March 2020 communication, education providers must continue to ensure that nursing and midwifery entry to practice education programs meet the standards that programs have been accredited against to ensure that graduates are able to register as a nurse or midwife with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. Please ensure that your program still meets the following:

- Content and sequencing of the program of study continues to prepare the students for workplace experience
- For clinical components:
 - Students in Registered Nurse Programs have a minimum of 800 hours of workplace experience, not inclusive of simulation activities, that provide exposure to a variety of health-care settings
 - Students in Enrolled Nurse Programs have a minimum of 400 hours of workplace experience, not inclusive of simulation activities, that provide exposure to a variety of health care settings
 - Students in Nurse Practitioner Programs have a minimum of 300 hours of integrated supernumerary practice
 - Students in Midwifery programs have enough workplace experience to complete the minimum midwifery practice requirements.
 - Students in Registered Nurse Re-entry programs have a minimum of 80-240 hours of workplace experience
 - Students in EPIQ Registered Nurse programs have a minimum of 240 hours of workplace experience.
- A summative assessment of student achievement of the relevant NMBA Standards for Practice conducted by the relevant registered health care professional on program completion.

To clarify the implications for the above information – if a program has more than the mandated minimum professional experience placement (workplace experience) hours, an education provider can reduce the placement hours to the minimum hours as outlined in the relevant accreditation standards. For example, a Bachelor of Nursing program with 880 of placement could reduce to 800 hours. This would be helpful if placement opportunities have diminished as it would facilitate some students to complete their studies earlier. It would also release the additional hours, 80 hours in this example, for use where there is a shortfall in available placement hours.

ANMAC has also had reports from education providers about difficulty in obtaining professional experience placements in speciality clinical areas such as mental health and paediatrics. The Registered Nurse and Enrolled Nurse accreditation standards both stipulate that students must undertake professional experience placements in a variety of settings in order to achieve the standards for practice for the respective qualifications. The standards do not specify professional experience placement settings. However, education providers must continue to ensure that their programs include theoretical knowledge of national health priorities and knowledge of care across the lifespan.

ANMAC will be requiring education providers to provide a further update about program delivery during COVID-19 restriction in the near future. This is in accordance with ANMAC's monitoring responsibilities under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009 (s50). Further information about the requirements and date for providing the information will be advised. Normal text for the main body of the message

If you have any queries please contact accreditation@anmac.org.au