

Policy

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

Purpose

This document sets out the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) policy on the delivery of the multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) 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 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 all IQNM MCQ examinations and OSCEs.

The following examinations are delivered by third-party providers:

- 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 and their authorised examination centres.
- The midwifery MCQ examination is delivered by Aspeq through the Quadrant examination system remotely and at Aspeq examination centres.

The EN MCQ examination is the Nursing Council of New Zealand EN State Final Examination. Delivery of the EN MCQ will be coordinated by Ahpra and delivered in a paper-based format and upon request or need by a prospective candidate. Delivery of the exam will be conducted in Ahpra offices, with specified locations to be determined.

The RN, EN and midwifery OSCEs are operationalised by Ahpra and delivered at Adelaide Health Simulation (AHS).

All external MCQ examination providers have policies and procedures they must follow when delivering the examinations. This policy applies to the delivery of the EN MCQ and OSCEs.

Policy

MCQ Examinations

RN and Midwifery MCQ

The external MCQ examination providers have policies and procedures that candidates must follow when delivering the examinations (see associated documents).

These cover the following aspects of delivering an examination:

- Candidate check-in / Identity checks
- Examination security e.g. storage of personal belongings, examination confidentiality etc.
- Examination centre rules
- Break procedures
- Quarantining candidates
- Contingency plans if there is a disruption from normal examination procedure e.g. a fire alarm/evacuation, a power cut, a technical system failure etc.

EN MCQ

- Ahpra is the provider for the EN MCQ examination and will manage the following aspects of delivery: Candidate check-in / Identity checks
- Examination security e.g. storage of personal belongings, examination confidentiality etc.
- Testing Location rules
- Contingency plans if there is a disruption from normal examination procedure e.g. a fire alarm/evacuation, a power cut, a technical system failure etc
- Invigilation of the examination session.

The candidate handbook describes and set outs the examination procedures so that candidates are familiar with the processes before the examination.

Candidate check-in

Ahpra staff will conduct an identification check for each candidate when the candidates arrive at the testing location. Candidates must show photo identification. This must be the same as the identification document(s) provided at the IQNM portfolio stage.

Examination security

Candidates should refer to the EN MCQ examination candidate handbook for the security measures employed in the examination process.

Candidates must maintain confidentiality of the examination content and processes during and after the examination. This includes posting or discussing questions or responses on the internet, on any form of social media or with any other person or organisation after an examination. Any candidate who attempts to record or supply material relating to the assessment will not be permitted to continue with the examination.

Candidates are required to sign the EN MCQ Examination Terms of Agreement prior to commencing the examination.

Cases of suspected security breaches will be reviewed and managed in accordance with the NMBA's IQNM assessment process misconduct policy.

Break procedures

Candidates should refer to the EN MCQ examination candidate handbook for the break procedures in the examination process.

OSCEs

The OSCEs must be delivered in accordance with this policy.

Candidate check-in

Ahpra staff must conduct an identification check for each candidate when the candidates arrive at the examination centre. Candidates must show photo identification. This must be the same identification document(s) as provided at the time of booking the OSCE examination. Once verified by Ahpra staff, candidates are issued with a candidate number and a unique swipe card. Candidates scan the swipe card at the start of each OSCE station.

Examination security

The following security measures must be implemented for every examination:

- Candidates are not allowed electronic equipment within the examination area. This includes mobile phones and all watches (including Smart Watches)
- Candidates must not bring study material into the examination area
- Candidates must not write any prompting material on their skin or other objects before or during the OSCE. All documentation required as part of the scenario must be left at the station
- Support people or family members will not be admitted into the examination area, including pre- and post-holding rooms
- Food or drink is not permitted in the examination area. Water will be provided
- Candidates must maintain confidentiality of the examination content and processes during and after the examination. This includes posting or discussing questions or responses on the internet, on any form of social media or with any other person or organisation after an examination. Any candidate who attempts to record or supply material relating to the assessment will not be permitted to continue with the examination.
- Candidates are required to sign a Terms of Agreement pertaining to this effect prior to commencing the examination

Reported cases of suspected security breaches will be reviewed in accordance with the NMBA's policy on candidate misconduct.

Break procedures

Once the OSCE begins there are no scheduled breaks for candidates to use the bathroom. If candidates need to use the bathroom during the examination, they must advise the marshal and will be escorted.

Examination conditions apply at all times.

Quarantining candidates

If more than one OSCE session takes place in a day, for example, a session in the morning and another in the afternoon, each candidate cohort must be quarantined in separate rooms to prevent communication about the OSCE.

Examination centre evacuation

In the event of an evacuation from the examination centre due to an emergency, the examiner must ensure that the candidate they were assessing at the time of evacuation remains with them, if this is reasonable. The examiner must not discuss the OSCE with the candidate and must ensure that candidates do not communicate with each other. The evacuation process is lead by Adelaide Health Simulation.

The Chief examiner and/or nominee together with the Ahpra examination coordinator must make the decision to continue or postpone the OSCE following an evacuation. If it is possible to return to the building and continue the OSCE, candidates must restart the station they were sitting at the time of the evacuation.

If it is not possible to return to the building or to return within a reasonable time period, the OSCE may be postponed. Candidates examination fees may be refunded in full or in part. The marking of the candidates' performance in the OSCE prior to the evacuation will be disregarded. A full OSCE will instead have to be taken at a later date.

Candidates unable to continue the assessment

If a candidate undertaking the OSCE is unable to continue for any reason, they must notify the examiner who must contact the Chief examiner and/or nominee or the Ahpra examination coordinator. If the candidate cannot continue, the assessment of the candidate must end, and an overall fail result will apply.

In accordance with the NMBA's policy on reasonable adjustments and special consideration, a candidate can request special consideration.

Critical safety incident

If a candidate is violent or displays any behaviour that endangers the simulated patients and/or the examiner, this is considered a critical safety incident. The examiner assessing the candidate must immediately stop the examination and contact the Chief examiner and/or nominee or the Ahpra examination coordinator. The candidate will receive an overall fail result for their OSCE.

The reported critical safety incident will be reviewed in accordance with NMBA's policy on candidate misconduct.

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.

Associated documents

NCLEX Candidate Bulletin (including NCLEX Candidate Rules)

Aspeq test centre policies and procedures

Adelaide Health Simulation testing centre policies and procedures

MCQ candidate handbooks:

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

OSCE candidate handbooks:

- *Registered nurse OSCE Examination - Candidate Handbook*
- *Enrolled nurse OSCE Examination - Candidate Handbook*
- *Midwives OSCE Examination - Candidate Handbook*

OSCE examiner handbooks:

- *OSCE examiner handbook – Registered nurse*
- *OSCE examiner handbook – Enrolled nurse*
- *OSCE examiner handbook – Midwife*

NMBA Policy Multiple-choice question (MCQ) examinations

NMBA Policy: Candidate misconduct

NMBA Policy: Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

References

NCLEX Member Board Manual (Chapter 4 – Exam Day (Administration of the NCLEX))

Document Control

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