



## Nursing education: registered nurse

In Australia there are two categories of nurse regulated to practice: the registered nurse and the enrolled nurse. A registered nurse is a person who has successfully completed the prescribed Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) accredited education program and has acquired the requisite qualification to be a registered nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). The registered nurse undertakes initial and ongoing assessment of nursing care needs, supervises and delegates aspects of care to the enrolled nurse.

### **It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:**

1. All nursing care must be provided by appropriately educated, qualified and regulated nurses.
2. Government must ensure there are sufficient places in the university sector in all States and Territories to meet the community's needs for a registered nurse workforce now and into the future.
3. Entry to practice education for registered nurses must be at degree level offered by a recognised Australian university.<sup>1</sup>
4. Entry to practice education for registered nurses should be augmented by flexible and innovative means, such as distance and online modes to provide equitable and optimal access for students wherever they live, study and work.
5. The principles of adult learning and the recognition of prior learning must be incorporated into registered nurse education together with the availability of credit transfer and articulation options.
6. Entry to practice Bachelor of Nursing education programs for registered nurses must prepare students to meet the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) *Registered Nurse Standards for Practice* to function as a safe beginning level registered nurse in a variety of health and aged care settings.
7. Adequate clinical education must be provided to undergraduate nursing students so they can acquire the clinical experience necessary to meet the NMBA Standards. Staffing levels and skills mix in health and aged care settings providing clinical placement for students, must be adequate to optimise the learning experience. Clinical supervision of student nurses must be undertaken by suitably qualified/experienced registered nurses.
8. Clinical nurse educators must be available, with a scope of practice which meets the needs of students in nursing, newly graduated nurses and nurses new to the workplace, as well



as supporting more experienced nurses with their clinical, educational and mentoring responsibilities.

9. Educational curricula for registered nurses should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health, culture, history and the social determinants of health.
10. The development of core curriculum elements across professions must not compromise the philosophy and integrity of nursing.
11. Registered nurses require support when making the transition from education to practice. This support includes transition to practice programs, orientation programs, access to clinical nurse educators, access to expert and experienced registered nurses as preceptors, supervisors or mentors, and access to continuing professional development.
12. Transition to practice programs should be:
  - available in all health and aged care settings which employ registered nurses, such as acute care, mental health care, aged care, community care and primary health care;
  - available for registered nurses working in rural, remote and metropolitan settings, in both public and private health care sectors; and
  - funded by governments at all levels through relevant public, private and community health and aged care settings.
13. Clinical placements for registered nurse education, either undergraduate or post registration, require active and positive collaboration between the health and education sectors and sufficient resources to assist education providers and facilities in which clinical education occurs to deliver a quality learning experience.
14. Formal mechanisms to support dialogue, interaction and collaboration between the health and education sectors should continue to be developed and strengthened. Professorial units or similar arrangements which combine academic and practice based education and research, are supported.
15. Registered nurse educator positions are supported and mechanisms must be in place to assist them to maintain a safe and current level of practice in their areas of expertise.
16. Increased funding is required to support registered nurses to undertake post registration courses, at post graduate certificate, diploma, masters and doctoral level.
17. Post registration courses for nursing practice must be conducted by an agency<sup>2</sup> or combination of agencies that can ensure an appropriate knowledge and skills/practice balance in the student's learning experience.



ANMF Policy

18. Providers of post registration education for registered nurses should schedule course provision with consideration for the needs of employers and students and with a view to maximising flexibility and access.
19. Appropriate academic recognition for all post registration courses not conducted within the university sector should be available together with nationally consistent nomenclature, award levels and credit transfer arrangements.
20. The offering of scholarships by governments, employers and other nursing and health related organisations to support post registration education for registered nurses, is supported. Bonding to a particular employer or agency on completion of studies as a condition for the awarding of scholarships to nurses is not supported.

*endorsed June 1998*

*reviewed and re-endorsed February 1999*

*reviewed and re-endorsed May 2007*

*reviewed and re-endorsed May 2010*

*reviewed and re-endorsed November 2013*

*reviewed and re-endorsed May 2016*

References

1. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council 2012. *Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards*. Available at [http://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/ANMAC\\_RN\\_Accreditation\\_Standards\\_2012.pdf](http://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/ANMAC_RN_Accreditation_Standards_2012.pdf)
2. The term 'agency' includes, but is not limited to: health services, universities, professional organisations and private providers of education and training such as registered training organisations.