

Policy

November 2020

Examination repeats

Purpose

This document sets out the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) policy on examination repeats for internationally qualified nursing and midwifery examination candidates (candidates) who fail their examinations. This includes the number of examination repeats permitted and the required stand-down period between repeated attempts.

Scope

The outcomes-based assessment (OBA) for internationally qualified nurses and midwives (IQNM) 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, enrolled nurses and midwives (IQNMs) seeking registration in Australia as a registered nurse (RN), enrolled nurse (EN) or midwife.

This policy applies to all candidates who sit the RN, EN or midwifery MCQ examinations and all candidates who sit the RN, EN or midwifery OSCEs.

Policy

Examination repeats

The number of examination attempts and the stand-down period varies between the MCQ examinations and the OSCEs.

When a candidate repeats any examination, they must complete all items in the examination i.e. the entire examination, not just the item(s) they failed on their previous attempt(s). Results from a candidate's previous attempt(s) will not be taken into consideration when determining the result of the candidate's repeat examination.

MCQ examinations

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.

The NMBA implements the NCSBN retake policy where candidates are permitted to take the NCLEX eight (8) times per year, but not more than once in any 45 calendar day period.

EN MCQ examination

The EN MCQ examination is delivered by Ahpra and is a paper-based examination.

Candidates are permitted to take the EN MCQ examination a maximum of eight (8) times per year and not more than once in any 45 calendar day period.

Midwifery MCQ examination

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

Candidates are permitted to take the midwifery MCQ examination a maximum of eight (8) times per year and not more than once in any 45 calendar day period.

OSCEs

The OSCEs for IQNMs wanting to register in Australia as an RN, EN or midwife are delivered at Adelaide Health Simulation (AHS). Ahpra operationalises the OSCEs on behalf of the NMBA. The OSCEs are held during defined examination periods. The number of examination periods per year is dependent on the volume of candidates wishing to sit the OSCE, as well as the facility and examiner availability.

The number of examination repeats permitted, and the stand-down period are the same across the RN, EN and midwifery OSCEs.

While the NMBA does not limit the number of attempts candidates are allowed to sit the OSCE, it recommends that candidates carefully consider the results of their previous OSCE performance(s). If there is evidence that on each successive attempt, the candidate's performance diminishes, the candidate should consider the results and prepare accordingly.

Candidates who are eligible to repeat the OSCE can do so at the next examination period, subject to availability of sittings. Candidates who are attempting to book their OSCE for the first time will be given priority over candidates booking a repeat OSCE.

Candidate feedback

The following outlines the type of feedback provided to candidates who fail the MCQ examination and those who fail the OSCE.

MCQ examinations

RN MCQ examination

An NCLEX® Candidate Performance Report (CPR) is provided by Pearson Vue for and to all candidates who fail the NCLEX-RN. There are two different types of CPRs:

1. CPR for candidates who completed their examination; and
2. CPR for candidates who did not answer at least the minimum number of items.

The CPR provides the following information as outlined in the *Member Board Manual – Chapter 5: Results Processing*:

- Individual candidate report information
- The number of items answered (not provided to candidates who did not complete at least the minimum number of items)
- Additional sources of information to which the candidate may refer, including the NCSBN Website and detailed test plans (not provided to candidates who did not complete at least the minimum number of items), and
- Information specific to each test plan area (not provided to candidates who did not complete at least the minimum number of items), including:
 - A definition of the test plan category
 - A list of content related to the test plan category
 - The percentage of items on every NCLEX that come from the test plan category, and
 - An assessment of the candidate's relative performance in the test plan category.

EN MCQ examination

Pass / fail results are provided to all candidates who sit the MCQ.

Midwifery MCQ examination

Pass / fail results are provided to all candidates who sit the MCQ.

OSCEs

High-level feedback is provided to all candidates who fail the OSCE.

Definitions and abbreviations

IQNM assessment process is the NMBA's process for assessing IQNMs. IQNMs 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 IQNMs will need to complete the Self-check and Orientation (Part 1) before they can apply for registration.

IQNMs 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 IQNMs will need to complete the Self-check, Orientation (Part 1), Establish portfolio, MCQ examination and the OSCE before they can apply for registration.

Stand-down period is the period in which candidates cannot sit the examination i.e. it is the test-free period.

Associated documents

NMBA Policy: Special consideration for examination candidates

References

NCLEX Member Board Manual - Chapter 4: exam day (administration of NCLEX)

Document Control

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