

Registration standard

Endorsement for scheduled medicines – designated registered nurse prescriber

Effective date: 30 September 2025

Ahpra acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Elders past and present.

Summary

This registration standard describes how a registered nurse (RN) can qualify for this endorsement for scheduled medicines under section 94 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). This registration standard sets out the scope of the endorsement for scheduled medicines – designated registered nurse prescriber (designated RN prescriber) and what the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) expects of RNs to attain and retain this endorsement.

Does this standard apply to me?

This registration standard applies to RNs:

- applying for the endorsement for scheduled medicines as a designated RN prescriber,¹ and/or
- whose registration is endorsed for scheduled medicines as a designated RN prescriber.

Scope of endorsement

A designated registered nurse prescriber is qualified to **administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply** and/or **use** Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines with an authorised health practitioner, in accordance with this standard and associated guidelines and relevant state and territory legislation, for the purposes of the practice of nursing.

The requirements of the endorsement

When applying for the endorsement for scheduled medicines – designated RN prescriber, an RN must be able to demonstrate all of the following:

1. Current general registration as an RN in Australia with no conditions or undertakings relevant to this endorsement.
2. The equivalent of three years' full-time post-initial registration clinical experience (5,000 hours) within the past six years, from the date when the complete application seeking endorsement for scheduled medicines as a designated RN prescriber is received by the NMBA.
3. Successful completion of:
 - a. NMBA-approved units of study leading to endorsement for scheduled medicines as a designated RN prescriber, or
 - b. units of study that are equivalent to the NMBA-approved units of study leading to endorsement for scheduled medicines as a designated RN prescriber.

What must I do when I am endorsed?

Ongoing endorsement by the NMBA is contingent upon the designated RN prescriber complying with the following requirements:

1. NMBA *Guidelines for registered nurses applying for or with the endorsement for scheduled medicines – designated registered nurse prescriber* particularly the requirements of the prescribing relationship with the authorised health practitioner/s and the governance framework.
2. For the first six months of the endorsement, the designated RN prescriber must complete a period of clinical mentorship with an authorised health practitioner.
3. Must only prescribe when there is an active prescribing arrangement in place with an authorised health practitioner.
4. For sole practitioners and/or RNs working in private practice the additional requirements outlined in the NMBA *Guidelines for registered nurses applying for or with the endorsement for scheduled medicines – designated registered nurse prescriber* must also be met.

1. Applications for endorsement may be made by registered nurses who hold registration with the NMBA or persons that are in the process of applying for registration as a registered nurse with the NMBA. Registration as a registered nurse must be granted before the endorsement can be granted

At renewal of registration

When you apply to renew your registration, you need to declare that you comply with the ongoing requirements for endorsement as set out above.

Under section 109 of the National Law, designated RN prescribers are required to make an annual declaration that they have met the professional indemnity insurance and recency of practice requirements and completed the required continuing professional development (CPD), including an additional 10 hours of CPD related to prescribing of scheduled medicines.

During the registration period

Your compliance with this registration standard, guidelines and all other relevant NMBA documents may be audited from time to time or if the NMBA receives a notification about you that is relevant to this endorsement.

Evidence

You must retain relevant records as evidence that you meet the ongoing requirements of this registration standard in case you are audited.

What happens if I don't meet this standard?

If you don't meet the requirements of this registration standard and guidelines you will not be eligible for initial or ongoing endorsement for scheduled medicines as a designated RN prescriber.

The National Law establishes possible consequences if you do not meet the ongoing requirements of this registration standard and guidelines, including that:

- the NMBA can impose conditions on your registration and/or endorsement or refuse renewal of registration and/or endorsement (sections 82 and 112 of the National Law).

Registration standards, codes or guidelines may be used in disciplinary proceedings against you as evidence of what constitutes appropriate practice or conduct for the nursing profession (section 41 of the National Law).

Guidelines

The NMBA *Guidelines for registered nurses applying for or with the endorsement for scheduled medicines – designated registered nurse prescriber* provide information about what the NMBA expects of you when you are applying for endorsement and when you are endorsed.

You are expected to understand, apply and comply with these guidelines, particularly the requirements of the prescribing relationship with the authorised health practitioner/s and the governance framework, together with this registration standard.

State or territory authority

The endorsement of your registration indicates that you are qualified to administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply and/or use Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines specified in the endorsement but does not authorise you to do so.

The authorisation for you to administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply and/or use the Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines in a state or territory will be provided by or under legislation of the state or territory.

You must administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply and/or use Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines in the accordance with the state or territory legislation at all times.

Wording to appear on the Register of nurses

Endorsed as qualified to administer, obtain, possess, prescribe, supply and/or use Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines for the purposes of prescribing as a designated registered nurse prescriber with an authorised health practitioner within the scope of registered nurse practice.

Authority

The Ministerial Council has decided that the NMBA may endorse RNs to the extent described in this registration standard.

This standard has been approved by the Ministerial Council under section 12 of the National Law on 11 December 2024.

Registration standards are developed under section 38 of the National Law and are subject to wide-ranging consultation.

Definitions

Active prescribing agreement means a prescribing agreement (as defined in the NMBA *Guidelines for registered nurses applying for or with the endorsement for scheduled medicines – as a designated registered nurse prescriber*) where there is a current relationship with the authorised health practitioner.

Administer a medicine means to personally apply or introduce a medicine, or personally observe its application or introduction, to the person's body.

Approved units of study means the educational units of study to develop an RN's knowledge and skills in prescribing medicines that has been accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) and approved by the NMBA under section 49(1) of the National Law for the purpose of enabling the RN to seek endorsement, under section 94 of the National Law, to prescribe Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines, in accordance with relevant state and territory legislation.

Authorised health practitioner is a registered health practitioner who is an authorised autonomous prescriber – for example a medical practitioner or a nurse practitioner (more than one authorised health practitioner may work with the designated RN prescriber).

Designated registered nurse prescriber means an RN with an endorsement for scheduled medicines who undertakes prescribing within their level of competence and scope of practice together with an authorised health practitioner. The designated RN prescriber is responsible and accountable for prescribing within their scope of practice and authorisation. The designated RN prescriber has an authorisation to prescribe medicines that is determined by legislation, will meet the requirements of the NMBA related to the endorsement and policies of the jurisdiction, employer or health service.

Ministerial Council means the COAG Health Council, or a successor of the Council by whatever name called, constituted by ministers of the governments of the participating jurisdictions and the Commonwealth with portfolio responsibility for health. The Health Ministers' Meeting is the current successor.

National Law means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory.

Person or people refers to those individuals who have entered into a therapeutic and/or professional relationship with an RN. These individuals will sometimes be healthcare consumers, at other times they may be colleagues or students, this will vary depending on who is the focus of practice at the time. Therefore, the words person or people include all the patients, clients, consumers, families, carers, groups and/or communities, however named, that are within the RN's scope and context of practice.

Prescribe a medicine for the purpose of this endorsement means to authorise the supply and/or administration of a medicine to a person (for example, an RN who writes a prescription for a person to be dispensed by a pharmacist is exercising their authority to prescribe) – it also includes de-prescribing of medicines.

Scheduled medicine means a substance included in a schedule to the current Poisons Standard within the meaning of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* (Cth).

Sole practitioner or individual working in private practice means the RN is working in a business owned solely by the RN or in a partnership or collective; or where an RN or is employed (full-time or part-time) by a company that is owned solely by the RN, or that is owned solely by RNs, where the only directors of that company are registered nurses.

Supply a medicine means to provide a medicine to a person for their later use or administration (for example, a nurse in a hospital in a rural and remote area who is authorised to supply a medicine to a person to take home for self-administration is exercising their authority to supply).

The terms 'obtain' and 'possess' should be given their ordinary dictionary meaning.

Review

This standard for endorsement of registration will be reviewed from time to time as necessary. The NMBA will review this standard at least every five years.