

## Fact sheet

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Updated September 2025

### Registration standard: General registration for internationally qualified registered nurses

#### Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) carries out functions as set by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). The NMBA regulates the practice of nursing and midwifery in Australia, and one of its key roles is to protect the public. The NMBA does this by developing registration standards, professional codes, guidelines and standards for practice which together establish the requirements for the professional and safe practice of nurses and midwives in Australia.

The new **Registration standard: General registration for internationally qualified registered nurses** (the registration standard) offers two additional pathways for eligible internationally qualified registered nurses (IQRNs) to register in Australia.

The following questions reflect common queries about the new registration standard.

#### Who is this registration standard for?

This standard is for internationally qualified registered nurses (IQRNs) seeking general registration in Australia.

#### Who is eligible for this registration standard?

There are two cohorts of IQRNs who may be eligible to apply for general registration under this standard.

Pathway 1 – IQRNs who:

- hold a relevant nursing qualification from one of the NMBA-approved comparable jurisdictions, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, United States, Canada (British Columbia and Ontario), Singapore and Spain, and
- who have practised for at least 1,800 hours since 1 January 2017.

Pathway 2 – IQRNs who since 1 January 2017 have:

- completed a relevant nursing qualification not from one of the NMBA-approved comparable jurisdictions, and
- successfully passed the examination process for internationally qualified registered nurses that led to general registration as a registered nurse in one of the NMBA-approved comparable jurisdictions, and
- practised for at least 1,800 hours in one of the NMBA-approved comparable jurisdictions.

#### I completed a CBT exam in the UK in a specific area of practice e.g. mental health, disability, or paediatric nursing. Can I use this to apply under Pathway 2?

No. The NMBA requires candidates under Pathway 2 to hold *general registration* as a registered nurse in an NMBA-approved comparable jurisdiction. In the UK there are four fields of nursing practice (adult, children, learning disabilities, mental health). You must complete the CBT exam and hold registration in the field of adult nursing to be eligible for Pathway 2.

IQRNs who complete the CBT exam and hold registration in the UK in one of the other fields are not eligible under the registration standard.

### **What happens if the standard doesn't apply to me or if I cannot meet all the requirements?**

If the standard doesn't apply to you or you cannot meet all the qualification and eligibility requirements, you will need to complete the existing [assessment process for internationally qualified nurses and midwives](#).

IQRNs with substantially equivalent qualifications or those holding a sole qualification in mental health nursing are not eligible to apply for general registration under this standard and will need apply via the NMBA's existing IQNM assessment process.

### **What happens if I have started the IQRN assessment process and I think the standard applies to me?**

The NMBA has developed the [Pathways diagram for IQRN registration standard eligibility](#) to help IQRN candidates determine if they are able to meet the requirements of the registration standard.

For candidates with an open portfolio as at 23 April 2025, you will have received email communication regarding your next steps if you meet the eligibility requirements of this standard.

### **How does Self-Check help determine my eligibility under the registration standard?**

After creating a new practitioner account via the [Ahpra portal](#), you will be prompted to complete a Self-Check.

The Self-Check is a series of questions about your qualification(s), registration history and practice experience. Once you complete the Self-Check you will be assigned a stream, which may include one of the new pathways within the registration standard.

**Important:** Eligibility for the registration standard will only be confirmed following a full Ahpra assessment of all required documents.

### **Why has the NMBA developed this new registration standard?**

The existing pathways for registered nurses (RNs) whose qualification does not meet the NMBA's requirements require that they successfully complete a multiple-choice examination and a clinical examination or that they upgrade their qualification to one that meets the NMBA requirements.

The standard streamlines the assessment and registration process for eligible experienced IQRNs who may have qualified in other countries but have registered and practised as a registered nurse in an NMBA-approved comparable jurisdiction.

By removing the need for NMBA examinations or qualification upgrades, the standard provides greater flexibility for eligible experienced IQRNs to become registered in Australia, saving time and costs for these practitioners, and aligns with the key reform priorities outlined in the Australian Government [Final Report of the Independent review of Australia's regulatory settings relating to overseas health practitioners](#).

### **What is an NMBA-approved comparable jurisdiction?**

An NMBA-approved international regulatory jurisdiction (country, state or province) is one which has comparable regulatory approaches, regulatory standards for education and registration, regulatory processes, and procedures for the registration of IQRNs. A current list of the NMBA-approved comparable jurisdictions is published on the NMBA website.

### **How did NMBA decide on the current list of approved comparable jurisdictions?**

The current list of NMBA-approved comparable jurisdictions is founded on strong evidentiary work and benchmarking commissioned by the International Nurse Regulatory Collaborative (INRC) from 2018 to 2023, of which the NMBA is a member.

### Why is New Zealand not listed as an NMBA-approved comparable jurisdiction?

New Zealand is not listed because experienced IQRNs who hold registration with the Nursing Council of New Zealand are already eligible to apply for registration in Australia under the [Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act](#).

### Why is there a requirement of at least 1,800 practice hours in an NMBA-approved comparable jurisdiction?

The NMBA regulates the practice of nursing and midwifery in Australia, and one of its key roles is to protect the public. The requirement of at least 1,800 practice hours in an NMBA-approved comparable jurisdiction helps ensure eligible experienced IQRNs:

- meet the professional standards, criteria, processes, and procedures to obtain and maintain their registration in a jurisdiction with regulatory standards for education and registration, regulatory approaches, processes and procedures that are comparable to Australia, and
- have had sufficient opportunity to consolidate their professional practice in a jurisdiction where standards for nursing practice align with those expected in Australia.

The 1,800 practice hours is approximately equivalent to working one year full-time in Australia – calculated at 38 hours per week over 48 weeks (allowing for an average of 4 weeks of leave). This aligns with the accepted maximum weekly hours of work set by the Australian Government's *Fair Work National Employment Standards*.

### Why do I need to have completed my initial nursing qualification on or after 1 January 2017 to be eligible under Pathway 2?

The NMBA has set this date limit to ensure a qualification used to support a registration application under the standard reflect recent education, teaching and practice standards. By setting this date limit, the NMBA can be assured that an applicant's primary qualification is current and relevant to today's clinical environment. This is in line with the NMBA's mandate to protect the public by registering practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise safely.

If you meet all other criteria under Pathway 2 but obtained your primary qualification *before* 1 January 2017, you will not be eligible under the registration standard.

### Why am I required to have completed 1,800 practice hours in an NMBA-approved comparable jurisdiction on or after 1 January 2017, and not before?

The date of 1 January 2017 is based on research commissioned by the International Nurse Regulator Collaborative (INRC), which found that comparable jurisdictions had implemented rigorous assessment processes for nurses from this time. This assures the NMBA that your practice experience was subject to thorough assessments and practice standards

### I have dual registration (e.g. mental health and adult nursing). Am I eligible under the registration standard?

You may be eligible if:

- your registration includes general registration as a registered nurse (adult)
- you have practised as a registered nurse (adult) for at least 1,800 hours in a comparable jurisdiction since 1 January 2017; and
- you meet all other requirements of the pathway.

If your registration is limited to a **sole area of practice** (e.g. mental health only), or you do not have sufficient practice hours as general adult nurse, you are unlikely to be eligible under this standard.

### For more information

- [Internationally qualified nurses and midwives](#) information on the NMBA website
- Visit [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au) under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (in Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)

### Document history

**Approved by:** Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

**Date commenced:** April 2025

**Next review due:** April 2028

**Policy history:** Is this a new policy? **Y**

Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? **Y**

If so which version **1.1**

Does this policy replace another policy with a different title? **N**

Approval date	Version	Reason for change
January 2025	v1.0	Advance copy
April 2025	v1.1	Updated as registration standard is now in effect and editorial changes to provide greater clarity
September 2025	v1.2	Addition of questions on regulatory examinations and qualification date threshold