



Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory

**Standards for the Accreditation
of Education Providers delivering Nursing and
Midwifery Courses**

**Standards for the Accreditation
of Nursing and Midwifery Courses**

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1 Glossary of terms

Accreditation

The process leading to certification that a specified course/program meets the criteria of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory.

Annual return

Part of the monitoring of accredited courses is to gather information regarding students, academic and clinical staff and the currency of the courses provided by an education provider. This information provides information to the Board, the Minister and to the public and the profession through the Board's Annual Report.

Clinical experience

This experience may be undertaken in a range of settings such as acute care, relevant community centres, mental health but does not include laboratory preparation. The clinical experience provides appropriate opportunities for practice in the care of individuals and groups and encompasses the range of health care needs/issues occurring within the spectrum of health and illness.

Curriculum

A statement of the theoretical and clinical learning experiences and succession of such experiences that are purposefully arranged and documented by registered educational providers.

Comprehensive nursing program

A comprehensive program is one that prepares a beginning nurse with grounding in the theory and practice of nursing. It should include, but not be limited to, the basic strands of medical/surgical nursing, community-based nursing and mental health nursing for individuals across the lifespan in both institutional and non-institutional settings. This includes knowledge of, and where possible, clinical experience in rural areas and takes account of current issues in nursing and health care. (1995 Report of the National Review of Nurse Education in the Higher Education Sector – 1994 and Beyond.)

Education provider

This refers to those approved venues that provide for the education of nurses and/or midwives. This may refer to a University, TAFE, Health Care Facility or Private Education Provider.

Faculty

Member/s of the academic/teaching staff of an education provider.

School of Nursing/School of Midwifery

A faculty, school, department, division or other administrative unit of an education provider that conducts nursing and/or midwifery courses accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory.

Introduction

These guidelines have been developed to provide education providers with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory's position on nursing and midwifery education for practice, registration and authorisation.

The Board's accreditation processes and criteria acknowledge and respect the academic integrity and autonomy of universities, TAFE's and other education providers. The integrity of the faculty members responsible for the conduct of nursing and midwifery courses is also acknowledged. The statutory responsibility of the Board is to protect and promote the public interest through the maintenance of nurses' standards of conduct and competence. To assist in achieving this purpose, the Board has a statutory mandate to approve and monitor educational programs that lead to registration/enrolment and/or authorisation.

The *Health Practitioners Act 2004*, Section 10 describes the functions of the Board.

They are in part to:

Section 10

- (g) to accredit courses for entry into the category of health care practice for which it is established; and
- (h) to accredit educational institutions to conduct courses referred to in paragraph (g)

The standards identified within this document reflect the Board's statutory responsibility under the *Health Practitioners Act 2004* and are consistent with contemporary regulation principles and practices. In developing these standards, the Board aims to:

- ◆ ensure a safe standard of nursing and midwifery care is provided to the community;
- ◆ ensure that nursing and midwifery graduates are prepared with the appropriate knowledge, skills and values to meet community requirements and the standards of practice articulated by the profession; and

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- ◆ encourage nurses and midwives to demonstrate high standards of conduct and competence by promoting continuous improvement to nursing and midwifery practice.

The ultimate goal of the Board is to ensure that graduates of nursing and midwifery programs are competent practitioners who recognise and value the importance of the partnership the profession has with the community.

Purpose of Accreditation standards

Whilst allowing for a variety of curricular approaches and support for innovation and change, the information contained in these guidelines is intended to serve as:

1. a guide to education providers and faculty involved in developing courses to meet the , enrolment and/or authorisation to practise requirements of the Board; and
2. a basis for assessing courses submitted to the Board for accreditation/re-accreditation.

Process for the assessment of courses and education providers

The Assessment Procedure involves the following:

Formal application by education provider

A written application should be made to the Board by the education provider seeking accreditation of the course, together with a submission addressing the Standards for Course Accreditation and the Standards for Accreditation of Education Providers together with three copies of the curricula.

Documentation developed by education providers needs to be submitted six months in advance of the anticipated date of course commencement.

Consideration of the Submission and the curricula

The Board will establish an Accreditation Team to undertake the accreditation. The Accreditation Team will consist of 2 members of the Board, the Boards Policy & Research Officer and external members will be co-opted as required. The Accreditation Team assesses the submission against the Standards for

Accreditation, will meet with the course designers, visits the campus and /or the clinical venues. The Accreditation Team prepares a Report to the Board and makes recommendations regarding the granting or otherwise of accreditation.

Period of accreditation

The Board will issue one of two types of accreditation – full or provisional. Provisional accreditation will be granted for a specified period of time detailed in the Notice of Accreditation and may, or may not, be subject to conditions.

Full accreditation will be granted for a period not exceeding five years. Full accreditation is subject to regular review as decided at the time of initial accreditation.

Monitoring visits to campus and clinical experience venues

A representative of the Board may undertake a visit to the school of nursing/school of midwifery and clinical venues to consult with faculty, preceptors, students, and clinical venue staff as required. Visits will be mutually arranged with the Head of School and should occur during the academic year.

The monitoring visit enables the education provider the opportunity of providing evidence of quality indicators that assures the Board that the program is being conducted according to the accredited curriculum. An example may be the way in which a mode of delivery has made a difference for students and the outcome of the unit/course.

The monitoring visit also enables any change/s to be discussed and to determine whether a formal letter and submission is required to be sent to the Board.

Changes in Accredited Courses

The Board must be advised of any changes, which will have an impact on the course.

These changes include, but are not limited to;

- Significant change in educational requirements, in terms of a significant departure in content or mode of delivery to that proposed in the most recent accreditation application, for example adding distance education offerings, or deleting or adding a course major;
- Change in location, for example moving to a new site, adding an additional site or deleting an existing site;
- Change in the legal status, sponsorship or control of the applicants or change in relations with other bodies, for example, merger with another body, change in ownership, contracting with another body or person to deliver a significant portion of the degree program, withdrawal of affiliation or recognition by a key professional body;
- Substantial change involving students, teaching staff, administration, governing body, for example significant reduction in number of full-time staff, substantial change in student admission policies or student grading systems, substantial revision in size and composition of governing body;
- Substantial change in financial/ethical arrangements for example declaring bankruptcy, serious legal, financial or ethical investigations, misrepresentation to students and the public.
- Substantial change in physical plant, clinics laboratories or libraries, for example closure of computer facilities on site, natural disaster necessitating reconstruction of laboratories.

Proposals for changes in existing course structures and detailed course proposals incorporating such changes should be submitted to the Board. The Board then determines whether the change requires an alteration to the accreditation status.

The Board will determine if decisions regarding accreditation can be made by correspondence, by consultation with course designers and others or by site visits by Board representative.

Re-accreditation

An accredited course should be submitted for re-accreditation four to six months before its existing accreditation lapses. The new document needs to reflect the contemporaneous nature of nursing and/or midwifery and health care delivery. Evaluation of previous curriculum will support the need for change.

It is the responsibility of the education provider to ensure submissions for re-accreditation are received by the Board prior to expiry of accreditation.

Acknowledgments

In developing these standards the Board acknowledges the assistance of the Nursing Board of Tasmania, the Nurses Board of Victoria and the Queensland Nursing Council.

3 Accreditation of Course Providers

The Board considers that certain criteria should apply to the conduct of all courses. The criteria set out below; include the major areas that the Board will take into account in evaluating an application for accreditation of a course conducted by an education provider.

Standard 1

Organisation and administration

Criteria 1

The statement of philosophy and objectives of the course is compatible with those of the education provider in which it is to be conducted.

Criteria 2

The school of nursing/midwifery is resourced appropriate to its need and commensurate with the financial resources of the parent organisation.

Criteria 3 (a) Applies to nursing courses only

Nursing programmes are administered by an appropriately qualified nurse who:

- (a) is registered as a nurse in the Northern Territory;
- (b) has experience as a registered nurse, in teaching, research, leadership positions, and administration of education courses; and
- (c) holds a higher degree preferably in nursing.

Criteria 3 (b) Applies to midwifery courses only

Midwifery programs are administered by an appropriately qualified midwife who:

- (a) is registered as a midwife in the Northern Territory or authorised to practise as a midwife in the Northern Territory
- (b) has experience as a midwife, in teaching, research, leadership positions, and administration of education courses; and
- (c) holds a higher degree preferably in midwifery.

Criteria 4

The course provider will appoint a person who has authority and responsibility with respect to:

- (a) organisation and administration of the school;
- (b) defining and interpreting aims and policies of the school;
- (c) establishing or participating in determining qualifications of academic and support staff;
- (d) enrolment requirements for students;
- (e) planning, organisation and direction of the course;
- (f) participating in preparation of the school budget and administration of the approved budget; and
- (g) maintenance of an effective record system.

Criteria 5

The course provider will appoint a person who will make provision for:

- (a) facilitation and co-ordination of activities related to academic and personnel policies, curriculum development and course evaluation;
- (b) involvement of faculty and students in the improvement of health care and development of the profession;
- (c) participation of community agencies in course development, implementation and evaluation; and
- (d) liaison with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory, professional nursing organisations, and with health services in which the education provider's graduates are likely to be employed.

Standard 2

Students

Criteria 1

Students enrolled in the course meet the normal requirements for university/TAFE entrance.

Criteria 2

Anticipated and actual numbers of students are realistic.

Criteria 3

Policies are in place that clearly identifies the requirements for admission, advanced standing, special entry categories, deferral and successful completion.

Criteria 4

The merit of the course in possible career pathways should identify recognition of prior learning processes and articulation to other education courses.

Criteria 5

Processes identified for student grievance and/or appeal mechanisms.

Standard 3

Faculty and support staff

Criteria 1

Faculty members are sufficient in numbers to:

- (a) teach the subjects in the curriculum,
- (b) be academically and professionally qualified in the areas in which they are teaching,
- (c) provide adequate guidance, supervision and support for students in clinical experience areas, and
- (d) collaborate with experience practitioners in the clinical area.

Criteria 2 (a) Applies to nursing courses only

The course co-ordinator

- (a) is a registered nurse in the Northern Territory and hold an appropriate qualification; and
- (b) has a depth and breadth of experience and knowledge of contemporary issues and practice.

Criteria 2 (b) Applied to midwifery courses only

The course co-ordinator

- (a) is a registered nurse authorised to practise midwifery or a registered midwife in the Northern Territory and hold an appropriate qualification; and
- (b) has a depth and breadth of experience and knowledge of contemporary issues and practice.

Criteria 3

Faculty members responsible for teaching the subjects are appropriately academically and professionally qualified and:

- (a) have appropriate experience in the practice areas for which they are responsible and additional education undertaken at the post graduate level; and
- (b) are experienced in teaching and, preferably have a teaching qualification as well as other academic qualifications.

Criteria 4

The responsibilities/expectations of the faculty members of the school of nursing/school of midwifery include participation in:

- (a) curriculum development, implementation and evaluation;
- (b) the provision of academic advice for, and guidance of, students;
- (c) the preparation and support of clinical teaching staff, including preceptors, to support and guide student learning in the clinical setting and to assess student competency;
- (d) activities directed toward maintenance and development of professional knowledge and practice skills, including participation in faculty development programs and/or other programs of continuing education;

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- (e) research and other scholarly activities to advance nursing/midwifery knowledge and participation in academic activities of the total faculty of the education provider; and
 - (f) professional and community activities directed towards the improvement of health care delivery.

Criteria 5

Technical, typing, clerical and other support staff directly relevant to the operation of the course is provided.

3 Accreditation of Nursing Courses

A major aim of the course is to provide comprehensive preparation of graduates, with grounding in the theory and practice of nursing. It should include, but not be limited to, the basic strands of medical/surgical nursing, community-based nursing and mental health nursing for individuals across the lifespan in both institutional and non-institutional settings. This includes knowledge of, and where possible, clinical experience in rural areas and takes account of current issues in nursing and healthcare.

Criteria 1

The minimum level of qualification for entry to practice for registered nurses is a university-based bachelor degree

Criteria 2

Successful completion of the course leads to an academic award.

Criteria 3

The curriculum is based on the philosophy of the course and takes account of the Board's endorsed competencies and relevant Professional Codes. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) National Competency Standards, Code of Ethics, Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses must be incorporated within the curriculum.

Criteria 4

All courses need to have a rationale that clearly;

- (a) Identifies a need for the course; and
- (b) Provides evidence of consultation with key stakeholders and consumers.

Criteria 5

The curriculum addresses the:

- (a) past, present and emerging roles and context of professional practice;
- (b) need for students to develop reflective, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills, to have opportunities for integrating learning experiences,

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- to accept responsibility and be accountable for professional practice, and to develop their potential as members of the profession and society;
- (c) concept that nurses act in collaboration with the client and are cognisant of the physical, psychological, social, spiritual, cultural needs and expectations of the client; and
- (d) collaboration between nurses and other health professionals.

Criteria 6

The curriculum focuses on theory and practice and is adequately supported by relevant aspects of the biophysical, behavioural and social sciences and is cognisant of the cultural diversity of the health care system.

Criteria 7

The curriculum addresses the cultural and health care needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Criteria 8

The amount of time devoted to the theoretical component of the course and the amount of clinical experience included in the course is consistent with philosophy, course objectives and content. The Board expects a minimum 40-45% of total course time to be allocated to clinical experience in practice settings. Theory and practice are closely correlated throughout the course.

Criteria 9

The clinical experience provides appropriate opportunities for practice in the care of individuals and groups and encompasses the range of health care needs/issue occurring within the spectrum of health and illness. This experience does not include laboratory preparation.

Criteria 10

There are written agreements covering the use of clinical experience facilities provided by hospitals and other health agencies. These agreements are jointly developed, adhered to and periodically reviewed. They also clearly set out the

individual and shared responsibilities of clinical experience and supervision/teaching of students.

Criteria 11

In the clinical practice areas, there is generally one faculty member to a maximum of eight students. It is recognised that alternative arrangements for clinical supervision such as Preceptorship may be appropriate in certain areas of practice.

Criteria 12

Student progress in the theoretical and clinical components of the course is appropriately assessed by a variety of methods.

- (a) Relevant theoretical instruction is to precede practice by the student;
- (b) Direct supervision by the faculty member, preceptor or experienced clinician, is to continue until the student has been assessed to safely carry out the activity or procedure/s;
- (c) Evidence of how preceptors are prepared for their role.

Criteria 13

The curriculum should include details of:

- a) objectives of subject, unites, modules etc, including clear indications as to how these objectives will be achieved;
- b) a brief description of course content, by year, for individual areas/subjects within the course, including laboratory, clinical experience; and details of elective units;
- c) envisaged student workload per year/semester of the course, subject/unit, lecture/seminar/tutorial hours per week, clinical experience hours/week, total student contact hours over the whole course;
- d) the relationship of theory and practice;
- e) details of clinical assessment tool;
- f) books, journals and other materials for each subject (prescribed and reference); and
- g) evidence of how generic subjects (i.e. those shared across courses) will relate to the submitted course.

Criteria 14

Appropriate arrangements are made for ongoing and periodic course review. Course evaluation processes are in place.

4 Accreditation of Midwifery Courses

The philosophy and major aim of the course is to prepare midwives to demonstrate competency against the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Competency Standards for the Midwife that forms the minimum standard of practice for all midwives in the Northern Territory.

Criteria 1

Successful completion of the course leads to an academic award.

Criteria 2

The curriculum is based on the philosophy of the course and takes account of the Board's endorsed competencies and relevant Professional Codes. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Competency Standards for the Midwife and the Australian College of Midwives Code of Ethics must be incorporated within the curriculum.

Criteria 3

All courses need to have a rationale that clearly;

- a) Identifies a need for the course; and
- b) Provides evidence of consultation with key stakeholders and consumers.

Criteria 4

The curriculum addresses the:

- a) past, present and emerging roles and context of professional practice;
- b) need for students to develop reflective, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills, to have opportunities for integrating learning experiences, to accept responsibility and be accountable for professional practice, and to develop their potential as members of the profession and society;
- c) concept that midwives act in collaboration with the client and are cognisant of the physical, psychological, social, spiritual, cultural needs and expectations of the client; and
- d) collaboration between midwives and other health professionals.

Criteria 5

The curriculum focuses on theory and practice and is adequately supported by relevant aspects of the biophysical, behavioural and social sciences and is cognisant of the cultural diversity of the health care system.

Criteria 6

The curriculum addresses the cultural and health care needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Criteria 7

The amount of time devoted to the theoretical component of the course and the amount of clinical experience included in the course is consistent with philosophy, course objectives and content. The Board expects a minimum 40-45% of total course time to be allocated to clinical experience in practice settings. Theory and practice are closely correlated throughout the course.

Criteria 8

The clinical experience provides appropriate opportunities for practice in the care of individuals and groups and encompasses the range of health care needs/issue occurring within the spectrum of health and illness. This experience does not include laboratory preparation.

Criteria 9

There are written agreements covering the use of clinical experience facilities provided by hospitals and other health agencies. These agreements are jointly developed, adhered to and periodically reviewed. They also clearly set out the individual and shared responsibilities of clinical experience and supervision/teaching of students.

Criteria 10

In the clinical practice areas, there is generally one faculty member to a maximum of eight students. It is recognised that alternative arrangements for clinical supervision such as Preceptorship may be appropriate in certain areas of practice.

Criteria 11

Student's progress in the theoretical and clinical components of the course is appropriately assessed by a variety of methods.

- a) Relevant theoretical instruction is to precede practice by the student;
- b) Direct supervision by the faculty member, preceptor or experienced clinician, is to continue until the student has been assessed to safely carry out the activity or procedure/s;
- c) Evidence of how preceptors are prepared for their role.

Criteria 12

The curriculum should include details of:

- a) objectives of subject, unites, modules etc, including clear indications as to how these objectives will be achieved;
- b) a brief description of course content, by year, for individual areas/subjects within the course, including laboratory, clinical experience; and details of elective units;
- c) envisaged student workload per year/semester of the course, subject/unit, lecture/seminar/tutorial hours per week, clinical experience hours/week, total student contact hours over the whole course;
- d) the relationship of theory and practice;
- e) details of clinical assessment tool;
- f) books, journals and other materials for each subject (prescribed and reference); and
- g) evidence of how generic subjects (i.e. those shared across courses) will relate to the submitted course.

Criteria 13

Appropriate arrangements are made for ongoing and periodic course review. Course evaluation processes are in place.

4 Accreditation of Nurse Practitioner Courses

Criteria 1

The course is a master's degree course

Criteria 2

A planning process that includes consultation with specialist colleges and associations for specialty elective/streams of the curriculum has occurred

Criteria 3

The curriculum design included:

- a) Content that meets the extended skill and knowledge requirements in the competency standards for the nurse practitioner;
- b) Content that includes speciality skills and knowledge as indicators or performance in extended practice;
- c) Learning and assessment processes that include capability approaches to learning;
- d) Flexible learning pathways and support for student determined learning goals and strategies;
- e) Structure that give primacy to the clinical field and mentored experiential processes as central to nurse practitioner education.

Criteria 4

Admission criteria for entry of students into the nurse practitioner course will ensure that candidates have sufficient and appropriate background. The required evidence is:

- a) documents that specify requisite length and depth of experience in a specialty field of clinical practice;
- b) documents that specify requisite education or equivalent in a specialty field as entry to the nurse practitioner program;
- c) documentary evidence of required professional activity.

Criteria 5

The program curriculum will demonstrate content that addresses the Nurse Practitioner Competency Standards. The required evidence is:

- a) a detailed map of the curricula that indicated and located the curriculum content related to each of the competencies in the Nurse Practitioner Competency Framework; and
- b) documentary evidence that relevant specialty organisation have been consulted in relation to the specialty/elective streams of the curriculum

Criteria 6

The course curriculum will demonstrate teaching and learning processes that address the requirements for developing capability. The required evidence is:

- a) evidence of curriculum structure that allow for flexible learning pathways and processes fo support for student-determined learning goals and strategies;
- b) Evidence of a curriculum structure that incorporates extensive lerning requirements in the specialist clinical field and mentored experiential processes as central to the educational experience; and
- c) Documentary evidence that curriculum learning and assessment processes include capability approached to learning.

Criteria 7

The course curriculum will demonstrate student assessment processes that address the requirement of developing capability. The required evidence is:

- a) assessment documents will demonstrate a commitment to contextualised, scenario-based assessment strategies; and
- b) student assessment includes a comprehensive portfolio of learning and practice experience that is examined both internally and externally to meet nurse practitioner authorisation requirements.

5 Accreditation of Re-entry courses for nurses and re-entry courses for midwives

Pursuant to section 49(d) of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004*, the Nursing and Midwifery Board will not re-issue practising certificates or register/enrol/authorise for practise, nurses or midwives who have not practised in the preceding five years.

Criteria 1

The content of the curriculum must reflect contemporary nursing/midwifery theory and practice, current knowledge and skills and the cultural diversity of Australia.

Criteria 2

The curriculum should recognise the need for students to:

- a) Develop reflective, critical thinking and problem solving skills and to have opportunities for integrating learning experiences into practice;
- b) Accept responsibility and be accountable for professional practice; and
- c) Develop their potential as individuals, members of the professions and of society;

Criteria 3

The clinical component should provide the necessary experience for nurses/midwives to be able to provide evidence of competence. The clinical component must be a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 60 days duration. This is in addition to any time spent in a clinical laboratory or simulated clinical setting.

Criteria 4

The theoretical and clinical learning experiences are sufficiently flexible to enable students to develop in accordance with their individual abilities and needs.

Criteria 5

The following competencies are to be used as an assessment framework:

- Registered Nurses/Enrolled Nurses – Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Competency Standards.
- Midwives – Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Competency Standards.

6 Accreditation of bridging programs for overseas educated registered nurses

Criteria 1

The content of the curriculum must reflect contemporary nursing theory and practice, current knowledge and skills and the cultural diversity of Australia.

Criteria 2

The curriculum develops the student's understanding of the health status and needs of Indigenous Australian, other cultural groups, rural and remote communities, and the aging population.

Criteria 3

The curriculum should recognise the need for students to:

- a) Develop reflective, critical thinking and problem solving skills and to have opportunities for integrating learning experiences into practice;
- b) Accept responsibility and be accountable for professional practice; and
- c) Develop their potential as individuals, members of the professions and of society.

Criteria 4

Instruction and assessment must be carried out using the English language.

Criteria 5

The theoretical components of the program must include topics congruent with the student being able to demonstrate the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

Criteria 6

The clinical component should provide the necessary experience for nurses to be able to provide evidence of competence.

Criteria 7

The clinical component of the program must be conducted in Australia.

Criteria 8

A minimum 40-45% of total course time to be allocated to clinical experience in practice settings.