

Fact sheet

22 October 2021

Registered nurses with provisional or general registration with re-entry to practice supervised practice conditions: Response to COVID-19

Background

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) undertakes functions as set by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). The NMBA regulates the practice of nursing and midwifery in Australia, and one of its key roles is to protect the public. The NMBA does this by developing registration standards, professional codes, guidelines and standards for practice which together establish the requirements for the professional and safe practice of nurses and midwives in Australia.

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues in Australia, there is an ongoing need to increase the nursing and midwifery workforce. The NMBA is working with government and other stakeholders to ensure there are sufficient registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives to provide care and support specifically to the COVID-19 response.

This fact sheet addresses important considerations for registered nurses (RNs) who hold provisional or general registration with re-entry to practice supervised practice conditions, who have not yet accessed or commenced their supervised practice.

Who is this fact sheet is for?

This fact sheet applies to RNs who hold provisional or general registration with re-entry to practice supervised practice conditions.

This fact sheet should be used by health services employing and supporting RNs who are seeking to return to practice.

Due to the evolving nature of COVID-19, the NMBA acknowledge that advice and management plans for the COVID-19 response may change quickly. Users of this fact sheet are advised to review the [NMBA website](#) regularly for updated information and current advice.

COVID-19 response

The NMBA is contacting RNs who hold provisional or general registration, with re-entry to practice supervised practice conditions.

RNs who have **not yet commenced** supervised practice, are eligible to seek employment to undertake their supervised practice to assist the COVID-19 response. This includes:

- a. vaccination rollout¹
- b. clinical and non-clinical roles directly related to the COVID-19 response

¹ All practitioners must complete the relevant Department of Health's mandatory online training modules before being able to administer the vaccines.

- c. employment and practice as part of a surge workforce or temporary backfill positions due to outbreak management and/or quarantining of other health workers.

What has changed?

The supervised practice documentation has been reduced for this cohort of RNs as follows:

- A 'letter of offer of employment' replaces the joint employer/employee *Supervised practice agreement* and the *Supervised practice plan*.
- The 'letter of offer of employment' must specify the context of practice in which the RN is being employed, and its relevance to the COVID-19 response.
- The RN must provide the letter of offer to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) within 14 days of commencing employment.

A summative report of competence against the [Registered nurse standards for practice](#) remains part of the supervision requirements. The practise may be used in demonstrating competence against the *Registered nurse standards for practice*.

The summative report is submitted to attest whether the RN demonstrates competence against each standard within the *Registered nurse standards for practice*.

Eligibility

I am an RN and have been contacted by the NMBA, what do I need to do next?

If you have not commenced a period of supervised practice, you are eligible to seek employment to undertake your supervised practice in assisting the COVID-19 response. A 'letter of offer of employment' from an employer, for a position that supports the COVID-19 response, must be provided to Ahpra's monitoring and compliance team in your state or territory, within 14 days of commencing employment. You will receive correspondence from Ahpra (on behalf of the NMBA) advising you of your obligations. Your principal place of practice will be published on the public register.

The hours undertaken in practice may be used in demonstrating your competence against the *Registered nurse standards for practice*. If you are assessed as competent, you can apply to have the supervised practice conditions reviewed (form [ARCD-00](#)).

I have already commenced a supervised practice placement, am I eligible to be part of this COVID-19 response?

No. If you have been offered or have already commenced supervised practice, you are already in the workforce and this does not apply to you.

What happens if I am unsuccessful in gaining a position to help with the COVID-19 response?

The supervised practice conditions will remain on your registration and you may continue to seek a period of supervised practice to meet the requirement of your conditions.

I do not want to undertake my supervised practice to support the COVID-19 response. What do I need to do?

You do not need to take any action with the email from the NMBA if you want to find your own placement to undertake a period of supervised practice, in a role that is not part of the COVID-19 response.

I deferred seeking my initial registration for more than two years after completing my Bachelor of nursing and have supervised practice conditions am I eligible?

No, the NMBA is taking a staged approach with strategies to assist in increasing the nursing and midwifery workforce. This stage focuses on RNs with a past work history and a consolidation of skills and knowledge. Due to the evolving nature of COVID-19, advice and strategies may change. Any change will be communicated to eligible registrants.

I am an enrolled nurse with supervised practice conditions am I eligible?

No, the NMBA is taking a staged approach with strategies to assist in increasing the nursing and midwifery workforce. This stage focuses on RNs. Due to the evolving nature of COVID-19, advice and strategies may change. Any change will be communicated to eligible registrants.

Information for employers

Considerations for health services

Employers have a responsibility when employing any nurse, or midwife, to ensure the practitioner has the appropriate education, skills and knowledge required for the position.

When considering employing RNs with re-entry to practice supervised practice conditions, in response to COVID-19, the NMBA recommends the following factors are considered:

- That RNs in this cohort:
 - have conditions on their registration because they have not practised for between five and ten years and are seeking to return to practice
 - have a past work history, have spent more time practising the profession than not practising, often have post graduate qualifications and evidence of completing CPD and have plans for future professional practice
 - must work under the direct or indirect supervision of an RN
- The health service's capacity to support appropriate supervision of the RN including available skill mix, model of care and staffing levels for direct/indirect supervision.
- The RN's scope of practice, accountability and reporting responsibilities
- The RN will need to be assessed against the *Registered nurse standards for practice* at the completion of their supervised practice.

What are the supervision requirements?

RNs with re-entry to practice supervised practice conditions require an initial period of *direct* or *indirect* supervision. A limited period of direct supervision may be utilised to support the assessment of the level of competence of the RN before transition to a period of indirect supervision.

Supervision requirements should be tailored to the purpose of supervision considering the RN's particular circumstances, their experience, skills and learning needs.

For further information, please see the [Supervision guidelines for nursing and midwifery](#).

The following pages on the NMBA website contain useful information for nurses and midwives and employers:

- [COVID-19 guidance for nurses and midwives](#)
- [Professional codes and guidelines](#)
- [Supervision guidelines for nursing and midwifery](#).
- Visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)

Document control

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