

<b>HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY</b>	
<b>Nurse Practitioner Authorisation Policy and Guidelines</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: 1 June 2009</b>	<b>REVIEW DATE: 31 December 2009</b>
<b>BOARD: Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory</b>	

### **PURPOSE OF POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

To inform staff of the Health Professions Licensing Authority, members of the public, intending applicants and members of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory (the Board) regarding the determination of applications for authorisation as a Nurse Practitioner received under Section 32 of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004* (the Act).

### **NURSE PRACTITIONER A PROTECTED TITLE**

Section 31 of the Act provides that the Board can declare a particular area of practice to be a **restricted area of practice**. The Board has declared the practice of midwifery and the practice of a nurse practitioner to be restricted areas of practice. The title “**nurse practitioner**” is a **protected title** and must only be used by a person who is authorised by the Board to practice as a nurse practitioner.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Nurse Practitioner**

A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse educated to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role. The nurse practitioner role is grounded in the nursing profession’s values, knowledge, theories and practice and provides innovative and flexible health care delivery that complements the practice of other health care providers. The scope of practice of the nurse practitioner is determined by the context in which the nurse practitioner is authorised to practice.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Advanced Practice**

Advanced practice is defined as a level of nursing practice that utilises extended and expanded skills, experience and knowledge in assessment, planning, implementation, diagnosis and evaluation of the care required. Nurses practicing at this level are educationally prepared at postgraduate level and may work in a specialist or generalist capacity. However, the basis of the advanced practice is the high degree of knowledge, skill and experience that is applied within the nurse-patient/client relationship to achieve optimal outcomes through critical analysis, problem solving and accurate decision making.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council *National Competency Standards for the Nurse Practitioner* (2006)

## **PRACTICE STANDARDS**

Applicants are required to practice in accordance with relevant legislation, professional practice standards, and Board endorsed policies and codes of conduct, including the following practice standards and guidelines from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council:

*Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse (2006)*  
*National Competency Standards for the Nurse Practitioner (2006)*  
*Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia (2002)*  
*Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia (2003)*  
Available at [www.anmc.org.au](http://www.anmc.org.au)

## **WHO CAN APPLY FOR AUTHORISATION?**

Section 32 of the Act states that:

*A registered health practitioner may apply for an authorisation to practice in a restricted practice area if the health practitioner:*

- (a) Has the qualification, training and experience determined by the relevant Board in respect of the area of practice; or*
- (b) Has qualifications, training and experience that the relevant Board considers to be at least substantially equivalent to those determined by it under paragraph (a).*

## **WHO IS ENTITLED TO AUTHORISATION?**

Section 34 of the Act states that:

*An applicant for an authorisation is entitled to be granted the authorisation if the relevant Board is satisfied that the applicant:*

- (a) Is eligible to apply for the authorisation; and*
- (b) Is competent and has the capacity to practice in the restricted practice area*

## **AUTHORISATION PATHWAYS**

There are three pathways for registered nurses that seek to be authorised to practice as a Nurse Practitioner in the Northern Territory.

**Pathway I** is for registered nurses or midwives who are authorised, registered or endorsed to practice as a Nurse Practitioner by another Australian or New Zealand Nursing and Midwifery Board.

**Pathway II** is for registered nurses or midwives who have completed a masters program accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory as leading to authorisation as a nurse practitioner.

**Pathway III** is for registered nurses or midwives who are working at an advanced practice level and wish to become authorised as a nurse practitioner but have not completed a clinically focused masters program that has been accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory.

## APPLICATION PROCESSES

### Pathway I

Applicants applying via Pathway I must:

1. Provide a current Practising Certificate / License to Practice Card as a Nurse Practitioner in another Australian state or territory or New Zealand; and
2. Complete and lodge an Application for Registration under the Mutual Recognition and Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act form, and pay the prescribed fee.

### Pathway II

Applicants applying via Pathway II must:

1. Provide a current Practising Certificate as a nurse or midwife in the Northern Territory;
2. Provide an official course transcript showing successful completion of a masters educational qualification that has been accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory as leading to authorisation as a nurse practitioner; and
3. Complete and lodge an Application to ADD AUTHORISATION to Practice in a Restricted Area – Nurse Practitioner form, and pay the prescribed fee.

### Pathway III

[NB: Applications for authorisation via Pathway III are **time limited**. The Board will cease to accept applications for authorisation via Pathway III on **31 December 2009**].

Applicants applying via Pathway III must:

1. Provide written notice to the Board of their intention to submit an application. (Advance notice of pending submissions assists the Board in planning for the assessment process).
2. Complete and lodge an Application to ADD AUTHORISATION to practice in a Restricted Area – Nurse Practitioner form, and pay the prescribed fee.
3. Provide documentary evidence of a **minimum of three years advanced practice within the preceding five years**, in the relevant area of practice. This evidence should include:
  - a written submission addressing the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council's *National Competency Standards for the Nurse Practitioner 2006*; and
  - an Advanced Practice Evidence Portfolio. (Information to assist applicants in the preparation of evidence portfolios is at Appendix 1: *A Guide to Developing an Advanced Practice Evidence Portfolio*).
  - Applicants are required to provide five (5) copies of all documentation provided in support of their application. |
4. Attend an interview and oral assessment with the Nurse Practitioner Authorisation Panel, if required.

## **ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS**

### **Pathway I**

Assessment of applications via Pathway I will be based on the applicant having current registration in the category of nurse practitioner in another jurisdiction.

### **Pathway II**

Assessment of applications via Pathway II will be based on the applicant having successfully completed all course requirements by submitting an official course transcript or certificate and providing evidence which shows that they have been assessed against the ANMC competencies for Nurse Practitioners and found competent.

### **Pathway III**

Assessment of applications via Pathway III will be based on an evaluation of the practitioner's application for authorisation as a nurse practitioner conducted by a Nurse Practitioner Authorisation Panel, established pursuant to section 15 of the *Health Practitioner's Act 2004*.

Each Authorisation Panel will comprise of:

- A member of the Board, who will Chair the Panel;
- A nurse academic with current expertise in advanced and extended nursing practice;
- Two registered nurses (ideally they will be authorised as nurse practitioners) with experience in the area of practice;
- Other co-opted members as identified by the Chair of the Panel as necessary for the assessment of the applicant's practice (for example a medical practitioner, mental health specialists, radiographer, pharmacist, pathologist).

The Health Professions Licensing Authority will provide secretariat support to the Panel.

On consideration of the application, the Panel will provide a report to the Board containing a recommendation on the entitlement of the applicant to be authorised to practice as a nurse practitioner.

Applicants should be aware that assessment of authorisation applications under Pathway III can not commence until the Panel is satisfied the application is complete. Applicants should also note that assessment of the application and all supporting documentation can take up to six months, depending on the availability of suitably qualified and experienced panel members to consider the application.

The Panel will consider all complete applications for authorisation to practice as a nurse practitioner, and all applicants will receive a Notice of Decision once the Board has made a determination on the application. Successful applicants will be issued with a practicing certificate noting authorisation to practice as a nurse practitioner. Area of practice will also be listed on the practicing certificate.

## **CONTACTS**

Policy Information: [www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards](http://www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards)

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