

Nursing and Midwifery Council consultation on the introduction of guidance to cover individuals who apply to register qualifications awarded more than five years previously.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We are the nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Islands. We exist to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public. We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance for nurses and midwives, and hold the register of those who have qualified and meet those standards. We provide guidance to help nurses and midwives keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our professional standards. We have clear and transparent processes to investigate and deal with nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards.

2 Background

- 2.1 Article 9 of the *Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001* (the Order) says an applicant can be admitted to the register if she satisfies the Registrar that she holds an approved qualification awarded within the previous five years, or if the qualification was awarded more than five years before applying, that she has done the additional education, training or experience that the Council requires.
- 2.2 Rule 7 of the *Nursing and Midwifery Council (Education, Registration and Registration Appeals) Rules 2004* further says that the prescribed period between the award of an approved qualification and applying to register it, is five years.
- 2.3 If a nurse or midwife applies for registration *more than five years* after being awarded an approved qualification (a five year applicant), article 19(3) of the Order and Rule 3(4) apply. This means that Council can set a standard, and then ask a five year applicant to undertake particular education, training or experience to show she meets this standard.
- 2.4 Council's own legislation envisages a situation where a five year applicant will be able to undertake some kind of further education or assessment to demonstrate her competence to enter the register.
- 2.5 However, Council had not set a standard to cover five year applicants.
- 2.6 At its March 2013 meeting, Council acted on this. They decided that for any person who first applies for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved pre-registration or post-registration qualification, the standard we require is that the person must be able to show us, when she

comes to register that qualification, *that she meets the NMC standards that currently apply to the qualification.*

- 2.7 The standards that currently apply are:

Initial registration

Standards for pre-registration nursing education (NMC, 2010) – Standards for Competence

Standards for pre-registration midwifery education (NMC, 2009) - Standard 17

Post-initial registration

Standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nurses (NMC, 2004) and related circulars – Standards of proficiency for entry to the register

- 2.8 Council also approved the development of guidance on ways to meet the standards.

3 Issues

- 3.1 The proposed guidance outlines the routes by which five year applicants may demonstrate that they meet the standards that apply to their qualification. It is proposed that they may undertake an education or training programme (Route 1) or take competence tests, if available (Route 2).

Route 1. For pre-registration and post-registration qualifications, we propose that five year applicants may meet the standards that currently apply to the qualification by undertaking a new education and training programme. This option already exists for five year applicants.

However, we explicitly spell this out, because for five year applicants who have not practised in the intervening period, we consider it to be the best option in the interests of public protection.

Route 2. For pre-registration qualifications, three aptitude tests have been developed with an approved education institute (AEI) that could apply to five year applicants who wish to register as nurse (adult and child only) or midwife. The current tests for nurses would need to be modified to align them with the current pre-registration education standards. There are no tests available for mental health and learning disability fields of nursing.

- 3.2 The tests involve multiple choice testing, short answers and an objective simulated clinical examination (OSCE), using actors. More information about the aptitude tests can be found here:
<http://www.northampton.ac.uk/about-us/academic-schools/school-of-health/post-registration-study/nmc-eu-aptitude-test>
- 3.3 It should be noted that this guidance also applies to enrolled nurses seeking to enter onto the first part of the register by applying accreditation of prior experiential learning.

4 Questions

- 4.1 In this consultation we would like your feedback on the proposed guidance (please see page 12) to cover individuals who apply to register qualifications awarded more than five years previously.
- 4.2 The questions are as below:

Question 1: Are you aware that, as a nurse or midwife, if you are awarded an approved qualification, you must apply to the NMC to register it *within* five years?

If you are aware of this, how did you become aware of it?

Who would you expect to make nurses and midwives aware of a requirement such as this?

Question 2: Do you agree or disagree that nurses or midwives who apply to register an approved qualification awarded *more than five years* previously should be required to undertake an education or training programme that enables them to demonstrate that they have met the standards that apply to them?

[Agree/ Not sure] If you would like to give reasons for your answer, you may do so here.

[Disagree] Please explain why you disagree.

Question 3: Do you agree or disagree that nurses or midwives who have applied to register an approved qualification awarded *more than five years* previously should undertake competence testing, if that option was available?

[Agree/ Not sure] If you would like to give reasons for your answer, you may do so here.

[Disagree] Please explain why you disagree.

If you have any comments regarding the competence tests given as an example (at <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/about-us/academic-schools/school-of-health/post-registration-study/nmc-eu-aptitude-test>) then you may record them here.

Question 4: Bearing in mind the NMC's role in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the public, we would welcome your suggestions with regard to the following questions:

- how do you think the guidance could be improved?
- how could the proposed system be made to work most effectively?
- what would you suggest as an alternative method of assessment to test current competency for nurses and midwives in this situation?

General Questions

Question 5: Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of a group or organisation?

As an individual

On behalf of an organisation

Question 6: Are you currently, or have you been, a five year applicant previously?

Question 7: Are you a... (Tick all that apply)

Registered nurse or midwife

Employer or Manager

Educator

Nursing or midwifery student

Member of the public, service user or carer

Other

Question 7a: Please specify.

Question 8: Please tick one box which best describes the type of organisation you work for:

- Government department or public body
- Regulatory body
- Professional organisation or trade union
- NHS employer of nurses or midwives
- Education provider
- Independent sector employer of, or agency for, nurses or midwives
- Consumer or patient organisation
- Other

Question 8a: Please specify.

Question 9: Please tick one box which best describes the type of organisation you represent:

- Government department or public body
- Regulatory body
- Professional organisation or trade union
- NHS employer of nurses or midwives
- Independent sector employer of, or agency for, nurses or midwives
- Education provider
- Consumer or patient organisation
- Other

Question 9a: Please specify.

Question 10: Please give the name of your organisation.

Question 11: Would you be happy for your comments in this consultation to be identified and attributed to your organisation in the reporting, or would you prefer that your response remains anonymous?

- Happy for comments to be attributed to my organisation
- Please keep my responses anonymous

Question 12: Please state where your organisation mainly operates:

UK-wide
England
Northern Ireland
Scotland
Wales
The Islands
Other

Question 12a: Please specify.

Question 13: Please tell us where you live.

England
Northern Ireland
Scotland
Wales
The Islands
Other

Question 13a: Please specify.

Equality and diversity monitoring questions

It would be very helpful for monitoring the effectiveness of our consultation process if you would complete the following 6 questions. Your answers will give us information about the people that have taken part in this consultation. There is a 'prefer not to answer' option for some questions. This information will only be used for statistical purposes and you will not be identified.

Question 14: Please indicate your gender.

Male
Female
Transgender

Question 15: Please indicate your sexual orientation.

Bisexual
Gay or lesbian
Heterosexual
Prefer not to answer

Question 16: Do you have a disability?

Disability in this context means a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Yes
No
Prefer not to answer

Question 17: Please indicate your ethnic group. Please tick the appropriate box to indicate your background.

White – British
White – Irish
Any other White background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Any other Black background
Mixed group - White and Black Caribbean
Mixed group - White and Black African
Mixed group - White and Asian
Any other Mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Any other Asian background
Chinese
Other East Asian or South East Asian background
Any other background
Prefer not to answer

Question 17a: Please specify.

Question 18: Please indicate your age range.

- Under 20
- 20 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 - 59
- 60 - 65
- 66+
- Prefer not to answer

Question 19: I would describe my religious background/beliefs as:

- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- I have no religious beliefs
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

Question 19a: Please specify

Consultation monitoring questions

We would appreciate it if you would answer a few questions about your experience of this consultation.

Question 20: How did you find out about this consultation?

- NMC website
- RCN website
- NMC event
- RCM website
- NMC newsletter
- University
- Email from NMC
- Friend/colleague
- RCN event
- RCM event
- Other

Question 20a: Please specify.

Question 21: How far do you agree or disagree that:

You know what this consultation can and cannot influence?

You have been provided with enough information on the subject?

The consultation documents were easy to understand?

It was easy to give your views?

All of the above may be ranked:

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Question 22: How do you think this consultation could be improved?

Question 23: As this is an anonymous survey, it will not be possible to view or amend your response after you have 'submitted' it unless you supply your email address below. This is because your email address will be needed to identify your response. If you supply your email address and later wish to revisit your response, then you will need to contact Alpha Research at 9674nmc@alpharesearch.co.uk to ask for your response to be returned.

Please note that the survey closes at 17.00 on Wednesday 9 October 2013 and that amendments can only be made up until then. Your email address will not be used for any purpose other than allowing us to locate your response for amendments.

If you would like further information or information in an alternative format please call 0207 681 5568.

5 Your response to this consultation

- 5.1 All questions are optional except for the question which asks whether you are responding as an individual or an organisation. Responses from individuals and organisations will be analysed separately, so it is important that we know in which capacity you are responding. It would help the analysis if you indicate which part of the guidance your comments refer to.

- 5.2 **This consultation will close at 17:00 on Wednesday 9 October 2013.**
Unfortunately any responses received after this time will not be included in the analysis of the consultation results.

6 Sharing your response

- 6.1 It is only possible to share your response with colleagues before it has been submitted.
- 6.2 When you 'save' your completed or partially completed response you will be sent an email link (see 'Saving your response') which you may then forward to colleagues, but please be aware that if you do this it would be possible for them to amend or submit your response.

7 Saving your response

- 7.1 The survey programme does not close automatically, so your answers will not be lost if you leave your computer unattended for a while.
- 7.2 If you are unable to complete the survey in one sitting you can press 'Save' at any point. You will be asked for your email address and a link will be sent to this address within a few minutes. Please note that there is a small possibility that the automatic message with the link may be intercepted by your junk or spam filter programme. If the message has not appeared in your inbox within a few minutes then check your junk email.
- 7.3 Do not save the page you are working on as a 'Favourite' in your browser window, as this will not save all your responses.
- 7.4 When you are prompted for your email address there is an option to 'Reset'. Please be assured that this only clears the email address box, not your responses to the survey.

8 Submitting the survey

- 8.1 When you have reached the end of the survey, you will be asked to 'Submit' your response, and to supply an email address. As this is an anonymous survey, it will not be possible to view or amend your response after you have 'submitted' it unless you supply your email address at the point of submission. This is because your email address will be needed to identify your response.

- 8.2 If you supply your email address upon submission and later wish to revisit your response, then you will need to email Alpha Research at 9674nmc@alpharesearch.co.uk to ask for your response to be returned. Please note that the survey closes at **17.00 on Wednesday 9 October 2013** and that amendments can only be made up until then. Your email address will not be used for any purpose other than allowing Alpha Research Ltd to locate your response.

9 Next steps

- 9.1 Following the consultation, Alpha Research Ltd, an independent research company, will produce a report based on the responses received. The report will be considered to assess whether any changes to our proposed guidance are necessary. These will then be considered by the NMC with a view to the revised guidance being approved and implemented.

Guidance for those who first apply for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved qualification

Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) exists to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public. We do this through maintaining a register of all nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses eligible to practise within the UK, and by setting standards for their education, training and conduct.

One of the most important ways of serving the public interest is through providing guidance to nurses and midwives about professional issues.

This guidance confirms the standards that must be met by those who first apply for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved qualification and also sets out the ways in which five year applicants can demonstrate that they meet those standards.

Background

Our Order and Rules specify that an applicant seeking to register an approved qualification must apply within five years of being awarded that qualification.

However those who drafted the legislation intended that Council would specify standards for those who applied to register approved qualifications awarded more than five years previously. They also intended that Council should require such five year applicants to undertake training, education and experience to show they met the standards.

Council therefore defined the standards applying to these five year applicants, and directed the NMC to draft guidance setting out the ways in which five year applicants can demonstrate that they meet the standards that apply to them.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- confirm the standards to be followed by a person who first applies for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved qualification, and
- to provide guidance on the ways in which a person who first applies for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved qualification can meet the standards.

The Standards

The five year applicant must be able to demonstrate, at the point of registering the approved qualification that he or she meets the NMC standards *that currently apply to his or her qualification*.

So, for example, if you were awarded an approved qualification as a midwife in 2004 you would now need to be able to demonstrate, at the point of registering that qualification, that you meet the current NMC standards that apply to midwives, that is, the *Standards for pre-registration midwifery education (NMC,2009) - Standard 17*.

Guidance

We have identified two possible ways in which five year applicants could demonstrate that they meet the current standards that apply to their approved qualifications.

Tests of Competence

The first one is competence testing. Three tests have been developed with an approved education institute that can apply to five year applicants who wish to register as nurse (adult and children's only) or midwife.

A five year applicant can undertake competence testing in order to demonstrate that she meets the following standards:

Standards for pre-registration nursing education (NMC, 2010) – Standards for Competence (adult and children's nursing competencies)

<http://standards.nmc-uk.org/PreRegNursing/statutory/competencies/Pages/Competencies.aspx>

Standards for pre-registration midwifery education (NMC, 2009) - Standard 17

http://www.nmc-uk.org/Documents/NMC-Publications/nmcStandardsforPre_RegistrationMidwiferyEducation.pdf

The competence tests for nurses will need to be modified to align them with current pre-registration education standards.

Five year applicants considering competence testing should contact the NMC on 0207 681 5568 to determine whether they are eligible to undertake competence testing and to ascertain whether the tests are ready to be used.

Note that an applicant wishing to demonstrate that she meets these standards may also undertake an education or training programme that enables her to demonstrate that she meets the standards that apply to her if she wishes.

Undertaking an education or training programme

The second one is undertaking an education or training programme. Although five year applicants have always had this option open to them, the NMC has now spelt this out in guidance because for five year applicants who have not practised in the intervening period, the NMC considers this to be the best option in the interests of public protection.

A five year applicant can undertake an education or training programme in order to demonstrate that she meets any of our standards.

This includes, in addition to the adult and children's nursing and midwifery standards listed above, the following standards:

Pre registration

Standards for pre-registration nursing education (NMC, 2010) – Standards for Competence (mental health and disabilities competencies)

<http://standards.nmc-uk.org/PreReqNursing/statutory/competencies/Pages/Competencies.aspx>

Post-initial registration

Standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nurses (NMC, 2004) and related circulars – Standards of proficiency for entry to the register

<http://www.nmc-uk.org/Nurses-and-midwives/Regulation-in-practice/Specialist-community-public-health-nursing/>