

Fact sheet

Updated March 2023

Enrolled nurse standards for practice

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 standards, codes and guidelines which together establish the requirements of the professional practice framework for the professional and safe practice of nurses and midwives in Australia.

Registration as an enrolled nurse (EN) means you need to meet the NMBA's mandatory registration standards. ENs are required to practise within the relevant NMBA-approved standards, codes, guidelines and frameworks.

The following questions answer common queries that you might have about the [Enrolled nurse standards for practice](#) (the standards).

What are the standards for?

The *Enrolled nurse standards for practice* are the core practice standards that provide the framework for assessing EN practice. The standards:

- communicate to the general public the standards that can be expected of ENs
- determine the eligibility for registration of people who have completed an EN program of study in Australia
- determine the eligibility for registration of ENs who wish to practise in Australia but have completed courses elsewhere
- assess ENs who wish to return to work after being out of the workforce for a defined period, and
- assess ENs who need to show that they are competent to practise.

These standards replace the *National competency standards for the enrolled nurse* that were first published in 2002 by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) and adopted by the NMBA at the start of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) in 2010.

The standards have been developed following an extensive literature review, a survey of ENs, interviews with ENs, observations of ENs in practice, and consultation with consumers and other stakeholders including education providers.

Why have you removed the term 'competency' from the standards?

Research suggested that confusion existed between the use of the term 'competency based assessment' in the vocational education and training (VET) sector and use of the term 'competency' in other settings.

What are the key features of the standards?

The standards provide clarity about supervision, delegation and role relationships, including:

- the EN needs to work under the direct or indirect supervision of a registered nurse (RN)
- the EN keeps responsibility for their actions, and
- the EN is accountable in providing delegated care.

The standards have the following domains:

- professional and collaborative practice
- provision of care, and
- reflective and analytical practice.

What does direct and indirect supervision mean?

Direct supervision is when the supervisor is physically present at all times and personally observes, works with, guides and directs the person who is being supervised.

Indirect supervision is when the supervisor works in the same facility or organisation as the supervised person but does not constantly observe their activities. The supervisor must be available for reasonable access. What is reasonable will depend on the context, the needs of the person receiving care and the needs of the person who is being supervised.

- It is generally expected that in the case of indirect supervision that the registered nurse and enrolled nurse have the same employer. There may be situations where the registered nurse and the enrolled nurse may not have the same employer but work in the same facility or organisation. In these situations, clearly documented arrangements between the employers, supported by the registered nurse(s) and the enrolled nurse(s), must be in place. These documented arrangements should include details of all aspects of the supervision arrangements (including insurance) and describe how the registered nurse will be available for reasonable access to ensure effective timely direction and supervision so that the delegated practice is safe and correct and public safety is ensured.

How is the role of the EN described in the standards?

The *Enrolled nurse standards for practice* reflect the role of the EN in the current health environment, remaining broad and principle-based, to ensure they are sufficiently dynamic and applicable for a range of practice settings.

Can an EN give medications with no RN present in the same room?

Under the *Enrolled nurse standards for practice* an EN needs to practice within their scope of practice, in line with the relevant state or territory drugs and poisons legislation and their own educational preparation and experience. ENs may administer medication if they have completed the required education and are competent to do so. ENs are also expected to work in accordance with the relevant policies of their employer.

Supervision by an RN may be direct or indirect according to the nature of the work delegated to the EN. For further information see the NMBA's [Fact sheet: Enrolled nurses and medicine administration](#) and [Decision-making framework for nursing and midwifery](#). You may also wish to refer to local protocols approved by your employer/health service.

Can an EN replace the role of an RN and be expected to do an RN's work?

No, the scope of practice of an EN and RN are different. An EN must work under the direct/indirect supervision of an RN at all times. An EN should only be carrying out practice that they are appropriately trained and competent to do, and which is within their scope of practice. This does not include working at the level of an RN.

For more information

- [Enrolled nurse standards for practice](#)
- [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 8708 9001 (overseas callers)

Document history

Approved by: Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Date commenced: January 2016

Next review due: February 2025

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 2023	v3.0	New document template Inclusion of 'Registered nurse' and 'Standards for practice' definitions Insertion of document history table
June 2019	v2.0	Removal of all reference to 'revised standards'. Deletion of table mapping key changes from previous competency standards to current standards for practice
December 2016	v1.2	Clarification regarding definition of 'indirect supervision'
August 2016	v1.1	Inclusion of definition of 'direct and indirect supervision'
January 2016	v1.0	