

Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified – Registered Nurses 2014

FINAL CONSULTATION

Accreditation Standards for
Entry Programs for
Internationally Qualified –
Registered Nurses 2014

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1 Preamble

1.1 Registered nurse education in Australia

To apply to become a registered nurse in Australia, individuals must first have completed a program of study accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) and approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

To be eligible to register, internationally qualified nurses seeking to practice in Australia must satisfy five criteria determined by the NMBA. These five criteria require the applicant to:

1. establish identity
2. meet current English language proficiency standards
3. meet current Australian nursing education standards
4. provide evidence of recency of nursing practice
5. provide evidence of 'fitness to practice' nursing in Australia.

ANMAC uses the Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses (EPIQ-RN) who want to register in Australia to assess education providers and programs. The objective of the EPIQ-RN programs is to ensure graduates can meet NMBA-approved competencies to practice in the Australian health care setting. The standards must therefore articulate desired competency outcomes of entry level registered nurse programs.

The Australian regulatory environment in which nurses are registered and programs of study are accredited and delivered has undergone significant change. Higher education regulation and quality assurance have also been transformed. National reforms in health policy, governance and funding have also been implemented. These changes form the basis for developing the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards.

1.2 Changes in health practitioner regulation

On 14 July 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish a single national registration scheme for health professionals, beginning with the 10 professional groups then registered by states and territories (the scheme has now been extended to 14 health professions). COAG further agreed to establish a single national accreditation scheme for health education and training, to simplify and improve the consistency of current arrangements.¹ At its 26 March 2008 meeting, COAG agreed to establish the scheme by 1 July 2010. Bills were put before state and territory parliaments, starting with Queensland, to enact the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law) to establish the scheme. The Act establishes, by law, a national registration and accreditation scheme for health practitioners.

The scheme has six objectives with the first of prime importance:

¹ COAG (2008), *Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions*. Accessed at: <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications/Ministerial-Directives-and-Communiqués.aspx> on 12 May 2013.

... to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered.²

Under Section 49(1) of the National Law, graduates who want to study nursing programs cannot register unless the program meets the educational requirements for registration as a registered nurse. This means the program must be accredited by an approved accreditation authority and that the accreditation be approved by the NMBA.

After the National Law was introduced, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) was appointed under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme as the independent accreditation authority for all nursing and midwifery education providers and programs of study leading to registration and endorsement in Australia. ANMC started operations on 1 July 2010.

ANMC changed its name to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) in November 2010 to reflect its principal role as an accrediting authority. Under the National Law, ANMAC:

- is also responsible for monitoring education providers and nursing and midwifery programs of study leading to registration or endorsement
- has the delegated responsibility as the accrediting authority to systematically review profession-specific accreditation standards underpinning all nursing and midwifery programs of study under its mandate.

Professional education accreditation is about the quality of the profession and its work, for public interest and community safety. More broadly, it helps assure the Australian community that beginning nurses and midwives have completed an accredited program of study and achieved agreed professional outcomes. This means beginning practitioners have the foundation knowledge, professional attitudes and essential skills needed to practise in a safe and competent manner.

Accreditation relies on these two principles:

1. Education providers must be authorised to issue qualifications and must be evaluated to assure quality learning outcomes for graduates.
2. Agreed and contemporary competency standards for the profession must be in place and graduates assessed against these.

The first principle is discussed in Section 1.3.

The second principle deals with the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse³ originally developed in the early 1990s. These standards articulate the core competencies used to assess the performance of those wanting to obtain and retain registration to practise as a registered nurse in Australia. They are used by higher education providers when developing nursing curricula and assessing student performance, and by employers evaluating performance in the practice setting.

² Section 3(2)(a) *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*. Accessed at: <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Legislation and Publications 2009> on 13 May 2013.

³ Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2006), *National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse*, January. Accessed at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes and Guidelines> on 13 May 2013.

The National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse—regularly reviewed and revised—were formally adopted by the NMBA in 2010. They will continue to be reviewed against nursing education and practice changes.

The accreditation processes undertaken by ANMAC are an efficient and effective proxy for independently assessing each graduate against relevant competency standards. Professional program accreditation must ensure that professional standards are protected without inhibiting diversity and innovation or constraining continuous quality improvement. As with the national competency standards, the national accreditation standards are regularly reviewed to ensure relevance in the light of pertinent changes in health and education legislation, policy, delivery and ethos.

The principles underpinning the ANMAC Accreditation Standards for EPIQ-RN are to ensure the standards:

- are contemporary and consistent with emerging research, policy and industry guidance, as well as with health and education legislation, policy and delivery
- align with the ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012)
- expose graduates to the theoretical and practical program elements necessary to meet relevant national competency standards
- underpin ANMAC's principles and protocol for accreditation standards
- instil community confidence that the first objective of the National Law is met, which is to:
... provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered.⁴

1.3 Changes in higher education regulation

The policy direction and regulation of the higher education sector in Australia has changed significantly, following to the *Review of Australian Higher Education*.⁵ The Review recommended structural reform, increased funding and improved quality, equity and access. The Australian Government's response, *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System* (December 2008),⁶ heralded a period of transformation in post-secondary education in this country.

On 12 May 2011 the Government announced the establishment of an independent national body to regulate and assure the quality of all types of higher education. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) started on 1 July 2011 to fulfil the Government's commitment to:

... accredit providers, evaluate the performance of institutions and programs, encourage best practice, simplify current regulatory arrangements and provide greater national consistency.⁷

⁴ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009, Section 3(2)(a). Accessed at <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Legislation and Publications 2009> on 13 May 2013.

⁵ Australian Government (2008), *Review of Australian Higher Education—Final Report*. Viewed at: http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Review/Documents/PDF/HigherEducationReview_onedocument_02.pdf on 15 June 2013. Also known as 'The Bradley Review'.

⁶ Australian Government (2009), *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*. Viewed at: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Documents/TransformingAusHigherED.pdf> on 15 June 2013.

⁷ Australian Government (2009), *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, p. 31. Viewed at: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Documents/TransformingAusHigherED.pdf> on 15 June 2013.

The Government also committed to ensuring that growth in the higher education sector would be underpinned by a robust quality assurance and regulatory framework to renew emphasis on student outcomes and the quality of the student experience.⁸

TEQSA will evaluate the performance of universities and other higher education providers every five years, or when there is evidence standards are not being met. As a consequence, TEQSA will regulate and accredit all higher education institutions offering degree programs in nursing and midwifery.

One of TEQSA's first tasks was to review the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes. After doing so, TEQSA prepared the draft Higher Education Standards Framework and consulted widely on it in 2011. The resulting Threshold Standards (comprising the Provider and Qualification Standards), passed into legislation on 4 January 2012. They apply to all higher education providers offering Level 5 (diploma) to Level 10 (doctoral) qualifications as described in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The Teaching and Learning, Research and Information Standards have also been developed.

Another government initiative arising from the *Review of Australian Higher Education* was the publication of the revised AQF (July 2011).⁹ The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into one comprehensive framework comprising 10 levels of qualification (from certificates to doctoral degrees), with a bachelor degree sitting at level 7.

The AQF stipulates the learning outcomes expected within each level of education in relation to knowledge, skills and the application of both. This is to ensure the integrity of qualifications and standardisation across education providers, settings and delivery modes. All education providers offering entry to practice nursing programs must comply with the new AQF criteria for learning outcomes. The Register of AQF Qualifications and Authorised Issuing Organisations¹⁰, lists all qualifications and the organisations authorised to issue them.

1.4 Reform in health policy and funding

Major reforms in the governance, funding and provision of health services are underway.¹¹ The objective is to build a nationally unified and locally controlled health system to improve patient access to health services, performance, transparency and accountability, while ensuring the sustainability of funding. In addition, new national agencies¹² have been announced over the past few years. One of the first is Health Workforce Australia. This organisation is already having a developmental and ongoing influence on the role and number of registered nurses and their place in the professional health services delivery system.

⁸ TEQSA, *About TEQSA*. Viewed at: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/about-teqsa> on 17 June 2013.

⁹ Australian Qualifications Framework Council (2011), *Australian Qualifications Framework First edition 1 July 2011*. Viewed at: http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AustQualsFrmwrkFirstEditionJuly2011_FINAL.pdf on 12 June 2013.

¹⁰ Australian Qualifications Framework Council *AQF Register of AQF Qualifications and Authorised Issuing Organisations*. Viewed at: <http://www.aqf.edu.au/RegisterAccreditation/AQFRegister/tabid/174/Default.aspx> on 12 June 2013.

¹¹ Australian Government (2010), Department of Health and Ageing, *A National Health and Hospitals Network for Australia's Future (2010)* and *A National Health and Hospitals Network: Further Investments in Australia's Health*. Viewed at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/publications-N> on 15 June 2013.

¹² Examples: Independent Hospital Pricing Authority; National Performance Authority; Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care; Australian National Preventive Health Agency; Health Workforce Australia.

While the full impact of reforms is as yet unknown, the policy intent, at least at Australian Government level, is clear. Health services and health professionals are mandated to be more involved in physical and mental health promotion and early intervention to prevent progression of illness. Greater emphasis on providing services in primary and sub-acute care settings is needed, as is stronger inter-professional awareness, collaboration and communication to better support people with complex illness and those who can self-care. Facilitating transition from one health care setting to another is critical to reform success. So too is familiarity with health informatics, including personally-controlled electronic health record. The Australian Government's role as funder and program provider of aged care services emphasises accessible, seamless and comprehensive support for healthy ageing and care for older Australians.

Accountability for the quality and cost of health services delivered by health service providers and professionals is clearly articulated in the new National Health Reform Agreement¹³ between the Australian Government and state and territory governments. Indeed, Australian Government growth funding is predicated on an efficient price for admitted and ambulant care for people and the requirement of providers to meet key performance indicators.

Consequently, it is likely that programs of study leading to registration as a registered nurse will require greater emphasis on understanding the cost drivers of health care as well as enhanced knowledge of quality improvement, performance measurement and care coordination. Broader experience and knowledge of complex care, community, primary and sub-acute health care settings are covered by the National Health Reform Agreement. The education of nurses and other health professionals will require increased attention to developing the knowledge, skills and emphasis to care for the elderly across the spectrum of wellness to ill health, particularly for those with dementia and multiple disease aetiologies. Superior communication and teamwork, delegation and supervision capabilities will be essential pre-requisites in the emerging health care environment. Also important will be the capacity to innovatively use information technology and electronic resources to research the growing evidence base for improved care and treatment methods.

1.5 Background to the review and development of Accreditation Standards

The original *Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses Leading to Registration, Enrolment, Endorsement and Authorisation in Australia—with Evidence Guide* were developed by the ANMC with key industry stakeholders, including regulators, professional bodies and academics, in February 2009. The standards were approved by the newly established NMBA in 2010.¹⁴

As the external accreditation authority for nursing and midwifery programs of study¹⁵, ANMAC has been conducting accreditation assessments of programs of study leading to registration or endorsement as a nurse or midwife since 1 July 2010. During this time, education providers have provided valuable feedback on the Accreditation Standards, as have independent assessment team members, ANMAC

¹³ Council of Australian Governments (2011), *National Health Reform Agreement*. Viewed at: http://www.coag.gov.au/docs/national_health_reform_agreement.pdf on 15 June 2013.

¹⁴ Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (2009), *Registered Nurses Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses Leading to Registration, Enrolment, Endorsement and Authorisation in Australia – with Evidence Guide*, February 2009, Canberra, Australia.

¹⁵ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009, Section 44. Accessed at <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Legislation and Publications 2009> on 13 May 2013.

Associate Directors for Professional Programs and members of the ANMAC Accreditation Committees. Following a request from the NMBA, the ANMAC Board, at its 30 to 31 August 2011 meeting, agreed to undertake a rolling review of all Accreditation Standards used by ANMAC, starting with the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards.

In October 2011, ANMAC started the review of the ANMC *Registered Nurses Standards and Criteria for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses Leading to Registration, Enrolment, Endorsement and Authorisation in Australia – with Evidence Guide* (2009). Extensive stakeholder and other consultation underpinned the review. The NMBA endorsed the final *ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012)*¹⁶ in October 2012.

1.6 Development of the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards

In October 2012, the ANMAC Board convened an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) to oversee the development of the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards.

The group consulted with a wide-ranging list of stakeholders and provided each with a dedicated ANMAC email address to enable them to contribute views at any time.

Constructive and respectful engagement underpinned the process to ensure the standards were contemporary, comprehensive, clearly articulated and nationally consistent.

The standards were developed around three key consultation stages:

Stage 1—First consultation process

The EAG prepared the first consultation paper, which was approved by ANMAC's Standards Accreditation and Assessment Committee (SAAC) and the ANMAC Board and distributed to stakeholders before the first consultation forum.¹⁷ Stakeholders could provide feedback by attending a forum, sending a submission or email or responding to an electronic survey.

The consultation paper was placed on ANMAC's website and the public invited to provide comment. The paper provided the background, context, purpose and process of the review and addressed key areas of change in education and health policy relevant to the development of the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards.

This first consultation process identified strong support for aligning the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards with the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012) and articulating, at a minimum, desired competency outcomes of entry-level programs.

Feedback aligned with the themes identified in Australian and international literature. It identified communication, competency, education, and racial and social integration as the most common issues and agreed that these six key areas must be addressed in all programs for seeking registration in Australia:

- socialising to the contemporary Australian professional nursing role
- acquiring English language and other communication skills

¹⁶ Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (2012), *Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards*. Accessed at http://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/ANMAC_RN_Accreditation_Standards_2012.pdf on 10 July 2013.

¹⁷ Held in 2013—Melbourne (24 April), Perth (30 April) and Brisbane (7 June).

- adapting to the Australian style of interpersonal and interprofessional and intraprofessional relationships
- developing workplace competence, both clinical and organisational
- providing culturally congruent care to diverse populations
- making available culturally safe support systems and resources.^{18,19,20}

Four issues emerged from the first consultation which the EAG, SAAC and ANMAC Board decided to explore further.

The first issue was whether an education provider of entry programs for registration as a registered nurse should be a higher education provider or required to demonstrate formal evidence of a relationship with such a provider. The foundation for this premise is twofold:

- education providers delivering these programs must be experienced in assessing students against the practice standards for registered nurses
- the governance of a higher education provider must be subject to the higher standards of performance, quality assurance and governance expected of universities and higher education providers by TEQSA.

The second issue concerned program length.

The third issue involved workplace practice requirements.

The fourth issue explored what award or qualification, if any, would be appropriate for graduates of these programs.

Stage 2—Second consultation process

The EAG developed a second consultation paper and draft EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards. The second paper raised the issues arising from the first stage of consultation for which the EAG, SAAC and/or the ANMAC Board decided further consultation was required. ANMAC placed these documents on its website and distributed them to stakeholders. Another electronic survey was made available so stakeholders could again provide feedback.

Stage 3—Preparation of accreditation standards

All responses to the electronic survey were considered by the EAG, SAAC and the ANMAC Board. The draft accreditation standards were distributed to stakeholders for review (including for accuracy and completeness) before the second consultation forum.

The four primary issues remaining—category of education provider, what award or qualification, if any, would be appropriate, program content, and workplace practice requirements—were placed on the agenda for the final consultation forum held in Sydney on 4 July 2013. These, and other issues raised by participants during the forum, were discussed in a facilitated session and, for the most part, resolved.

¹⁸ Deegan Dr J Simkin Dr K (2013), *Expert to Novice: Experiences of Professional Adaptation Reported by Non-English Speaking Nurses in Australia*. Accessed at http://www.ajan.com.au/Vol27/AJAN_27-3.pdf#page=32 on 10 May 2013.

¹⁹ Denton S (2009) 'Nation-to-nation: Challenges to addressing the effects of emerging global nurse migration on health care delivery' *Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice* accessed at http://ppn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/7/3_suppl/76s on 10 May 2013.

²⁰ Hawthorne LA (2001) 'The Globalisation of the Nursing Workforce: Barriers Confronting Overseas-qualified Nurses in Australia', *Nursing Inquiry*.

Following a review by the EAG, SAAC and ANMAC Board throughout August and September 2013, the proposed accreditation standards were presented to the NMBA for consideration in October 2013.

Stage 4—Final consultation stage

In April 2014, ANMAC reconvened the EAG to further consider changes to the required level of qualification at the completion of an EPIQ-RN and RN Re-entry program in Australia. The EAG also reviewed feedback received by the NMBA on the proposed standards, received by ANMAC in May 2014. The EAG, SAAC and ANMAC Board then determined that the proposed accreditation standards be made available for a final 6 week consultation period throughout July and August 2014.

It should be noted that these standards are for programs designed for those internationally qualified nurses who the NMBA has determined are not suitable for a program of only supervised practice; or those who should enrol into a Bachelor of Nursing program to gain the qualification required for registration.

1.7 Regulatory impact assessment of EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards

During the development of the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards, ANMAC undertook a regulatory impact assessment.²¹ The Australian Government Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) requires national standard setting agencies such as ANMAC to consider the impact of regulation, standards and other quasi-regulation before approving such instruments. The regulatory impact statement was developed by ANMAC to assist the SAAC and the ANMAC and NMBA Boards in making decisions on approving the proposed accreditation standards.

This assessment was undertaken in accordance with COAG's *Best Practice Regulation—A Guide for Ministerial Councils and National Standard Setting Bodies* 2007. It considered such matters as the costs and benefits of introducing the new accreditation standards, the business compliance costs and the impact on competition.

The assessment concluded that the regulatory impact of the proposed EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards would be minimal. It would be most felt by private providers who need to become an approved higher education provider or establish a partnership through a governance relationship with such a provider if they want to continue to provide programs. The ability to partner is cost effective for health services and registered training organisations (RTOs) who want to provide high-quality programs. In contrast, the benefits to be attained through certain and consistent standards include:

- removal of unregulated providers
- improvements to the quality of education provided in EPIQ-RN
- better certainty for employers on the quality of graduates
- improved certainty for students paying high fees for these programs
- attainment of a nationally recognised qualification.

In May 2014 and in alignment with the requirements of the NMBA and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for all agencies delegated the role of reviewing and developing accreditation standards, ANMAC submitted the proposed EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards to the Office of Best

²¹ Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (2013) *Regulatory Impact Statement – EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards*, July 2013.

Practice Regulation (OBPR) to assess whether a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) was required. ANMAC received confirmation, in July 2014 from the OBPR, that implementation of the proposed EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards would be minor and would not require any changes to the consultation process or a RIS.

1.8 Ratification and approval of EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards

While ANMAC is responsible for developing the accreditation standards, the NMBA is responsible for approving them as qualifications for registrations under the National Law. This same dual regulatory function applies to accrediting individual programs of study leading to registration or endorsement as a nurse or midwife.

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2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the ANMAC accreditation process

The purpose of the ANMAC accreditation process is to ensure the quality of the profession and its work on behalf of public interest and public safety. The public needs to know that education providers of entry programs for internationally qualified nurses produce graduates who are competent to practise safely and effectively and are eligible for registration as registered nurses in Australia.

Education providers must ensure graduates have the required common and transferable skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes (articulated in the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse) upon which to build the competencies they need to practice. Accreditation evaluates whether the provider, on the basis of the evidence provided, is likely to meet this goal.

Professional program accreditation is concerned with the quality of the profession and its work, from the perspective of the public interest and public safety. This is contrasted with accreditation (or similar assessment) of a higher education provider (the provider of professional education) by TEQSA for quality assurance and risk management. However, under this framework, such accreditation or quality assurance of higher education providers is a pre-requisite for accrediting programs of nursing and midwifery study by ANMAC.

External professional (or occupational) accreditation helps assure the community that individual professionals, having completed an accredited program of study, are safe and competent beginning practitioners. It is an efficient and effective proxy for assessing every graduate against the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse. Accreditation therefore involves comprehensively examining the higher education provider's governance system and quality management framework; student enrolment processes, student support, assessment and workplace experience; curriculum philosophy, curriculum structure and content; and teaching and learning approaches.

Periodic accreditation of nursing and midwifery programs stimulates education providers to review and assess their own programs. It draws out weaknesses and gives providers the opportunity to validate the strengths of existing programs and introduce new teaching and learning initiatives.

The ANMAC accreditation process supports diversity, innovation and evolution in approaches to education. In contrast to the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012), these EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards prescribe key elements required in the curricula. This is to ensure equivalence with contemporary nursing practice in Australia for internationally qualified registered nurses.

2.2 EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards

The EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards detail the minimum requirements to be met by education providers seeking accreditation of their program of study by ANMAC. TEQSA-approved higher education providers must seek, and ultimately attain, accreditation for their nursing program of study. Under section 49(1) of the National Law, graduates of programs cannot register unless their program of study is accredited by ANMAC with accreditation approved by NMBA.

The nine EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards are listed in Figure 1 with associated criteria.

Figure 1 Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses Accreditation Standards

<p>STANDARD 1: GOVERNANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The education provider has established governance arrangements for the nursing program of study that develop and deliver a sustainable, high-quality education experience for students, to enable them to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
<p>STANDARD 2: CURRICULUM CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provider makes explicit, and uses a contemporary conceptual framework for the nursing program of study that encompasses the educational philosophy underpinning design and delivery and the philosophical approach to professional nursing practice.
<p>STANDARD 3: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program of study is developed in collaboration with key stakeholders reflecting contemporary trends in nursing and education; complying in length and structure and complies with the Australian Qualifications Framework for the qualification offered and enabling graduates to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse. Workplace experience is sufficient to enable safe and competent nursing practice by program completion.
<p>STANDARD 4: PROGRAM CONTENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program content delivered by the program provider comprehensively addresses the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse and incorporates Australian and international best practice perspectives on nursing as well as existing and emerging national and regional health priorities.
<p>STANDARD 5: STUDENT ASSESSMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum incorporates a variety of approaches to assessment that suit the nature of the learning experience and robustly measure achievement of required learning outcomes, including a summative assessment of student performance against the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
<p>STANDARD 6: STUDENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provider's approach to attracting, enrolling, supporting and assessing students is underpinned by values of transparency, authenticity, equal opportunity and an appreciation of social and cultural diversity.
<p>STANDARD 7: RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provider has adequate facilities, equipment and teaching resources, as well as staff who are qualified, capable and sufficient in number, to enable students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
<p>STANDARD 8: MANAGEMENT OF WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provider ensures that every student is given supervised workplace experiences conducted in an environment(s) providing suitable opportunities and conditions for students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
<p>STANDARD 9: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provider is able to assess and address risks to the program, its outcomes and students, and has a primary focus on continually improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience for students and the competence of graduates.

2.3 Using the Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards

The EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards are designed principally for use by education providers seeking accreditation of an entry to practice program for internationally qualified registered nurses. ANMAC Associate Directors for Professional Programs, members of ANMAC assessment teams and the Registered Nurse Accreditation Committee evaluate programs in accordance with these standards and make recommendations to the ANMAC Board/CEO for determinations.

While the Accreditation Standards are principally for use by education providers, they are also useful for anyone interested and involved in the education of nurses.

Education providers seeking accreditation are required to complete an application pack (available on the ANMAC website). The pack includes the EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards and relevant guidance on addressing them. The guidance is regularly reviewed and updated to assist education providers prepare their submissions.

Other material of assistance to education providers (also available on the website) includes the *National Guidelines for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Programs Leading to Registration and Endorsement in Australia*²², which describes the structures, personnel and processes of accreditation of nursing and midwifery providers and programs of study.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the resources identified on the ANMAC website. Also of interest is the ANMAC Assessor Handbook.²³

²² ANMAC (2011), *National Guidelines for Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Programs of Study Leading to Registration and Endorsement in Australia* – July 2011. Accessed at http://www.anmac.org.au/National_Accreditation_Guidelines_2013 on June 15 2013.

²³ Available at: www.anmac.org.au/assessors.

3 Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified–Registered Nurse

FINAL CONSULTATION

Standard 1: Governance

The education provider has established governance arrangements for the nursing program of study that develop and deliver a sustainable, high-quality education experience for students, to enable them to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

Criteria

The program provider must provide evidence of:

- 1.1 One of the following:
 - a. Current registration with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) as an Australian university or other higher education provider²⁴ offering an entry to practice registered nurse program²⁵.
 - b. Current registration by TEQSA as an Australian university or other higher education provider **not** offering an entry to practice registered nurse program that has a formal agreement in place with an Australian university or other higher education provider with current TEQSA registration and offering an entry to practice registered nurse program.
 - c. An Australian registered training organisation (RTO) that has a formal governance arrangement with an Australian university or other higher education provider with current TEQSA registration and offering an entry to practice registered nurse program.
- 1.2 Current accreditation of this EPIQ-RN program of study by the university (or TEQSA for non-self-accrediting higher education providers) detailing the expiry date and recommendations, conditions and progress reports related to the school.
- 1.3 Meeting the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements for a minimum level 7 award program, and be issued with a statement of completion/attainment by the governing Australian university or higher education provider.
- 1.4 Current registration as a Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) provider, where relevant, for visa classification.
- 1.5 Current, documented academic governance structure for the university (or other higher education provider) and program provider that ensures academic oversight of the program and promotes high-quality teaching and learning, scholarship, research and ongoing evaluation.
- 1.6 Terms of reference for relevant program advisory committees demonstrating partnership with key stakeholders, including partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals and communities.
- 1.7 Staff delegations, reporting relationships, and the role of persons or committees in decision making related to the program.

²⁴ For explanation of provider categories see: Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency (2011), *Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards) 2011 Legislative Instrument, Chapter 2*. Accessed at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/higher-education-standards-framework> on 7 June 2013.

²⁵ Entry to practice program: For registration as a registered nurse, the minimum qualification must be a Bachelor degree (or where relevant, a postgraduate qualification) delivered by a university or higher education provider and the minimum length of the course is equivalent to six semesters' full-time study.

- 1.8 Governance arrangements between the university or higher education provider and the program provider that ensures responsiveness to accreditation requirements for ongoing compliance with accreditation standards.
- 1.9 Policies confirming that credit transfer or the recognition of prior learning that are consistent with AQF national principles are not available to students seeking entry into the proposed program.

FINAL CONSULTATION

Standard 2: Curriculum Conceptual Framework

The program provider makes explicit, and uses a contemporary conceptual framework for the nursing program of study that encompasses the educational philosophy underpinning design and delivery and the philosophical approach to professional nursing practice.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 2.1 A clearly documented and explained conceptual framework for the program, including the educational and professional nursing philosophies underpinning the curriculum.
- 2.2 The incorporation of contemporary Australian and international best practice teaching, learning and assessment methodologies and technologies to enhance the delivery of curriculum content, stimulate student engagement and promote understanding.
- 2.3 A program of study that is congruent with contemporary and evidence-based approaches to professional nursing practice and education.
- 2.4 Teaching and learning approaches that:
 - a. enable achievement of stated learning outcomes
 - b. facilitate the integration of theory and practice
 - c. scaffold learning appropriately throughout the program
 - d. encourage the application of critical thinking frameworks and problem-solving skills
 - e. engender deep rather than surface learning
 - f. encourage students to become self-directed learners
 - g. embed recognition that graduates take professional responsibility for continuing competence and life-long learning
 - h. instil students with the desire and capacity to continue to use, and learn from, emerging research throughout their careers
 - i. promote emotional intelligence, communication, collaboration, cultural safety, ethical practice and leadership skills expected of registered nurses
 - j. incorporate an understanding of, and engagement with, intraprofessional and interprofessional learning for collaborative practice.

Standard 3: Program Development and Structure

The program of study is developed in collaboration with key stakeholders reflecting contemporary trends in nursing and education; complying in length and structure with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) for the qualification offered and enabling graduates to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse. Workplace experience is sufficient to enable safe and competent nursing practice by program completion.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 3.1 Consultative and collaborative approaches to curriculum design and program organisation between academic staff, those working in health disciplines, students, consumers and other key stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals.
- 3.2 Contemporary nursing and education practice in the development and design of curriculum.
- 3.3 A map of subjects against the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse which clearly identifies the links between learning outcomes, assessments and required graduate competencies.
- 3.4 Descriptions of curriculum content and the rationale for its extent, depth and sequencing in relation to the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of students.
- 3.5 Opportunities for student interaction with other health professions to support understanding of the multi-professional health care environment and facilitate interprofessional learning for collaborative practice.
- 3.6 A minimum of 240 hours of workplace experience, not inclusive of simulation activities, incorporated into the program.
- 3.7 Content and sequencing of the program of study prepares students for workplace experience and incorporates opportunities for simulated learning.
- 3.8 Workplace experience in Australia to consolidate the acquisition of competence and facilitate transition to practice. A summative assessment is made against all National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse in the clinical setting.
- 3.9 Equivalence of subject outcomes for programs taught in Australia in all delivery modes in which the program is offered (subjects delivered on-campus or in mixed-mode, by distance or by e-learning methods).
- 3.10 Where the structure of the program allows for multiple entry pathways for which students receive block credit or advanced standing (other than on an individual basis), evidence that each pathway meets the ANMAC *Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Nurses - Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards*.

Standard 4: Program Content

The program content delivered by the program provider comprehensively addresses the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse and incorporates Australian and international best practice perspectives on nursing as well as existing and emerging national and regional health priorities.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 4.1 A comprehensive curriculum document structured around the conceptual framework that includes:
 - a. program structure and delivery modes
 - b. subject outlines
 - c. linkages between subject objectives, learning outcomes and their assessment, and national competencies
 - d. teaching and learning strategies
 - e. a workplace experience plan.
- 4.2 The central focus of the program is nursing practice in the Australian context. This comprises core health professional knowledge and skills and specific nursing practice knowledge and skills that are evidence based, applied across the human lifespan and incorporate existing and emerging national and regional health priorities, health research, health policy and reform.
- 4.3 Nursing research and evidence-based inquiry underpins all elements of curriculum content and delivery.
- 4.4 Program content supports the development and application of professional knowledge and skills including but not limited to:
 - a. critical thinking, analysis and decision making
 - b. essentials of care²⁶
 - c. professional culture and behaviour in the Australian health care context
 - d. cultural competence
 - e. delegation, supervision and leadership
 - f. quality improvement methodologies
 - g. research appreciation and translation
 - h. legal and ethical obligations, responsibilities and issues in health care and research
 - i. health informatics and health technology

²⁶ Essentials of care are the aspects of care that are fundamental to a person's health and wellbeing (New South Wales Health Essentials of Care program accessed at <http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/projects/eoc> on 23 July 2013). These may include, but are not limited to, personal care, promotion of self-care, fluid and nutritional management, clinical interventions including wound management, acute and chronic health care.

- j. social determinants of health and wellbeing
 - k. rural and remote health
 - l. mental health
 - m. chronic disease and self-management
 - n. primary health care
 - o. health professional regulation and health policy
 - p. pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics
 - q. National Safety and Quality Standards²⁷ including but not limited to:
 - documentation and communication
 - recognition of and response to the deteriorating health of the patient
 - infection control
 - quality use of medicines
 - prevention of risk and promotion of safety
 - clinical monitoring and management.
- 4.5 Inclusion of subject matter that gives students an appreciation of the diversity of Australian culture, develops their knowledge of cultural respect and safety, and engenders the appropriate skills and attitudes.
- 4.6 Inclusion of discrete subject matter specifically addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, health, wellness and culture. Health conditions prevalent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also appropriately embedded within the curriculum.

²⁷ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2012), *The National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards*. Accessed at: <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/NSQHS-Standards-Sept-2012.pdf> on 23 July 2013.

Standard 5: Student Assessment

The curriculum incorporates a variety of approaches to assessment that suit the nature of the learning experience and robustly measure achievement of required learning outcomes, including a summative assessment of student performance against the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 5.1 A consistent approach to student assessment across teaching sites and modalities that is periodically reviewed and updated.
- 5.2 Clear statements about assessment and progression requirements provided to students at the commencement of the program.
- 5.3 The level, number and context of assessments are consistent with determining the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.
- 5.4 Both formative and summative assessment types and tasks exist across the program to enhance individual and collective learning as well as inform student progression.
- 5.5 Various assessment approaches across a range of contexts to evaluate competence in the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours required for professional nursing practice.
- 5.6 Assessment of student communication competence and English language proficiency before undertaking workplace experience.
- 5.7 Validated instruments are used in workplace experience assessment to evaluate student knowledge, skills, behaviours and competence.
- 5.8 Ultimate accountability for assessing students in relation to their workplace experience.
- 5.9 Assessments include the appraisal of competence in the quality use of medicines.
- 5.10 Evidence of procedural controls, fairness, reliability, validity and transparency in assessing students.
- 5.11 Processes to ensure the integrity of online assessment.
- 5.12 Collaboration between health service providers (where relevant) and teaching staff in selecting and implementing assessment methods.
- 5.13 A summative assessment of student achievement of competence against the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse is conducted by a registered nurse (registered by the NMBA and who has demonstrated current experience in conducting the summative assessment of students in an entry to practice program) in an Australian clinical context before program completion.

Standard 6: Students

The program provider's approach to attracting, enrolling, supporting and assessing students is underpinned by values of transparency, authenticity, equal opportunity and an appreciation of social and cultural diversity.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 6.1 Applicants are informed of the following before accepting an offer of enrolment:
 - a. specific requirements for entry to the program of study including English language proficiency
 - b. that education providers will, under the National Law, register students with the NMBA and notify the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency if a student undertaking clinical training has an impairment that may place the public at risk of harm
 - c. specific requirements for right of entry to health services for workplace experience (including fitness for practice, immunisation and criminal history)
 - d. requirements for registration as required and approved by the NMBA including, but not limited to, the explicit registration standard on English language skills.
- 6.2 Students are selected for the program based on clear, justifiable and published admission criteria.
- 6.3 Students have met the NMBA English language proficiency requirements before entering the program and have demonstrated they have the communication skills needed to successfully undertake academic and workplace experience requirements throughout the program.
- 6.4 Students are informed about, and have access to, appropriate support services including counselling, health care and educational advisory services.
- 6.5 Processes to enable early identification and support for students who are not performing well.
- 6.6 All students have equal opportunity to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse. The mode or location of program delivery should not influence this.
- 6.7 Processes for student representation and feedback in matters relating to governance and program management, content, delivery and evaluation.

Standard 7: Resources

The program provider has adequate facilities, equipment and teaching resources, as well as staff who are qualified, capable and sufficient in number, to enable students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 7.1 Staff, facilities, equipment and other teaching resources are sufficient in quality and quantity for the anticipated student population and any planned increase.
- 7.2 Students have sufficient and timely access to academic and clinical teaching staff to support their learning.
- 7.3 A balance of academic, clinical, technical and administrative staff appropriate to meeting teaching, research and governance commitments.
- 7.4 Staff recruitment strategies are culturally inclusive and reflect population diversity in Australia.
- 7.5 Documented position descriptions for teaching staff, clearly articulating roles, reporting relationships, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- 7.6 The head of program is a registered nurse who holds a current Australian general registration, who has no conditions on their registration relating to conduct, and who holds a relevant post-graduate qualification.
- 7.7 Staff teaching and assessing nursing practice related subjects are registered nurses and have relevant clinical and academic experience.
- 7.8 Academic staff are qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching, to at least one qualification standard higher than the program of study being taught or with equivalent professional experience.
- 7.9 In cases where an academic staff member's tertiary qualifications do not include nursing, their qualifications and experience are relevant to the subject areas they are teaching.
- 7.10 Processes to ensure academic staff have a sound understanding of contemporary scholarship and professional practice in the subject areas they teach.
- 7.11 Teaching and learning takes place in an active research environment where academic staff are engaged in research and/or scholarship and/or generating new knowledge. Areas of interest, publications, grants and conference papers are documented.
- 7.12 Policies and processes to verify and monitor the academic and professional credentials, including registration, of current and incoming staff and evaluate their performance and development needs.

Standard 8: Management of Workplace Experience

The program provider ensures that every student is given supervised workplace experiences conducted in an environment(s) providing suitable opportunities and conditions for students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 8.1 Constructive relationships and clear contractual arrangements with all health providers where students gain their workplace experience and processes to ensure these are regularly evaluated and updated.
- 8.2 Risk management strategies in all environments where students are placed to gain their workplace experiences and processes to ensure these are regularly reviewed and updated.
- 8.3 Workplace experiences are appropriate for students to attain the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.4 Each student is provided with quality and appropriate workplace experiences that reflect major health priorities and contemporary nursing practice. Opportunities are provided for intraprofessional and interprofessional learning and the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours for collaborative practice.
- 8.5 Clearly articulated models of supervision, support, facilitation and assessment are in place so students can achieve required learning outcomes and current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.6 Academics, nurse clinicians and other health professionals engaged in supervising and supporting students during workplace experiences are adequately prepared for this role and seek to incorporate contemporary and evidence-based Australian and international perspectives on nursing practice.
- 8.7 Assessment of nursing competence within the context of the workplace experience is undertaken by an appropriately qualified and prepared registered nurse practicing in Australia who has current skills in assessing undergraduate students against the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.8 Appropriate resources are provided, monitored and regularly evaluated to support students while on workplace experience.

Standard 9: Quality Improvement and Risk Management

The program provider is able to assess and address risks to the program, its outcomes and students, and has a primary focus on continually improving the quality of the teaching and learning experience for students and the competence of graduates.

Criteria

The program provider demonstrates:

- 9.1 Responsibility and control of program development, monitoring, review, evaluation and quality improvement is delegated to the nursing school with oversight by the academic board and/or appropriate governance body.
- 9.2 Regular evaluation of academic and clinical supervisor effectiveness using feedback from students and other sources; systems to monitor and, where necessary, improve staff performance.
- 9.3 Professional and academic development of staff to advance knowledge and competence in teaching effectiveness and assessment.
- 9.4 Feedback gained from the quality cycle incorporated into the program of study to improve the experience of theory and practice learning for students.
- 9.5 Regular evaluation and revision of program content to include contemporary and emerging issues surrounding nursing practice, health care research and health policy and reform.
- 9.6 Students and staff are adequately indemnified for relevant activities undertaken as part of program requirements.

4 Glossary and Abbreviations

Advanced standing—recognition of prior learning in terms of experience and/or studies.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)—the organisation responsible for the implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme across Australia. Supports the National Health Practitioner Boards (such as the Nursing and Midwifery Board Australia) in implementing the scheme.

ANMAC—the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council is the independent accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. ANMAC sets standards for accreditation and accredits nursing and midwifery programs leading to registration and endorsement; and the providers of those programs.

ANMC—the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council evolved into ANMAC following approval as the accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery. ANMC authored the original set of Accreditation Standards as well as the National Competency Standards for nursing and midwifery.

AQF—the Australian Qualifications Framework is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

AQF qualification—the result of an accredited complete program of learning leading to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

AQF register—a register of all AQF qualifications and the organisations authorised to issue them.

Australian university—a higher education provider registered with TEQSA in the ‘Australian University’ provider category.

Block Credit—the recognition of previously completed formal training/qualifications such that credit is given for whole stages or components of a program.

COAG—the Council of Australian Governments is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia, comprising the Prime Minister, state premiers, territory chief ministers and the president of the Australian Local Government Association.

Collaborative practice—where health professionals work as an effective team, optimising individual skills and talents and sharing case management to reach the highest of patient care standards.

Competence—the combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities underpinning effective and/or superior performance in a profession or occupational area (from the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse).

Competent—when a person is competent across all the domains of competencies applicable to the nurse or midwife, at a standard judged to be appropriate for the level of nurse being assessed (from the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse).

Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)—these are providers of nationally recognised training to overseas students who have Australian student visas. Only these providers can enrol overseas students or issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment to them.

Criteria—rules or tests on which a judgement or decision in relation to compliance with the Accreditation Standards can be based.

Curriculum— the full outline of a program of study, usually built around a conceptual framework with the educational and professional nursing or midwifery philosophies underpinning the curriculum

and includes: the philosophy for the program; the program structure and delivery modes; subject outlines; linkages between learning outcomes and their assessment, and national competencies; teaching and learning strategies; and a workplace experience plan.

Education provider—university, or other higher education provider, responsible for a *program of study*, the graduates of which are eligible to apply to the NMBA for nursing or midwifery registration or endorsement.

Entry to practice program - An NMBA approved three year program of education for entry to the register as a Registered Nurse For registration as a registered nurse, the minimum qualification must be a Bachelor degree (or where relevant, a postgraduate qualification) offered by a university of higher education provider and the minimum length of the course is equivalent to six semesters' full-time study

Equivalent professional experience—successful completion of a qualification equivalent to that being taught and sufficient post-graduate professional experience²⁸ in the discipline being taught to demonstrate competence in applying the discipline's principles and theory.

Essentials of care—the aspects of care that are fundamental to a person's health and wellbeing. These may include but are not limited to: personal care, promotion of self-care, fluid and nutritional management, clinical interventions including wound management, acute and chronic health care.

Governance—framework, systems and processes supporting and guiding the organisation towards achieving its goals and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements.

Graduate competency outcomes—knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes possessed by graduating students in accordance with the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

Head of school or discipline—lead nursing academic responsible for the design and delivery of the program of study on behalf of the education provider.

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (National Law)—contained in the Schedule to the Act. This second stage legislation provides for the full operation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions from 1 July 2010 and covers the more substantial elements of the national scheme, including registration arrangements, accreditation arrangements, complaints, conduct, health and performance arrangements, and privacy and information-sharing arrangements. The purpose is to protect the public by establishing a national scheme for regulating health practitioners and students undertaking programs of study leading to registration as a health practitioner. The National Law is legislated in each state and territory.

Higher education provider—tertiary education provider who meets the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) as prescribed by the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* and is currently registered with TEQSA.

Health Workforce Australia (HWA)—an initiative of the COAG and established to meet the challenges of providing a health workforce that responds to the needs of the Australian community.

Internationally qualified nurse – for the purposes of this document an internationally qualified nurse is defined as a registered nurse not registered in Australia but who obtained their nursing qualification(s) and registration in a country outside of Australia.

²⁸ To be read in the context of the *Recency of practice registration standard*, NMBA. Accessed at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx> on 19 June 2013.

Interprofessional learning—occurs when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care.

National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse—core competency standards by which performance and professional conduct is assessed to obtain and retain registration as a Registered Nurse.²⁹

NMBA— the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia is the national regulator of nursing and midwifery professions in Australia. It is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory. Its primary role is to protect the public and set standards and policies that all nurses and midwives registered within Australia must meet.

Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR)—The office administers the Australian Government’s regulatory impact analysis requirements. It has a number of roles, including: assisting agencies in preparing regulation impact statements through training and guidance; monitoring and reporting on the government’s regulatory impact analysis requirements; and administering COAG guidelines for regulation making by national bodies.³⁰

Pharmacodynamics—the study of the biochemical and physiological effects of drugs and the mechanisms of their action in the body.

Pharmacokinetics—the study of the bodily absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion of drugs.

Program or program of study—the full program of study and experiences that must be completed before a qualification recognised under the AQF, such as a Bachelor or Masters of Nursing, can be awarded.

Program provider—school or faculty responsible for the design and delivery of a program of study in nursing leading to the award of a Bachelor Degree in nursing as a minimum.

Recognition of prior learning—an assessment process for the students formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that they have achieved required learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards for entry to and/or partial or total completion of a qualification.

Registered nurse (RN)—a person with appropriate educational preparation and competence for practice, who is registered by the NMBA to practise nursing in Australia.

Regulatory impact statement (RIS)—a key component of the Australian Government’s best practice regulation process is a regulation impact statement, containing seven elements setting out:

1. problems or issues that give rise to the need for action
2. desired objectives
3. options that may achieve the desired objectives (at a minimum a regulatory option, a non-regulatory or light-handed regulatory option, and a do-nothing option)
4. assessment of impact (costs, benefits and, where relevant, levels of risk) of options for consumers, business, government and the community
5. consultation

²⁹ Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia *Registered Nurse Competency Standards 2006*. Accessed at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx> on 19 June 2013.

³⁰ The role of the OBPR is formally set out in a charter available at: <http://www.finance.gov.au/obpr/about/charter.html>. Accessed on 2 August 2013.

6. recommended option
7. strategy to implement and review the preferred option.

The purpose of a regulatory impact statement is to:

- give decision makers a balanced assessment based on the best available information
- inform interested stakeholders and the community about the likely impact of the proposal and the information decision makers took into account.³¹

Research—According to the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research specifications for the Higher Education Research Data Collection, research comprises:

- Creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.
- Any activity classified as research which is characterised by originality; it should have investigation as a primary objective and should have the potential to produce results that are sufficiently general for humanity's stock of knowledge (theoretical and/or practical) to be recognisably increased. Most higher education research work would qualify as research.
- Pure basic research, strategic basic research, applied research and experimental development.

Scholarship—application of systematic approaches to acquiring knowledge through intellectual inquiry. Includes disseminating this knowledge through various means such as publications, presentations (verbal and audio-visual), professional practice and the application of this new knowledge to the enrichment of the life of society.

School—organisational entity of an education provider responsible for the design and delivery of a program of study in nursing or midwifery. Where the school of nursing is part of a larger faculty, the school is regarded as the program provider for the purposes of these standards.

Simulation—any educational method or experience evoking or replicating aspects of the real world in an interactive manner.

Standard—level of quality or attainment.

Subject—unit of study taught within a program of study.

Student assessment—process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes. May include written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)—established in July 2011 to regulate and assure the quality of Australia's large, diverse and complex higher education sector. From January 2012, the TEQSA will register and evaluate the performance of higher education providers against the new Higher Education Standards Framework. TEQSA will undertake compliance assessments and quality assessments.

Workplace experience—component of nursing education allowing students to use judgement when applying theoretical knowledge in an actual practice setting. Includes the concept of 'clinical training' as embodied in the National Law.

³¹ Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) (2013) *Best Practice Regulation Handbook*. Accessed at: <http://www.finance.gov.au/obpr/proposal/handbook/Content/01-productivity-evidence-based-policy.html> on 12 August 2013.