



Australian  
**Nursing & Midwifery**  
Accreditation Council

registered nurses

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



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# Acknowledgements

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# 1 Preamble

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## 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 a number of requirements determined by the NMBA. Applicants are required to provide evidence which:

1. establishes identity
2. meets the current English language proficiency registration standard
3. meets the current Australian nursing education standards
4. confirms recency of nursing practice
5. meets the current criminal history registration standard
6. confirms fitness to practice nursing in Australia.

ANMAC uses the Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses (EPIQ RN) to assess education providers and programs of study. The objective of the EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards is to ensure graduates can meet NMBA approved National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse in the Australian health-care setting. The standards must therefore articulate desired 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 since 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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

... 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 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 practice 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 Nurse<sup>3</sup> originally developed in the early 1990s. These standards articulate the core competencies used to assess the performance of those wanting to obtain and/or 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 when evaluating performance in the practice setting.

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. Current NMBA revisions indicate that they will in time become ‘standards for practice’.

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

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

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 ANMAC's EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards are designed 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.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.3 Changes in higher education regulation

The policy direction and regulation of the higher education sector in Australia has changed significantly, following the *Review of Australian Higher Education*.<sup>5</sup> 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),<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

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.

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

5 Australian Government (2008), *Review of Australian Higher Education—Final Report*. Accessed on 15 June 2013: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Review/Documents/PDF/HigherEducationReview\\_onedocument\\_02.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Review/Documents/PDF/HigherEducationReview_onedocument_02.pdf) Also known as 'The Bradley Review'.

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

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

8 Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, About TEQSA. Accessed on 17 June 2013: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/about-teqsa>

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 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 were subsequently developed.

Another government initiative arising from the *Review of Australian Higher Education* was the publication of the revised AQF (July 2011).<sup>9</sup> 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 AQF register lists all qualifications and the AQF authorised organisations that issue such qualifications.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.4 Reform in health policy and funding

Major reforms in the governance, funding and provision of health services are underway.<sup>11</sup> 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 agencies<sup>12</sup> have been announced over the past few years.

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 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 records. 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 Agreement<sup>13</sup> 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.

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9 Australian Qualifications Framework Council (2011), *Australian Qualifications Framework*, First edition, 1 July 2011. Accessed on 12 June 2013: [http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AustQualsFrmwrkFirstEditionJuly2011\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AustQualsFrmwrkFirstEditionJuly2011_FINAL.pdf).

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

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*. Accessed on 15 June 2013: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/publications-N>

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.

13 Council of Australian Governments (2011), *National Health Reform Agreement*. Accessed on 15 June 2013: [http://www.coag.gov.au/docs/national\\_health\\_reform\\_agreement.pdf](http://www.coag.gov.au/docs/national_health_reform_agreement.pdf)

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 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.<sup>14</sup>

As the external accreditation authority for nursing and midwifery programs of study<sup>15</sup>, 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 Associate Directors for Professional Programs and members of ANMAC's 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 Nurse 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)<sup>16</sup> in October 2012.

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14 Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (2009), *Registered Nurse 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 on 13 May 2013: <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Legislation/Publications/2009>

16 Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (2012), *Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards*. Accessed on 10 July 2013: [http://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/ANMAC\\_RN\\_Accreditation\\_Standards\\_2012.pdf](http://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/ANMAC_RN_Accreditation_Standards_2012.pdf)

## 1.6 Development of the Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses

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 it to stakeholders before the first consultation forum.<sup>17</sup> Stakeholders were invited to 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 comment. The paper covered 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
- 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.<sup>18,19,20</sup>

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

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

18 Deegan Dr J, Simkin Dr K (2013), *Expert to Novice: Experiences of Professional Adaptation Reported by Non-English Speaking Nurses in Australia*. Accessed on 10 May 2013: [http://www.ajan.com.au/Vol27/AJAN\\_27-3.pdf#page=32](http://www.ajan.com.au/Vol27/AJAN_27-3.pdf#page=32)

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 on 10 May 2013: [http://ppn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/7/3\\_suppl/76s](http://ppn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/7/3_suppl/76s)

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

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 was two-fold:

- 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. This paper raised the issues arising from Stage 1 for which the EAG, SAAC and 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 EPIQ RN 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. 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 program or Registered Nurse Re-entry program in Australia. The EAG also reviewed feedback received by the NMBA on the proposed standards. ANMAC received the EAG's review in May 2014. The EAG, SAAC and ANMAC Board then determined that the proposed EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards be made available for a final six-week consultation period throughout July and August 2014.

It should be noted that these standards are for programs designed for internationally qualified nurses whom 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 Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses

During the development of the EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards, ANMAC undertook a regulatory impact assessment.<sup>21</sup> The Australian Government's 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 SAAC, as well as 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 that 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 the EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards
- 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 Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for all agencies that are delegated to review and develop accreditation standards, ANMAC submitted the proposed EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards to the OBPR to assess whether a Regulation Impact Statement was required. ANMAC received confirmation from the OBPR, in July 2014, that implementation of the proposed EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards would be minor and not require changes to the consultation process or Regulation Impact Statement.

## 1.8 Ratification and approval of Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses

While ANMAC is responsible for developing the accreditation standards, the NMBA is responsible for approving them as qualifications for registration 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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<sup>21</sup> Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (2013), *Regulatory Impact Statement—EPIQ-RN Accreditation Standards*, July 2013.

## 2 Introduction

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### 2.1 Purpose of ANMAC's accreditation process

The purpose of ANMAC's 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 education 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 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. ANMAC's accreditation process supports diversity, innovation and evolution in approaches to education. In contrast to the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (2012), the 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 Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses

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 obtain, 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 the NMBA.

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

**Figure 1: Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses**

**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.

**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.

**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 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 meet the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

**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 meet the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

**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.

## 2.3 Using the Accreditation Standards for Entry Programs for Internationally Qualified Registered Nurses

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 and Chief Executive Officer 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.

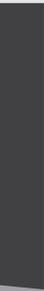
Education providers seeking accreditation are required to complete an application pack (available on ANMAC's website). The pack includes the EPIQ RN Accreditation Standards and relevant guidance on addressing them. The guidance is regularly reviewed and updated to assist education providers to prepare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

Other material of assistance to education providers (also available on ANMAC's website) includes the National Guidelines for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Programs Leading to Registration and Endorsement in Australia<sup>22</sup>, 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 ANMAC's website.

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22 Australian Nursing and Midwifery Association (2011), National Guidelines for Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Programs of Study Leading to Registration and Endorsement in Australia—July 2011. Accessed on 14 June 2013: [http://www.anmac.org.au/National\\_Accreditation\\_Guidelines\\_201](http://www.anmac.org.au/National_Accreditation_Guidelines_201)



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

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#### 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 education provider must demonstrate evidence of:

- 1.1 Current registration with one of the following:
  - a. TEQSA as an Australian university or other higher education provider<sup>23</sup> offering an entry to practice registered nurse program.<sup>24</sup>
  - b. 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. AQSA as an Australian registered training organisation that has a formal governance arrangement in place with an Australian university or other higher education provider, which has current registration with TEQSA and offers 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 AQF requirements for a minimum level 7 award program, and having been issued with a statement of completion and/or 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 provider, where relevant, for visa classification.

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<sup>23</sup> For explanation of provider categories: Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency (2011), *Higher Education Standards (Threshold Standards) 2011 Legislative Instrument, Chapter 2*. Accessed on 7 June 2013: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/higher-education-standards-framework>

<sup>24</sup> 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 of full-time study.

- 1.5 Current documented academic governance structure for the university (or other higher education provider) and program provider that illustrates academic oversight of the entry to practice registered nurse program and promotes high-quality teaching and learning, scholarships, 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 involved in making decisions relating to the entry to practice registered nurse program.
- 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 recognition of prior learning, consistent with AQF national principles, are not available to students seeking entry into the proposed program.

## 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 must demonstrate evidence of:

- 2.1 A clearly documented and fully explained conceptual framework for the entry to practice registered nurse 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 designed 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 their 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 the 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 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 must demonstrate evidence of:

- 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 aligned 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 The program incorporating a minimum of 240 hours of workplace experience, not inclusive of simulation activities.
- 3.7 Content and sequencing of the program that 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 conducted 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 (subjects delivered on-campus or in mixed-mode, by distance or by e-learning methods).

## 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 must demonstrate evidence of:

- 4.1 A comprehensive curriculum document structured around the program provider's conceptual framework that includes:
  - a. program structure and delivery modes
  - b. subject outlines
  - c. links between subject objectives, learning outcomes, learning assessments and national competencies
  - d. teaching and learning strategies
  - e. a workplace experience plan.
- 4.2 The program's central focus on nursing practice in the Australian health care context, comprising 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 underpinning all elements of curriculum content and delivery.
- 4.4 Program content that 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 care<sup>25</sup>
  - 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

<sup>25</sup> Essentials of care are aspects of care that are fundamental to a person's health and wellbeing (New South Wales Health Essentials of Care program. Accessed on 23 July 2013: <http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/projects/eoc>. 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.

- i. health informatics and health technology
  - 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 Standards<sup>26</sup>, including but not limited to:
    - documentation and communication
    - recognition of and response to the patient's deteriorating health
    - 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.
- 4.7 A curriculum that embeds health conditions prevalent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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<sup>26</sup> Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2012), *The National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards*. Accessed on 23 July 2013; <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/NSQHS-Standards-Sept-2012.pdf>

## 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 must demonstrate evidence of:

- 5.1 Consistent approaches used for student assessment across teaching sites and modalities and how this approach is periodically reviewed and updated.
- 5.2 Clear statements about assessment and progression requirements that are provided to students at the start of the program.
- 5.3 The level, number and context of assessments that are consistent with determining the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.
- 5.4 Formative and summative assessment types and tasks that exist across the program to enhance individual and collective learning as well as inform student progression.
- 5.5 Assessment approaches used across a range of contexts to evaluate competence in the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours required for professional nursing practice.
- 5.6 Assessment approaches used to evaluate student communication competence and English language proficiency before workplace experience begins.
- 5.7 Validated instruments used in workplace experience assessments to evaluate student knowledge, skills, behaviours and competence.
- 5.8 Ultimate accountability mechanisms in place for assessing students on their workplace experience.
- 5.9 Assessments included in the appraisal of competence in the quality use of medicines.
- 5.10 Procedural, fairness, reliability, validity and transparency controls in place to assess students.
- 5.11 Processes in place 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 Summative assessments of student achievement of competence against the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse 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 must demonstrate evidence of:

- 6.1 Applicants being informed of the following before accepting an offer of enrolment:
  - a. specific requirements for entry to the program, including English language proficiency
  - b. how education providers will, under the National Law, register students with the NMBA and notify the AHPRA 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 being selected for the program based on clear, justifiable and published admission criteria.
- 6.3 Students having met the NMBA English language proficiency requirements before entering the program and having demonstrated they have the communication skills needed to successfully undertake academic and workplace experience requirements throughout the program.
- 6.4 Students being informed about, and having access to, appropriate support services, including counselling, health care and educational advisory services.
- 6.5 Processes in place enabling early identification of and support for students who are not performing well.
- 6.6 Students having equal opportunity to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse without any influence of the program mode of delivery or program location.
- 6.7 Processes in place for student representation in and feedback on 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 meet the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

### Criteria

The program provider must demonstrate evidence of:

- 7.1 Staff, facilities, equipment and other teaching resources being in place in sufficient quality and quantity for the anticipated student population and any planned increase.
- 7.2 Students having sufficient and timely access to academic and clinical teaching staff to support their learning.
- 7.3 A balanced academic, clinical, technical and administrative staff complement being in place that is appropriate to meeting teaching, research and governance commitments.
- 7.4 Staff recruitment strategies being in place that are culturally inclusive and reflect population diversity in Australia.
- 7.5 Documented position descriptions for teaching staff being in place that clearly articulate roles, reporting relationships, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- 7.6 The head of program being 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 subjects, including workplace experience, who are registered nurses with relevant clinical and academic experience.
- 7.8 Academic staff being qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching, to at least one qualification standard higher than the program being taught or with equivalent professional experience.
- 7.9 Qualifications and experience relevant to the subject areas being taught in cases where an academic staff member's tertiary qualifications do not include nursing.
- 7.10 Processes being in place 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 taking place in an active research environment in which academic staff are engaged in research and/or scholarship and/or generating new knowledge and in which areas of interest, publications, grants and conference papers are documented.
- 7.12 Policies and processes being in place to verify and monitor the academic and professional credentials and 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 meet the current National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

### Criteria

The program provider must demonstrate evidence of:

- 8.1 Constructive relationships and clear contractual arrangements being in place with all health providers through which students gain their workplace experience, and processes being in place to ensure these arrangements are regularly evaluated and updated.
- 8.2 Risk management strategies being in place in all environments in which students are placed to gain workplace experiences, and processes being in place to ensure these strategies are regularly reviewed and updated.
- 8.3 Workplace experiences being in place that are appropriate to enable students to meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.4 Each student being provided with: quality and appropriate workplace experiences that reflect major health priorities and contemporary nursing practice; opportunities 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 being in place to enable students to achieve required learning outcomes and meet the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.6 Academics, nurse clinicians and other health professionals being engaged in supervising and supporting students during workplace experiences are being adequately prepared for this role, and seeking 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 being undertaken by appropriately qualified and prepared registered nurses practicing in Australia with current skills needed to assess undergraduate students against the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.
- 8.8 Appropriate resources being 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 must demonstrate evidence of:

- 9.1 Responsibility for and control of program development, monitoring, review, evaluation and quality improvement being 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 taking place using feedback from students and other sources.
- 9.3 Systems being in place to monitor and, where necessary, improve staff performance.
- 9.4 Professional and academic development of staff taking place to advance knowledge and competence in teaching effectiveness and assessment.
- 9.5 Feedback being gathered from the quality cycle and being incorporated into the program to improve the experience of theory and practice learning for students.
- 9.6 Regular evaluation and revision of program content taking place which includes contemporary and emerging issues surrounding nursing practice, health care research and health policy and reform.
- 9.7 Students and staff being adequately indemnified for relevant activities undertaken as part of program requirements.

# Glossary and abbreviations

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

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

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

**Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council**—ANMC evolved into ANMAC following approval as the accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery. ANMC authored the original set of accreditation standards and the original set of national competency standards for nursing and midwifery.

**Australian Qualifications Framework**—AQF 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**—this qualification is the result of an accredited complete program of learning leading to formal certification that a graduate has achieved the learning outcomes described in the AQF.

**AQF register**—this is the register of all AQF qualifications and the organisations authorised to issue them.

**Australian university**—this is a higher education provider registered with TEQSA in the 'Australian University' provider category.

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

**Collaborative practice**—this is 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**—this is 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**—this is when a person is competent across all domains of competencies applicable to the nurse or midwife. It is the 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**—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.

**Council of Australian Governments**—COAG 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.

**Criteria**—these are the rules or tests on which a judgement or decision in relation to compliance with the accreditation standards can be based.

**Cultural safety**—this is the effective midwifery practice of a person or a family from another culture, as determined by that person or family. Culture includes, but is not restricted to: age or generation; gender; sexual orientation; occupation and socioeconomic status; ethnic origin or migrant experience; religious or spiritual belief; and disability. The midwife delivering the midwifery service will have undertaken a process of reflection on his or her own cultural identity and recognise the impact that this has on their professional practice. Unsafe cultural practice comprises any action that diminishes, demeans or disempowers the cultural identity and wellbeing of an individual.<sup>27</sup>

**Curriculum**—this is the full outline of a program, usually built around a conceptual framework with the educational and professional nursing or midwifery philosophies underpinning it and including: program philosophy; program structure and delivery modes; subject outlines; links between learning outcomes, their assessment and national competencies; teaching and learning strategies; and a workplace experience plan.

**Delivery mode**—the means by which programs are made available to students: on campus or in mixed mode; by distance or by e-learning methods.<sup>28</sup>

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

**Entry to practice program**—the NMBA approved, three-year program of education for entry to register as a Registered Nurse. The minimum qualification must be a Bachelor Degree (or where relevant, a postgraduate qualification) offered by a university or higher education provider and the minimum length of the course is equivalent to six semesters of full-time study

**Equivalent professional experience**—this is the successful completion of a qualification equivalent to that being taught and sufficient post-graduate professional experience<sup>29</sup> in the discipline being taught to demonstrate competence in applying the discipline's principles and theory.

**Essentials of care**—these are aspects of care that are fundamental to a person's health and wellbeing. They 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.

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27 Adapted from Nursing Council of New Zealand, *Guidelines for Cultural Safety, the Treaty of Waitangi and Maori Health in Nursing Education and Practice*, last amended July 2011.

28 ANMC (2009). *Midwives 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.

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

**Governance**—this is the framework, systems and processes supporting and guiding an 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**—these are the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes graduating students must have in accordance with the National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse.

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

**Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (National Law)**—this is 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. Its 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**—this is the 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 was an initiative of the COAG, 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, this is an internationally qualified nurse who is not registered in Australia but who has obtained their nursing qualification(s) and registration in a country outside of Australia.

**Interprofessional learning**—this 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**—these are the core competency standards against which performance and professional conduct is assessed to obtain and retain registration as a registered nurse.<sup>30</sup>

**Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia**—the NMBA is the national regulator of nursing and midwifery professions in Australia. It is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, and is 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**—the OBPR 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.<sup>31</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Regulatory impact statement**—this is a key component of the Australian Government’s best practice regulation process. It contains 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 option 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
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.<sup>32</sup>

**Research**—According to the Department of Industry, specifications for the Higher Education Research Data Collection, this comprises:

- Creative work undertaken on a systematic basis to increase stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.

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<sup>32</sup> Office of Best Practice Regulation (2013). Best Practice Regulation Handbook. Accessed on 12 August 2013: <http://www.finance.gov.au/obpr/proposal/handbook/Content/01-productivity-evidence-based-policy.html>

- Any activity classified as research that is characterised by originality and has investigation as a primary objective and the potential to produce results that are sufficiently general to recognisably increase humanity's stock of knowledge (theoretical and/or practical). Most higher education research work would qualify as research.
- Pure basic research, strategic basic research, applied research and experimental development.

**Scholarship**—this is the application of systematic approaches to acquiring knowledge through intellectual inquiry. It 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**—this is the organisational entity of an education provider that is responsible for the design and delivery of a program in nursing. Where the school of nursing is part of a larger faculty, the school is regarded as the program provider for the purposes of these accreditation standards.

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

**Standard**—this is the level of quality or attainment.

**Subject**—this is the unit of study taught within a program.

**Student assessment**—this is the process that determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes. It may include written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

**Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency**—TEQSA was 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 has registered and evaluated the performance of higher education providers against the new Higher Education Standards Framework. TEQSA also undertakes compliance assessments and quality assessments.

**University/universities**—these are institutions listed as 'Australian universities' on the AQF Register. Being on the register indicates that the Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs vouches for the quality of the institution. The institutions meet the requirements of protocols A and D of the National Protocols for Higher Education Processes (2006), are established by an Australian legislative instrument, as defined in Part 3 of the National Protocols, and may include institutions operating with a 'university college' title or with a specialised university title, where they meet these protocols.

**Workplace experience**—this is the component of nursing education that allows students to use judgement when applying theoretical knowledge in an actual practice setting. It includes the concept of 'clinical training' as embodied in the National Law.

