

Guidelines

November 2016

Continuing professional development

Introduction

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.

These guidelines supplement the [Registration standard: Continuing professional development](#) by providing further information about the NMBA's minimum annual CPD requirements and how you can meet these requirements to ensure your CPD is effective. You are expected to understand and apply these guidelines together with the CPD registration standard.

Do these guidelines apply to me?

These guidelines apply to all nurses and midwives except those with student and non-practising registration.

What must I do?

The NMBA needs you to engage in CPD activities to meet the NMBA's registration standard on CPD each year, and encourages you to spread these activities over the course of the year.

Effective CPD

Learning and development occurs throughout a nurse's and/or midwife's career. CPD is an important foundation of lifelong learning and helps nurses and midwives maintain their competence to practise.

CPD aims to enable nurses and midwives to maintain, improve, and broaden their professional knowledge, expertise and competence to meet their obligation to provide ethical, effective, safe and competent practice. Research on CPD shows that by engaging others in CPD planning, this results in positive learning outcomes and evidence-based changes to practice.

Planning and reflection

Research shows that CPD is more effective when it involves planning and reflection. You will get most benefit from your CPD activities by planning your learning goals and the activities to meet these goals, completing your CPD and then recording reflections on your learning.

Planning your CPD is an opportunity for you to:

- a. review best-practice standards or evidence-based practice to enable you to evaluate and improve your level of competency, treatment plan or service delivery
- b. identify your limitations or deficits to improve your practice to meet current standards using evidence-based practice or best-practice standards, and
- c. identify how you could further develop competency or strengths in areas of particular interest or aptitude.

It is often helpful to discuss planning with your peers, mentors and/or supervisors as you may not always identify your own areas of limitation. Patient feedback may also be helpful in identifying areas where you need further continuing professional or personal development.

You should consciously reflect on your CPD as it relates to your practice. Research shows this will improve your learning. You can do this by writing a brief summary of your CPD activities, how these activities affected your practice and assess your progress against the goals you set for yourself.

Reflection on learning can contribute to the learning goals for the coming year as part of the ongoing CPD cycle. See Figure 1 below for the CPD cycle.

Figure 1 – CPD cycle



Choosing a range of CPD activities

The NMBA recommends that you complete a range of CPD activities throughout the course of the registration period. This is more effective for your learning than completing CPD activities of one type, or in a short time period.

The NMBA recognises that people learn in different ways. Accordingly, CPD may include formal and informal learning activities. Participation in certain professional activities can also contribute to meeting your CPD requirements.

CPD activities must be relevant to your area of professional practice, and have clear aims and objectives that meet your self-assessed requirements.

The type of learning activities selected can be broad and varied. Registrants are encouraged to consider the combined use of multimedia and multiple instruction techniques, e.g. face-to-face, simulation, interactive e-learning, self-directed learning. Possible examples of activities include:

- postgraduate studies
- participating in journal clubs

- in-service education
- attending conferences, workshops and seminars
- authoring a book chapter, or
- having an article published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Recordkeeping and templates

You must keep records of your CPD activities for a period of five years from the date you completed the CPD. All CPD records must be available for audit or if needed by the NMBA as part of an investigation arising from a notification (complaint).

To help you with your CPD recordkeeping, the NMBA has developed a [self-directed CPD evidence record](#) that you can use for planning and recording your CPD. While it is not mandatory to use this template, your CPD records must include all the information listed in the template.

All evidence should be verified, and it must demonstrate that the nurse or midwife has:

- identified and prioritised their learning needs, based on their self-reflection and evaluation of their practice against the relevant competency or professional practice standards
- developed a learning plan based on identified learning needs
- participated in effective learning activities appropriate to their learning needs, and
- reflected on the value of the learning activities or the effect that participation will have on their practice.

The format of this evidence is not defined by the NMBA and may take many forms. You should keep evidence of CPD activities completed, such as:

- certificates of attainment and/or attendance, and
- notes from self-directed CPD activity such as a literature review, case study or journal articles. Any notes submitted should provide a comprehensive summary of the key points of the review and reflect the learning from the activity.

Pro rata CPD

When a nurse or midwife registers part-way through a registration period, pro rata CPD requirements will apply as outlined below (see *Table 1*) and in the *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*. Practitioners holding dual registration must complete CPD hours for both professions.

Table 1

Months registration has been held	CPD Hours
0–3 months	≥ 5 hours
3–6 months	≥ 10 hours
6–9 months	≥ 15 hours
9–12 months	≥ 20 hours

When a nurse and/or midwife is endorsed or notated part-way through a registration period, pro rata CPD requirements will apply as outlined below (see *Table 2*) and in the *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*.

Table 3

Months endorsement/notation has been held	Additional pro rata CPD hours that must be completed
0–3 months	≥ 2.5 hours
> 3–6 months	≥ 5 hours

> 6–9 months	≥ 7.5 hours
> 9–12 months	≥ 10 hours

Exemption

Under the *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*, the NMBA may consider and/or grant an exemption from the CPD requirements in exceptional circumstances. For further guidance, see the NMBA's [Policy: Exemptions from continuing professional development for nurses and midwives](#).

Temporary absence from practice

Before returning to practice after an absence, you have an obligation to assess what changes there have been to professional practice. You will need to decide what CPD you need to ensure you are suitably prepared to return to practice. CPD activities must be designed to maintain and update your knowledge, clinical judgement and technical skills.

For more information

- [Registration standard: Continuing professional development](#)
- [Fact sheet: Continuing professional development](#)
- [Policy: Exemption from continuing professional development for nurses and midwives](#)
- [Audit](#) information on the NMBA website
- Visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (in Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)