

Policy

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Multiple-choice question (MCQ) examinations

Purpose

This document sets out the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) policy on the multiple-choice question (MCQ) examinations as part of the outcomes-based assessment (OBA) pathway of the internationally qualified nurses and midwives (IQNM) assessment process.

Scope

The OBA comprises a multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination and an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). There are separate MCQ examinations and OSCEs for internationally qualified registered nurses and midwives (IQNMs) seeking registration in Australia as a registered nurse (RN), enrolled nurse (EN) or midwife.

Only internationally qualified nurses with relevant qualifications from countries where there are two divisions of nursing can complete the EN MCQ examination and EN OSCE.

This policy applies to the following activities for all RN, EN and midwifery MCQ examination candidates:

1. Prior successful completion of the MCQ examination by a candidate for the profession in which they intend to register
2. Authorisation of candidates to sit the MCQ examination, and
3. Releasing results to candidates.

Policy

1. Prior successful completion of the relevant MCQ examination

RN MCQ examination

The RN MCQ examination is the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) develops and administers the NCLEX-RN through Pearson VUE.

In order to be eligible for registration as a registered nurse in the United States and Canada, both domestic and international candidates must pass the NCLEX-RN. Some candidates in the NMBA's IQNM assessment process may have therefore already passed the NCLEX-RN for registration in the United States or Canada.

Once a candidate completes the Self-check and Orientation Part 1, they must establish a portfolio. At this stage, candidates are asked if they have previously passed the NCLEX-RN (for registration in the United States or Canada) within the past 10 years. If a candidate passed the NCLEX-RN more than 10 years from the date the candidate establishes their portfolio, they must re-take the NCLEX-RN as part of NMBA's OBA.

If the candidate can provide evidence that they have previously passed the NCLEX-RN within 10 years from the date the candidate establishes their portfolio, the candidate does not need to re-take the NCLEX-RN. The candidate can then progress directly to the RN OSCE.

At the registration application stage, the evidence provided by the candidate of previously passing the NCLEX-RN must be verified by the original nursing regulatory body who made the candidate eligible to sit the NCLEX-RN. If the results cannot be verified, the registration application must be withdrawn.

Note, a candidate who has previously passed the NCLEX-RN can only progress to the RN OSCE, they cannot progress to the EN or midwifery OSCEs.

EN MCQ examination

A candidate seeking registration as an EN in Australia who has previously passed the Nursing Council of New Zealand EN State Final Examination within the past 10 years and can provide verifiable evidence of that, does not have to re-take the EN MCQ examination as part of the NMBA's OBA. These candidates can progress directly to the EN OSCE. If a candidate passed the Nursing Council of New Zealand EN State Final Examination more than 10 years from the date the candidate establishes their portfolio, they must re-take the EN MCQ as part of NMBA's OBA.

Note, a candidate who has previously passed the Nursing Council of New Zealand EN State Final Examination can only progress to the EN OSCE, they cannot progress to the RN or midwifery OSCEs.

Midwifery MCQ examination

The midwifery MCQ examination is delivered by Aspeq through the Quadrant examination system.

The MCQ examination is the same examination as the Midwifery Council of New Zealand's (MCNZ) National Midwifery Examination (NME) modified for internationally qualified midwives (modified NME).

Once a candidate completes the Self-check and Orientation Part 1, they must establish a portfolio. At this stage, candidates are asked if they have previously passed MCNZ's modified NME since in 2020.

A candidate seeking registration as a midwife in Australia who has previously passed the modified NME since in 2020, does not have to re-take the MCQ examination as part of the NMBA's OBA. These candidates can progress directly to the midwifery OSCE.

Note, a candidate who has previously passed the modified NME can only progress to the midwifery OSCE, they cannot progress to the RN or EN OSCEs.

2. Authorisation of candidates to sit the MCQ examination

RN MCQ examination

Once a candidate has registered with Pearson VUE to sit the NCLEX-RN and Ahpra has made the candidate eligible, Pearson VUE sends an Authorisation To Test (ATT) e-mail to the candidate which contains the candidate's unique ID number and an authorisation number that the candidate must have in order to schedule their examination sitting.

Each ATT e-mail is valid for a designated time period. The NMBA's designated ATT validity period is 90 calendar days.

In line with NCSBN's policy, candidates must test during the time period stated on their ATT email and extensions to the ATT period will not be granted for any reason. If the candidate does not test within the designated time period, the ATT and the registration with Pearson VUE will expire and Pearson VUE will not allow the candidate to schedule an examination. In order to have another opportunity to test, the candidate must reregister with Pearson VUE and pay another examination fee. The NMBA must then re-confirm the candidate's eligibility.

EN MCQ examination

Once candidates are deemed eligible to sit the EN MCQ Examination, the IQNM exam team will email the candidates a copy of the EN Examination Form. The candidates must then register to sit by completing the form and pay the examination fee for the EN MCQ Examination. In the form, candidates must provide relevant details required to process the examination fee payment.

Once paid, IQNM Exam team will send candidates a Booking Selection email. Candidates can now progress to schedule their examination by replying to the Booking Selection email. For more details, please refer to the EN MCQ Candidate Handbook.

Midwifery MCQ examination

Once Ahpra authorises the candidate to sit the midwifery MCQ examination, the candidate must register with Aspeq. Once registered, Ahpra must confirm to Aspeq that the candidate is eligible to sit the examination and Ahpra must verify the candidate's photo identification provided to Aspeq as the same document the candidate provided to Ahpra.

Once Ahpra has verified the candidate, the candidate can book their examination sitting.

3. Releasing results to candidates.

RN MCQ examination

The NMBA does not allow candidates that sit the NCLEX-RN as part of the NMBA's IQNM assessment process to access the early 'unofficial' results via the NCLEX Quick Results service. Only Ahpra will release results to candidates once they have been received. Ahpra will release results within six (6) weeks of the examination sitting date.

EN MCQ examination

Once candidates sit the EN MCQ examination, results for all candidates will be emailed directly from the IQNM exam team to the candidates' email addresses as supplied in the IQNM dashboard. Ahpra will release results within six (6) weeks of the examination sitting date.

Midwifery MCQ examination

Once candidates sit the MCQ examination for internationally qualified midwives and their results are ready for release, the candidates are able to access their individual results via Aspeq's candidate portal. Ahpra is also able to access candidates' results via the administration portal.

Ahpra will receive a candidate's results and authorise Aspeq to release the results to the candidate. This gives an opportunity for Ahpra to review the results and where a candidate passes the examination, provide the candidate with information and access to the next step of the OBA (the midwifery OSCE). Ahpra will release results within six (6) weeks of the examination sitting date.

Definitions and abbreviations

IQNM assessment process is the NMBA's process for assessing IQNM. IQNM who are assessed as holding a qualification that is substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an Australian approved qualification (and who meet the mandatory registration standards), will be eligible to apply for registration. These IQNM will need to complete the Self-check and Orientation (Part 1) before they can apply for registration

IQNM who are assessed as holding a qualification that is relevant but not substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an Australian approved qualification (and who meet the mandatory registration standards), will be required to successfully complete an outcomes-based assessment (OBA) prior to being eligible to apply for registration. These IQNM will need to complete the Self-check, Orientation (Part 1), Establish portfolio, MCQ examination and the OSCE before they can apply for registration.

Associated documents

MCQ candidate handbooks:

- *Registered Nurse MCQ Examination - Candidate Handbook*
- *Enrolled nurse MCQ Examination - Candidate Handbook*
- *Midwives MCQ Examination - Candidate Handbook*

Aspeq test centre policies and procedures

NCLEX Candidate Bulletin (including NCLEX Candidate Rules)

NMBA Policy Multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) delivery

References

NCSBN website – 'Authorisation to Test'. Accessed 01 October 2019

NCLEX Member Board Manual - Chapter 2: Candidate Registration, Eligibility, ATT & Scheduling

Document Control

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