

IQNM policy reference guide

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Document history

Version	Author title	Date	Summary of changes and comments
0.1	IQNM Senior Project	18/12/2018	Initial draft of document
1.0	IQNM Senior Project Officer	19/03/2019	Inclusion of NMBA decision regarding policy intent of criterion 2
1.1	Policy Officer Nursing and Midwifery	3/12/2019	Inclusion of relevant NMBA decisions
1.2	Policy Manager, Nursing and Midwifery	04/06/2021	Inclusion of relevant NMBA decisions and update of criterion 1
1.3	Executive Officer, Nursing and Midwifery	26/08/2021	Update and full review
1.4	Executive Officer, Nursing and Midwifery	25/11/2021	Update to Solely qualified RN and adjustment to requirements set out under Guiding principles Criterion 2 and 3
1.5	Senior Policy and Project Officer	14/09/2022	Inclusion of relevant NMBA decisions regarding documentary requirements for ELS and academic transcripts with related update to criterion 2
1.6	Policy manager, nursing and midwifery	19/01/2023	Inclusion of relevant NMBA decisions regarding Stream B pathway one candidates
1.7	Policy manager, nursing and midwifery	31 May 2023	Inclusion of NMBA decision regarding streamlining registration for internationally qualified midwives
1.8	Policy manager, nursing and midwifery	28 September 2023	Inclusion of relevant NMBA decision regarding increasing the required clinical practice hours for pathway one candidates
2.0	Specialist Accreditation Advisor – IQNM, nursing and midwifery	25 July 2024	<p>Inclusion of relevant NMBA decisions regarding remove conditions for supervised practice for sole qualified IQRNs; UK pre-registration qualifications in adult nursing; pre-registration postgraduate diplomas and dual qualifications in nursing and midwifery</p> <p>Updates to reflect Advisory Committee and Ahpra IQNM team feedback on outdated content, re-order content and increase plain language to improve clarity</p>

3.0	Specialist Accreditation Advisor – IQNM, nursing and midwifery	27 February 2025	Inclusion of relevant NMBA decisions July – December 2024 Updates to clarify governance of relevant policy and decision-making
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NMBA Approvals

Version	Date
2.0	25 July 2024
3.0	27 February 2025

Distribution

Ahpra International registration team (IQNM team)
 Ahpra IQNM Advisory Committee members
 Ahpra IQNM Internal Review Panel Members
 Ahpra Program management team (process specialists)
 Ahpra Qualification assessment policy team

Glossary of abbreviations

IQNM	Internationally qualified nurse or midwife
IQRN	Internationally qualified registered nurse
IRP	Ahpra IQNM Internal Review Panel
National Law	Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory
NMAC	Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee (Assessment of Overseas Qualified Nurses and Midwives)
NMBA	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council (UK)
UK	United Kingdom

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Introduction

To work as a nurse or midwife in Australia, individuals must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)¹. The NMBA is governed by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (National Law).

The National Law requires internationally qualified nurses and midwives (IQNMs) who want to register in Australia to qualify through one of the section 53 pathways and meet the requirements of the NMBA mandatory registration standards to be eligible for registration².

The Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee (Assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives) (NMAC) oversees the pre-registration assessment of the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes of internationally qualified nurses and midwives (IQNM) wanting to register in Australia. The pre-registration assessment process includes the following stages:

- Self-Check
- Orientation Part 1
- Portfolio
- Multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination
- Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

Qualifications held by IQNMs who want to apply for registration in Australia (IQNM qualifications) are assessed during the self-check and portfolio stages.

The NMBA approves policies for assessment of IQNM qualifications, as part of its section 35 functions. NMAC monitors the assessment of IQNM qualifications and makes recommendations and gives advice to the NMBA on relevant policies and related matters, as part of its section 42 functions. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) establishes and administers efficient procedures for assessing IQNM qualifications in accordance with the NMBA policies, and supports NMAC's oversight of these assessments as part of its section 25 functions.

This document provides internal procedural guidance on application of relevant NMBA policies to assessment of IQNM qualifications. The footnotes identify the NMBA agenda items for each policy. The document is a guide only and is intended to explain application of rules in the published policy framework. The document does not create any additional rules or requirements that must be followed by decision-makers when assessing IQNM qualifications.

The document is reviewed at least twice each year and updated as required to provide internal guidance on relevant NMBA policy changes.

Who will use this document?

Ahpra staff refer to this document when they establish and administer procedures for assessing IQNM qualifications in accordance with the NMBA policies.

The Ahpra International registration team (IQNM team) may refer to this document when they implement procedures to assess IQNM qualifications against the qualifications assessment criteria and assign IQNMs to one of the streams described in this document.

The Nursing and Midwifery Policy team and the Ahpra Qualifications Assessment Policy team may refer to this document when they provide advice to the IQNM team about assessment of IQNM qualifications.

The guidance in this document may also be used by:

- NMAC members
- Ahpra IQNM Advisory Committee members
- Ahpra IQNM Internal Review Panel members

¹ This is a National Law requirement and information is published at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/IQNM/Before-you-apply.aspx>

² This is a National Law requirement and information is published at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/IQNM/Before-you-apply/Meeting-the-registration-requirements.aspx#>

when they consider issues related to assessment of IQNM qualifications.

If Ahpra staff or NMAC members propose not to apply the guidance in this document to assess an IQNM qualification, they must contact the Executive Officer, Nursing and Midwifery (or delegate) before progressing the assessment.

Who can approve amendments to this document?

Any substantive amendments to incorporate relevant policy changes must be approved by the NMBA. Refinements that enhance clarity of the guidance but do not change the relevant policy may be approved by Ahpra's IQNM Advisory Committee.

Policy statement - NMBA qualification assessment criteria (approved by NMBA July 2018³)

IQNM qualifications are assessed against the requirements of three criteria to assign IQNMs to one of three streams before they apply for registration. The pre-registration IQNM assessment aligns with NMAC's accreditation functions and the streams align with the pathways to qualify for general registration described in Part 7 (section 53) of the National Law. The stream assigned is dependent on which criteria an IQNM's qualification meets. The stream may be based on assessment of a single qualification, or combination of qualifications.

IQNM assessment framework for (RN/EN/MW) – qualification assessment criteria ⁴	
Criterion	What the criterion requires
1 - Qualification recognised for registration	The qualification was recognised by a statutory registration/licensing body for registration as a registered nurse or enrolled nurse or midwife, in the country the qualification was received and the IQNM has met any pre-registration examination requirements. Where there is only one level of nurse registration in the country, the qualification will be assessed at the registered nurse level.
2 – Qualification subject to quality assurance and accredited	<p>At the time the qualification was received as a registered nurse or enrolled nurse or midwife, the qualification was subject to quality assurance and recognised or accredited by a body external to the education institution and based on published accreditation standards.</p> <p>The accreditation standards for registered nurse or enrolled nurse or midwife education must include all the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contemporary approaches to education• institutional resources (staffing and facilities)• evidenced based and contemporary nursing practice or• evidence based and contemporary midwifery practice• workplace experience across a variety of healthcare settings. and• medication management that addresses safe and effective use of medicines. <p>The published processes for reviewing programs/providers against the accreditation standards must include all the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an assessment conducted by an individual or team with appropriate expertise in education and in registered nurse or enrolled nurse or midwife practice, and• regular review of the program of study such as annual reporting or cyclic re-accreditation.
3 - Academic level of qualification	The academic level of the qualification is comparable to, at a minimum, an Australian bachelor's degree at level 7 (registered nurse or midwife) or Australian Diploma at level 5 (enrolled nurse) of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

³ 2018-07 NMBA Item 2.2.3 – Review of qualification assessment criteria for the transition to the Outcomes Based Assessment model for IQNMs registration under the National Law

⁴ The NMBA established these requirements based on tribunal matters related to qualification assessment under the National Law. They are published at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/IQNM/Before-you-apply/Meeting-the-registration-requirements.aspx#>

Internal procedural guidance on assessing IQNM qualifications against the qualification assessment criteria - guiding principles for assessment of qualifications

Criterion 1: Qualification recognised for registration

For a qualification to meet Criterion 1, there is evidence it was recognised by a statutory registration/licensing body in the country where it was issued, for registration in each profession that corresponds to the IQNM's portfolio/application (registered nurse or enrolled nurse or midwife). There is also evidence that the IQNM passed a pre-registration examination where applicable (for example, USA, Canada, and the Philippines).

Criterion 2: Quality assurance and accreditation

For a qualification to meet Criterion 2, there is advice from the Qualifications Assessment Policy team that the quality assurance/accreditation of the qualification, published standards for nurse/midwife/enrolled nurse education and published accreditation process meet the elements specified in criterion 2. This may be existing advice from a previous qualification assessment or instructions provided to the IQNM team; or new advice in response to a request from the IQNM team.

Criterion 3: Academic level of qualification

For a qualification to meet Criterion 3, there is evidence the academic level is comparable to, at a minimum, an Australian bachelor's degree at level 7 (registered nurse or midwife) or Australian Diploma at level 5 (enrolled nurse) of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). This may be existing information from a previous qualification assessment or page 10 of this document. If there is no existing information, evidence about the comparable academic level of a qualification is identified by using:

- (i) the Country Education Profiles (CEP) [published online](#) by the Australian Government Department of Education, and/or
- (ii) published information about the qualifications framework in the IQNM's country of education; and/or
- (iii) published AQF specifications for an Australian bachelor's degree or Australian Diploma.

If evidence about the comparable level cannot be identified in one of these three ways, criterion 3 is recorded as 'not assessable'.

Policy statement - Comparable academic level of 3 year UK diploma level nursing qualifications⁵

Three year pre-registration diploma level nursing qualifications issued in the UK and accredited by the UKCC / Nursing and Midwifery Council (UK) are assessed as if they are comparable to an Australian Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree at AQF level 6 for the purposes of Criterion 3 if the IQNM started their studies before 2013. This includes UK diploma level qualifications in mental health nursing, childrens/paediatric nursing or learning and disability nursing if the IQNM started their studies before 2013.

Policy statement - Comparable academic level of pre-Bologna 'Diplomado' qualifications issued in Spain⁶

Pre-Bologna 'Diplomado' qualifications issued in Spain that are titled "Diplomado/a en Enfermería" are assessed as comparable to an Australian Bachelor degree at AQF level 7, because they are equivalent to an EQF 6 in the post Bologna framework.

Policy statement - Comparable academic level of 3 year diploma level nursing qualifications issued in Singapore⁷

Three year pre-registration diploma level nursing qualifications issued in Singapore and accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board for the purposes of registration as a nurse are comparable to an Australian Advanced Diploma at AQF level 6 for the purposes of Criterion 3.

⁵ 2015-01 NMBA Item 8.2.1 – Qualifications assessment – UK

⁶ 2015-05 IQNM PAC Item 3.2 - IQNM Spanish-educated nurses

⁷ 2025-11 NMBA Item 3.5 – IQNM policy - confirming approach to assessing academic level of relevant qualifications from comparable jurisdictions

Policy statement - Comparable academic level of associate degree nursing qualifications issued in the United States of America⁷

Associate degree nursing qualifications issued in the United States of America (USA) and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) against standards for registered nurse education are comparable to an Australian associate degree at AQF level 6 for the purposes of Criterion 3.

Internal procedural guidance - Assessment of whether an IQNM qualification is 'based on similar competencies to an approved qualification'⁸

An IQNM's qualification is assessed against the threshold requirements of the three qualification criteria before considering if a specific assessment is required to check if the IQNM could be assigned to stream A (instead of stream B) because the qualification is likely to be 'based on similar competencies' to an approved qualification (second limb of section 53(b) of the National Law).

It is expected that only a negligible number of portfolios may need this type of specific assessment. For example, to check if assignment to stream B is a proportionate regulatory response. The specific assessment may be completed as part of a review of portfolio outcome under the relevant IQNM policy.

Internal procedural guidance - Assignment of IQNMs to streams based of qualifications assessment

IQNM qualifications are assessed to assign IQNMs to one of three streams. The policies underpinning the streams align with the pathways to qualify for general registration described in section 53 of the National Law. The stream assigned is dependent on assessment of the IQNM's qualification against the qualification assessment criteria. The stream may be based on assessment of a single qualification, or a combination of qualifications. The approach to assessment of a combination of qualifications is described in more detail in the section on assessment of composite qualifications.

If an IQNM has a single qualification, or combination of qualifications, that are assessed as meeting all three criteria, the IQNM is qualified for general registration and assigned to **Stream A**. Subject to applying for registration and meeting all other registration standards, they are eligible to be registered.

If an IQNM has a single qualification, or combination of qualifications, that are assessed as:

- meeting criteria 1 and 3, or
- meeting criteria 1 and 2, and are assessed as comparable to an Australian Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree (at AQF 6) for registered nurses and midwives or Australian Certificate IV (at AQF 4) for enrolled nurses

the IQNM is assigned to **Stream B**. IQNMs assigned to **Stream B** need to complete the outcomes-based assessment to qualify for general registration, unless they meet the requirements of the *Experience-based assessment pathway for Internationally qualified registered nurses*, the *Registration standard: General registration for internationally qualified registered nurses*⁹ or the *Experience-based assessment pathway for Internationally qualified midwives*.

If an IQNM has a single qualification, or combination of qualifications, that are assessed as:

- meeting criteria 1, or
- meeting criteria 1 and 2,
and
- are assessed as comparable to an Australian Diploma (at AQF 5) or lower for registered nurses and midwives or comparable to an academic level lower than an Australian Certificate IV (at AQF 4) for enrolled nurses

⁸ 2016-12 NMBA Item 4.1 - Assessing Internationally Qualified Nurses and Midwives under the National Law – Assessment 'Based on similar competencies to an approved qualification' under the National Law
2017-12 NMBA Item 2.2.3 - IQNM processing – refined process of assessing IQNM applications under section 53 of the National Law

⁹ Information published at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards/General-registration-for-IQRN.aspx>

the IQNM is assigned to **Stream C**. If an IQNM is assigned to **Stream C** and they still want to register in Australia, they are advised to upgrade their current qualifications to qualify for general registration.

Policy statement - Experience-based assessment pathway for Internationally qualified registered nurses

Registered nurses with a relevant entry to practice qualification may be registered without completing the outcomes-based assessment if:

- their entry to practice qualification was **completed in** and led to registration as a nurse in any of the following countries/provinces **only**:

- United Kingdom
- Republic of Ireland
- United States
- Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Ontario
- Singapore
- Spain

and

- they have a minimum of 1,800 hours practice as a registered nurse in any of the countries/provinces listed above

and

- they meet all the NMBA's mandatory registration standards.

This policy ceases when the *Registration standard: General registration for internationally qualified registered nurses* takes effect.

Policy statement - Experience-based assessment pathway for Internationally qualified midwives

Registered midwives with a relevant entry to practice qualification may be registered without completing the outcomes-based assessment if:

- their entry to practice qualification was **completed in** and led to registration as a midwife in one of the following countries **only**:

- United Kingdom
- Republic of Ireland

and

- they meet all the NMBA's mandatory registration standards.

Policy statement - Assessment of IQNM qualifications for enrolled nursing streams

If the IQNM qualification was issued in a country where two divisions of nurse (corresponding to Australian enrolled nurse and registered nurse divisions) are regulated/registered, the IQNM's qualification is assessed against the criteria applicable to the corresponding Australian division— either enrolled nurse or registered nurse.

If the IQNM qualification was issued in a country where only one division of nurse is regulated/registered, the IQNM's portfolio is assessed against the criteria applicable to the Australian registered nurse division.

Policy statement - Assessment of IQNM qualifications for both nursing and midwifery¹⁰

An IQNM's qualification, or combination of qualifications can be assessed as both a nursing qualification portfolio and a midwifery qualification portfolio if:

¹⁰ 2021-05 NMBA item 3.2 - IQNM policy reference guide update

- they were issued in a country where nursing and midwifery are regulated as separate professions (evidence of this is usually that there is a register of nurses and a register of midwives), and
- they enabled the IQNM to register in their country of practice as both a registered nurse and as a midwife.

Subject to these two requirements being met, if the IQNM is registered as both a nurse and a midwife in their country of practice (dual registered) and wants to register in both professions in Australia, the IQNM's qualification portfolio will be:

- assessed against the three criteria as a registered nursing qualification to assign the IQNM to the relevant stream for the nursing profession, and
- assessed against the three criteria as a midwifery qualification to assign the IQNM to the relevant stream for the midwifery profession. Assessment against criterion 2 as a midwifery qualification uses the standards for midwifery education (specific midwifery accreditation/competency standards) in the country where the qualification was issued. If there are not any standards for midwifery education, criterion 2 is not met.

A single international qualification that enabled the IQNM to register in their country of practice as both a registered nurse and as a midwife can be assessed as both a nursing qualification portfolio and a midwifery qualification portfolio if the IQNM's studies are comparable to an Australian double degree in nursing and midwifery. Assessment of this type of qualification portfolio against the three criteria for the midwifery profession checks whether the IQNM's studies included content specifically focused on the development of midwifery knowledge, skills and practice comparable to an Australian double degree qualification including a midwife-led model of care, with collaboration, consultation and referral to other services and health practitioners as required.¹¹

Policy statement – assessment of composite qualification portfolios¹²

If the portfolio requires assessment of more than one qualification to assign the IQNM to a stream for the portfolio profession, it may be assessed as a “composite qualification portfolio”.

A **primary qualification** is any qualification that makes the IQNM eligible for registration as a nurse or midwife in the country of education.

A **subsequent qualification** is any additional qualification in nursing or midwifery other than the primary qualification. Subsequent qualifications can be completed before or after the primary qualification and can contribute to meeting any criterion not satisfied by the primary qualification.

Internal procedural guidance – assessment of composite qualification portfolios¹³

Any **primary** qualification that forms part of a composite qualification portfolio assessment will

- meet criterion 1 in the portfolio profession
- may meet criterion 2
- may meet criterion 3

Any **subsequent** qualification that forms part of a composite qualification portfolio can be used to meet criteria 2 and/or 3 in the same portfolio profession as the primary qualification if it:

- includes learning outcomes and/or research **directly related** to practice in the same portfolio profession as the primary qualification - nursing or midwifery practice

Some **subsequent** qualifications may make the IQNM eligible for registration in a different country to the primary qualification – that is, some subsequent qualifications may meet criterion 1.

¹¹ 2024-04 NMBA item 4.1 – IQNM – dual nursing and midwifery qualifications

¹² 2014-06 NMBA Item 8.8.1 - IQNM Assessment Model

¹³ 2015-02 NMBA Item 8.4.1 - IQNM enhancements to composite qualifications policy

If an IQNM's primary qualification is assessed as comparable to an Australian Diploma (at AQF 5) or Australian Advanced Diploma/Associate Degree (at AQF 6) and they hold subsequent qualifications, all qualifications may be assessed as a whole (composite qualification portfolio).

The *Internal procedural guidance - Assignment of IQNMs* applies to assessment of a composite qualification portfolio.

Internal procedural guidance - composite qualifications and policy intent of criterion 2¹⁴

If an IQNM's composite qualification portfolio is assessed as meeting criteria 1 and 3, or meets criterion 1 and is assessed as comparable to an Australian Advanced Diploma/Associate degree (RN & MW) or Australian Certificate IV (EN), consideration should be given to the following factors to determine whether the IQNM could be assigned to Stream A or Stream B despite the primary qualification not meeting criterion 2:

a) whether the program of study leading to any subsequent qualification/s in nursing (if a nursing qualification portfolio) or midwifery (if a midwifery qualification portfolio):

- i) required the IQNM to hold (or to have previously held) registration as a nurse or midwife before enrolling in the program;
- ii) was subject to regular review within a documented system of external quality assurance including institutional resources (staffing and facilities)

b) the primary and any subsequent qualification/s in nursing (if a nursing qualification portfolio) or midwifery (if a midwifery qualification portfolio) when considered together, addressed the following to ensure safe and competent practice in Australia:

- contemporary approaches to education
- evidenced based and contemporary nursing and/or midwifery practice
- workplace experience across a variety of healthcare settings, and
- medication management that addresses safe and effective use of medicines.

Consideration of portfolios applying the above policy approach will be referred to Ahpra's IQNM Internal Review Panel (IRP) to provide advice to the IQNM Registration team on whether, despite the primary qualification not meeting criterion 2 but having regard for the objectives of the National Law, it is a proportionate regulatory outcome for the IQNM to be assigned to Stream A (if the portfolio is assessed as meeting criteria 1 and 3) or Stream B (if the portfolio is assessed as meeting criterion 1 and as comparable to an Australian Advanced Diploma/Associate degree (RN & MW) or Australian Certificate IV (EN)). The Qualifications assessment policy team, in consultation with the Senior Regulatory Advisor (IQNM), will prepare a background paper for the IRP on application of the above policy approach to the IQNM's qualifications.

The Qualifications assessment policy team does not have authority to determine whether the IQNM should be assigned to Stream A or Stream B despite the primary qualification not meeting criterion 2.

Policy statement - Assessment of pre-registration qualifications in adult nursing issued in the United Kingdom¹⁵

The NMBA considers pre-registration qualifications that are:

- approved by the United Kingdom Nursing and Midwifery Council for registration in the field of adult nursing, and
- comparable to, at a minimum, an Australian Bachelor Degree at level 7 of the Australian Qualifications Framework, including pre-registration postgraduate diplomas

to be substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an NMBA approved qualification.

¹⁴ 2019-02 NMBA item 2.2.4 – IQNM proposed policy approach for criterion 3 under the interim qualification assessment model

¹⁵ 2024-05 NMBA OOS item - IQRN – pre-registration qualifications in adult nursing

Internal procedural guidance - Assessment of pre-registration qualifications in adult nursing issued in the United Kingdom

Any IQNM who holds a pre-registration qualification in the field of adult nursing issued in the United Kingdom that meets all criteria is assigned to Stream A. This includes IQNMs who hold postgraduate diplomas in adult nursing, regardless of any other qualifications held by the IQNM.

Policy statement - Assessment of pre-registration qualifications in other fields of nursing issued in the United Kingdom¹⁶

The NMBA considers pre-registration qualifications approved by the United Kingdom Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) for registration in the field of mental health, paediatric or disability nursing that are comparable to, at a minimum, an Australian Bachelor Degree at level 7 of the Australian Qualifications Framework, including pre-registration postgraduate diplomas, are substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an NMBA approved qualification. This is because the knowledge and skills required for all registered nurses, regardless of their field of practice, are comparable to the standards for practice for a registered nurse in Australia.

Internal procedural guidance - Assessment of pre-registration qualifications in other fields of nursing issued in the United Kingdom

Any IQRN who holds:

- a pre-registration postgraduate diploma in mental health, paediatric/children's nursing or disability issued in the United Kingdom
- that was recognised by the NMC for registration in the relevant field

is assigned to Stream A because the NMBA considers these qualifications to be to be substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to an NMBA approved qualification.

Nursing qualifications issued in the United Kingdom (UK) may include a reference to mental health, paediatric/children's nursing or disability because the legislation in the UK requires every entry to the NMC register to identify one of four fields of nursing (the other field is adult nursing). The UK standards of proficiency for registered nurses align with this requirement by setting out standards that apply across all four fields of nursing practice (adult, children, learning disabilities, mental health) and all care settings. However, all registered nurses in the UK must be able to meet the person-centred, holistic care needs of the people they encounter in their practice who may be at any stage of life and who may have a range of mental, physical, cognitive or behavioural health challenges – these expectations align with the registered nurse standards for practice in Australia. In addition to the standards for general nursing care that apply to all registered nurses, the UK standards require all registered nurses to demonstrate a greater depth of knowledge and additional more advanced skills required to meet the specific care needs of people in their chosen fields of nursing practice.

Internal procedural guidance - Solely qualified registered nurses (mental health nursing; paediatric/childrens nursing; learning and disability)¹⁷

This section applies to the assessment of any registered nursing qualification that is solely focused in the areas of mental health, paediatric or disability nursing.

Any internationally qualified registered nurse (IQRN) who holds a registered nursing qualification with a sole focus on mental health, paediatric or disability nursing that is assessed as:

- meeting criteria 1 and 2, either through a single qualification or through composite qualifications
- comparable to an Australian Associate degree or Advanced diploma at AQF level 6 or an Australian Bachelor degree at AQF level 7 either through a single qualification or through composite qualifications

¹⁶ 2024-01 NMBA OOS item - Postgraduate Sole Qualifications: Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses

¹⁷ 2023-11 NMBA item - Proposal to remove supervised practice for sole qualified IQRNs

is assigned to Stream A because, subject to meeting all the NMBA's mandatory registration standards, they may be registered as a solely qualified nurse with reference to the area of sole focus of their primary qualification, without completing the outcomes-based assessment.

Internal procedural guidance – Assessment of subsequent qualifications held by solely qualified registered nurses (mental health nursing; paediatric/children's nursing; learning and disability)¹⁸

If an IQRN whose primary qualification had a sole focus on mental health, paediatric or disability nursing submits a second (subsequent) qualification for consideration, Ahpra will complete a composite qualification assessment. Unless the composite assessment identifies that the qualifications, when considered as a whole, cover similar competencies to an NMBA-approved program and the nurse holds registration in that country as an RN in general nursing or adult nursing, the IQRN will be registered as a solely qualified nurse with reference to the area of sole focus of their primary qualification.

For example a solely qualified registered nurse may present a Master of Health Management or Graduate diploma in education as their second qualification, this would not meet the qualification requirements for general nursing or adult nursing.

¹⁸ 2021-11 NMBA Item 4.3 – IQNM Policy Reference Guide update