

# English language skills requirements for students enrolling in entry to practice nursing and midwifery education programs

## Purpose

This communication has been developed to address some frequently asked questions about the English language skills (ELS) requirements for students enrolling in ANMAC-accredited entry to practice registered nurse programs. It also includes:

- an update to the ELS requirements of the [Enrolled Nurse Accreditation Standards 2017](#)
- advance notice of forthcoming change to ELS requirements in the Midwife Accreditation Standards

## Background

ANMAC is responsible for the accreditation and monitoring of all nursing and midwifery education providers and programs of study where graduates are eligible to apply for registration or endorsement with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

The current Enrolled Nurse Accreditation Standards (ENAS) were published in 2017. The standards include a requirement for education providers to ensure that only students who meet the minimum English language skills are admitted to entry to practice enrolled nurse programs. The relevant criterion says:

*6.1 Applicants are informed of the following before accepting an offer of enrolment: a). students that would be required by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) to provide a formal English language skills test when applying for registration, must provide a formal English language test result demonstrating they have achieved the NMBA specified level of English language skills, prior to commencing the program*

In 2019, the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards (RNAS) were published with an equivalent ELS requirement but with amended wording:

*1.3 The program's admission requirements are fair, equitable and transparent. Before making an offer for enrolment, education providers inform applicants of the requirements to: b. demonstrate English language proficiency either by providing a written declaration that English is their primary language or evidence that they have achieved the minimum English language test results as specified in the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) English language skills registration standard*

ANMAC is currently reviewing the Midwife Accreditation Standards (2014) and is in the process of stakeholder consultation. The new Midwife Accreditation Standards will align with both ENAS and RNAS ELS requirements

## Frequently asked questions (FAQS) RNAS

Several education providers and Tertiary Admission Centres have contacted ANMAC for advice regarding the ELS requirements for admission into RN programs. The questions are consistently related to two areas - the declaration form that a student must sign if they declare that English is their primary language, and whether the ELS requirement applies to enrolled nurses entering an entry to practice RN program via an approved EN entry pathway:

**Q Does the ‘English as a primary language’ declaration form for students have to be a statutory declaration?**

**A** No. It is up to the education provider to decide if that is necessary. However the declaration should have provision for the student’s signature (electronic or otherwise).

**Q Do students entering the program on the enrolled nurse pathway need to declare that English is their primary language or provide a valid ELS test result?**

**A** No. Students entering on the enrolled nurse pathway must be currently registered as an enrolled nurse with the NMBA, this means they have already met the NMBA’s English language skills registration standard. However, they are required to provide evidence of their current registration status.

**Q Do we need to have two forms? One for English as a primary language and one for registered enrolled nurses entering the program through an approved entry pathway?**

**A** No. Education providers can include provision for both the English as a primary language declaration and current registration status for enrolled nurses on the one form.

## **Update to ENAS 2017**

Some education providers have reported to ANMAC that they are unsure about the measures they should take when enrolling students to ensure compliance with ENAS criterion 6.1a.

To summarise the requirements: students admitted to ANMAC accredited Diploma of Nursing programs whose primary language is English must sign a declaration, all other students must provide valid English language test results as specified in the NMBA ELS.

ANMAC has determined that education providers applying for accreditation of a Diploma of Nursing program, must provide the following essential evidence to demonstrate compliance with standard 6.1a:

- admission policy
- information provided to students before enrolment that clearly states English language entry requirements
- program application information.
- screen shot of the education provider’s website showing program admission requirements
- policies and procedures for recording students’ English language assessment test results
- template for student declaration that English is their primary language.

**Q: Are Diploma of Nursing program applicants still able to enter the program via the ELS extended education pathway?**

**A:** No. Students entering Diploma of Nursing programs need to declare that English is their primary language or provide a valid ELS test result? The purpose of the standard criterion relating to English language is that students have an appropriate English language skills level at the start of the program i.e. before they undertake professional experience placement.

## **Midwife accreditation standards review**

The Midwife accreditation standards 2014 are currently under review. In the interests of equity and consistency with the other ANMAC accreditation standards, the English language requirement will be included in the revised standards.

The draft revised standards are currently in the final stages of the stakeholder consultation process. The draft standards have the same English language skills requirement as the EN and RN accreditation standards:

*1.3 The program’s admission requirements are fair, equitable and transparent. Before making an offer for enrolment, education providers inform applicants of the requirements: b). to demonstrate English language*

proficiency either through providing a declaration that English is their primary language or achievement of minimum English language test results as specified in the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) English language skills registration standard.

Therefore education providers and Tertiary Admissions Centres should begin to make any necessary preparations for this change in a timely way. **All education providers will be required to transition their midwifery programs to the new English language skills requirements from the date that the standards are published.**

## Relevant Documentation

The following documentation is relevant to this communication

- [ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards \(2019\)](#)
- [ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2019 Essential Evidence](#)
- [ANMAC Enrolled Nurse Accreditation Standards \(2017\)](#)
- [ANMAC's Transition policy for new accreditation standards](#)
- [NMBA English language skills registration standard](#)

- **Table of amendments**

Version number	Date	Short description of amendment
V1	July 2020	

**Date for Review**

2 November 2020

**Responsible Director: Director of Accreditation Services**

**Approved by**



[fiona Stoker \(Jul 13, 2020 14:04 GMT+10\)](#)

**Fiona Stoker**  
**Clinical Professor**  
**Chief Executive Officer**