

Fact sheet

Updated May 2024

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 of the professional practice framework for the professional and safe practice of nurses and midwives in Australia.

The NMBA's [Registration standard: Continuing professional development](#) requires nurses and midwives to complete a minimum number of continuing professional development (CPD) hours directly relevant to a nurse or midwife's context of practice.

The following questions address common queries that you might have about the *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*.

What is CPD?

CPD is how members of the professions maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities needed throughout their professional lives.

What do you mean by 'practice'?

Practice refers to any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. Practice in this context is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge (working) in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

I am currently not working in the profession but I am still registered (because I am on maternity leave, travelling etc.). Do I still need to do CPD?

As a nurse or midwife, you may choose not to work in the profession for a variety of reasons (such as maternity leave, extended overseas travel, moving overseas, an extended career break or retirement), however, you may want to keep your registration.

Under these circumstances, you must continue to complete CPD in relation to your context of practice. See section below on '[How do I describe my context of practice](#)'. Remember that 'context of practice' is not restricted to providing direct clinical care.

You may request to register as 'non-practising' – in this case you do not need to do CPD while you are on the non-practising register. For more information refer to the NMBA's [Fact sheet: Non-practising registration for nurses and midwives](#).

How do I describe my context of practice?

Context of practice refers to the conditions that define an individual's nursing and/or midwifery practice. These include:

- the type of practice setting (e.g. clinical care, management, administration, education, research)
- the location of the practice setting (e.g. urban, rural, remote)
- the characteristics of patients (e.g. health status, age, learning needs)
- the focus of nursing and/or midwifery activities (e.g. health promotion, research, management)
- the degree to which practice is autonomous, and
- the resources that are available, including access to other healthcare professionals.

How do I record my CPD?

A template is provided in [Appendix 1](#) which can be used to document your self-directed learning and CPD activities and reflections.

What sort of records will I need to produce?

If you are selected for audit you will need to complete an audit checklist that outlines the documents you need to show as evidence of completing your CPD.

CPD records may include participation in the following activities:

- tertiary, vocational and other accredited courses including distance education (should relate to context of practice)
- conferences, forums, seminars and symposia
- short courses, workshops, seminars and discussion groups through a professional group or organisation who may issue a certificate of compliance/completion
- mandatory learning activities in the workplace in the area of practice
- self-directed learning, and
- any other structured learning activities not covered above.

How many CPD hours do I need to complete?

Registration type	Minimum hours	Total hours
Registered nurse or Enrolled nurse	20 hours	20 hours
Midwife	20 hours	20 hours
Registered nurse and Midwife	Registered nurse – 20 hours Midwife – 20 hours	40 hours
Enrolled nurse and Midwife	Enrolled nurse – 20 hours Midwife – 20 hours	40 hours
Nurse practitioner	Registered nurse – 20 hours Nurse practitioner endorsement – 10 additional hours relating to prescribing and administration of medicines, diagnostics investigations, consultation and referral	30 hours
Midwife practitioner	Midwife – 20 hours Midwife endorsement – 10 additional hours relating to context of practice, prescribing and administration of medicines, diagnostics investigations, consultation and referral	30 hours

Registration type	Minimum hours	Total hours
Midwife with scheduled medicines endorsement	Midwife – 20 hours Scheduled medicines endorsement –10 additional hours relating to context of practice, prescribing and administration of medicines, diagnostics investigations, and consultation and referral	30 hours
Nurse and midwife with scheduled medicines endorsement	Registered nurse or enrolled nurse – 20 hours Midwife – 20 hours Scheduled medicines endorsement –10 additional hours relating to context of practice, prescribing and administration of medicines, diagnostics investigations, consultation and referral	50 hours

I am registered as both a nurse and a midwife. Can I count relevant CPD activities towards the CPD hours for both professions?

If CPD activities are relevant to both nursing and midwifery professions, those activities may be counted as evidence for both nursing and midwifery CPD hours. The activities should be relevant to your context of practice and improve your knowledge, expertise and competence as a nurse and midwife.

How long do I need to keep a record of the evidence of my CPD, including ‘self-directed learning’?

The NMBA recommends that you keep evidence of CPD, including self-directed learning, for a period of five years.

What form should my evidence of CPD (including self-directed learning) take?

Your documentation of the identified learning need, a learning plan, your participation in the learning activity, and the outcome achieved will form the evidence of CPD you may need to provide. References to the articles that you have read are needed for self-directed activities.

The table in [Appendix 1](#) gives you an example of how to enter information about your CPD activities.

Will everyone be audited?

No. The NMBA has the discretion to select a random number of nurses and midwives to be audited at any time.

You will need to show evidence that you have completed the requirements and provide a copy of your CPD plan for the previous year (1 June – 31 May).

Several professional organisations offer CPD contribution in terms of points. How do I equate this to hours?

Nurses and midwives need to speak to the relevant professional organisation to confirm the hours equivalent of CPD from points they have completed.

Can I claim my cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or fire training that I have to do at work as CPD activities?

Mandatory learning activities in the workplace can only be counted as CPD provided that they are relevant to your context of practice and where they include new learning. For example, routine annual CPR and fire training education cannot be counted; however, if there is something new in the mandatory learning area such as COVID-19 pandemic education and training – in the initial stages of the pandemic then this could be claimed.

What if I don't meet my CPD quota?

At the time of renewal, you need to make a declaration about your CPD. You can apply to the NMBA for an exemption in exceptional circumstances if you feel that you have not met your minimum hours for CPD. You may then be contacted to provide additional information. Following a review, the matter may be referred to the NMBA for consideration.

How do I apply for an exemption?

The registration standard states that the NMBA reserves the right to grant exemptions in individual cases. Refer to the [Policy: exemption from continuing professional development for nurses and midwives](#) on the NMBA website.

For more information

- [Registration standard: Continuing professional development](#)
- [Guidelines for continuing professional development](#)
- [Policy: Exemption from continuing professional development for nurses and midwives](#)
- [Audit](#) information is available 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)

Document history

Approved by: Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Date commenced: February 2016

Next review due: May 2027

Policy history: Is this a new policy? **N**
Does this policy amend or update an existing policy? **Y**
If so which version **v2.1**
Does this policy replace another policy with a different title? **N**

Approval date	Version	Reason for change
May 2024	v3.1	Removal of reference to registered nurses with scheduled medicines endorsement (rural and isolated) due to retirement of registration standard
March 2022	v3.0	New document template Clarification regarding mandatory workplace training activities and whether or not they can be counted as CPD
February 2020	v2.1	Minor typographic changes to Appendix 1 to reflect updated document titles
June 2016	v2.0	Editorial changes to reflect document coming into effect (from previous advanced copy)
February 2016	v1.0	Advanced copy

Appendix 1 – Sample template for documenting CPD

Date	Source or provider details	Identified learning needs	Action plan	Type of activity	Description of topic (s) covered during activity and outcome	Reflection on activity and specification to practice	No./Title/Description of evidence provided	CPD hours
17/5/19	NMBA	RN standards for practice Practises in accordance with legislation affecting nursing practice and health care.	Clarify responsibility for aspects of care with other members of the health team. Unsure of my delegation responsibilities in the workplace. Plan: Access and review decision making framework	Self-directed learning. Review of NMBA Decision-making framework for nursing and midwifery .	Reviewed my scope of practice and the scope of practice for my profession. Understood the principles I need to apply when making decisions about my nursing practice and when and how I decide to delegate activities to other registered nurses and enrolled nurses.	This activity has enabled me to achieve my learning need as per my learning plan. As a team leader working in intensive care, I will be able to apply the Nursing decision-making framework when I allocate staff to patient care and delegate tasks as they arise during a shift.	Refer to item 6	2 hours
23/5/19	Advanced life support in practice (XYZ provider)	N/A	N/A	Workshop	Advanced life support reaccréditation	This activity provided me with new theory and a practical competence assessment in relation to advanced life support. I will be able to apply this to patients in respiratory/cardiac arrest and when part of the medical emergency team.	Refer to item 7 Certificate of attendance	3 hours
30/5/19	Obstetric emergency training (XYZ provider)	N/A	N/A	Workshop	Obstetric emergency reaccréditation	This activity provided me with new theory and a practical competence assessment in obstetric emergencies.	Refer to item 8	3 hours