

Policy

Updated March 2025

English language skills registration standard

Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (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 standards, codes and guidelines which together establish the requirements for the professional and safe practice of nurses and midwives in Australia. The NMBA undertakes its functions as set by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law), as in force in each state and territory.

Section 38 of the National Law requires the NMBA to develop an English language skills registration standard.

Purpose

The NMBA's [English language skills registration standard](#) (ELS registration standard) sets out the requirements for English language skills for people applying for registration as a nurse and/or midwife. The ELS registration standard provides flexible options for applicants to meet its requirements. The ELS registration standard outlines five pathways for applicants to show their English language competency when applying for initial registration.

The purpose of this policy is to provide information about:

1. Demonstrating English language proficiency at least equivalent to the other pathways in the standard

Pathway 5 states:

In other defined circumstances/cases where there is compelling evidence demonstrating English language proficiency at least equivalent to the other pathways in this standard set out in a policy published by the Board.

This policy confirms that:

- The NMBA defines and approves circumstances/cases meeting the above pathway.
- The above pathway does not apply to individual circumstances/cases but to a group or cohort.
- At this time the NMBA has not approved any circumstances/cases in which this pathway is applicable.

2. Exemptions with respect to limited registration

The NMBA currently does not have pathways to limited registration, so the exemptions related to limited registration in the ELS registration standard do not apply at this time.

Review

The NMBA will review this policy at least every five years, or as necessary.

Document history

Approved by: Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Date commenced: 26 May 2016

Next review due: March 2030

Policy history: Is this a new policy? **N**

Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? **Y**

If so which version **v2.0**

Does this policy replace another policy with a different title? **N**

Approval date	Version	Reason for change
March 2025	v3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of 'Determining full-time equivalence' information as 'full-time equivalent' is defined in the revised ELS registration standard.• Minor editorial changes to improve readability
May 2019	v2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of information relating to extended education pathways as this is now included as part of the Evidence guide.• Removal of definition for 'vocational education' as this is defined in the registration standard
26 May 2016	v1.0	