



## Nursing and midwifery education: continuing professional development

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) defines continuing professional development as *a life-long process of maintaining and enhancing the competencies of the nurse*. Continuing professional development is necessary for nurses and midwives to keep up to date with the rapidly changing health care environment.<sup>1</sup>

The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) also recognises that, to strengthen and advance the role of the midwife, a system of continuing professional development should be in place.<sup>2</sup>

The *Registration standard: Continuing professional development* developed by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)<sup>3</sup> states that continuing professional development is:

*the means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives.*

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

1. Continuing professional development is both an individual responsibility and the responsibility of the employing health or aged care provider. All nurses and midwives have a professional responsibility to maintain competence and to have a contemporary knowledge and skill base in order to provide best practice nursing and midwifery care.
2. All nurses and midwives must be provided with continuing professional development opportunities, relevant to their context of practice, and must be able to participate in continuing professional development and lifelong learning opportunities.
3. A broad range of formal and informal continuing professional development activities must be available to nurses and midwives which include: professional development; personal development; post graduate courses; re-training or skills transfer courses; and re-entry to the nursing and/or midwifery workforce and register.
4. Employers, including governments at all levels, benefit from the continuing professional development of nurses and midwives, and should contribute both financially and in kind to nurses and midwives accessing continuing professional development. For example: study and conference leave, staff replacement for nurses and midwives on study leave, and assistance with the cost of continuing professional development, such as through awarding scholarships.
5. All nurses and midwives are advised to maintain a portfolio of continuing professional development activities for the benefit of personal reflection and to comply with NMBA requirements.
6. Nurses and midwives should refer to, and be familiar with the NMBA *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*<sup>4</sup>, *Guidelines: Continuing professional development*<sup>5</sup>, *Fact sheet: Continuing professional development*<sup>6</sup> and *Policy: Exemptions from continuing professional development*.<sup>7</sup>

7. The ANMF is supportive of clauses negotiated in enterprise agreements for nurses and midwives that provide for access to professional development and associated entitlements, including access to paid professional development, conference and seminar leave, as well as access to a Continuing Professional Development allowance, the use of which is at the discretion of the individual nurse or midwife.

*endorsed August 2004*

*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. International Council of Nurses. 2010. *The ICN System for the Award of International Continuing Nursing Education Credits (ICNECs)*. Available at: <http://www.icn.ch>
2. International Confederation of Midwives (2014) Position Statement on Basic and Ongoing Education for Midwives. Available at: <http://www.internationalmidwives.org/who-we-are/policy-and-practice/icm-position-statements-general/>
3. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2016. *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/News/2016-02-01-revised-standards.aspx>
4. Ibid
5. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2016. *Guidelines: Continuing professional development*. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/News/2016-02-01-revised-standards.aspx>
6. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2016. *Fact sheet: Continuing professional development*. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/News/2016-02-01-revised-standards.aspx>
7. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2016. *Policy: Exemptions from continuing professional development*. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/News/2016-02-01-revised-standards.aspx>