

**Nursing and Midwifery Council
Investigating Committee**

**Registration Appeal Hearing
Monday, 24 November 2025 – Tuesday, 25 November 2025**

Virtual Hearing

Name of Appellant:	Chidinma Judith Okoroegbu
Type of case:	Registrations appeal
Panel members:	Godfried Attafua (Chair, Registrant member) Karen McCutcheon (Registrant member) Katriona Crawley (Lay member)
Legal Assessor:	Nigel Ingram
Hearings Coordinator:	Eyram Anka
Nursing and Midwifery Council:	Represented by Mousumi Chowdhury, Case Presenter
Ms Okoroegbu:	Present and unrepresented
Decision:	Appeal dismissed

Decision and reasons

The panel decided to dismiss your appeal against the decision of the Assistant Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

This appeal is made under Article 37(1)(a) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (the Order). You appealed the decision of the Assistant Registrar, dated 5 December 2023, that you did not meet the character requirements for registration to the NMC register.

Background

On 16 March 2023, Pearson VUE, the NMC's computer-based test (CBT) provider, alerted it to unusual data relating to tests taken at Yunnik Technologies Ltd test centre in Ibadan, Nigeria (Yunnik). The CBT test is in two parts, numeracy and clinical. The data raised questions about whether some or all of the CBT results at Yunnik had been obtained through fraud and called into question the validity of all tests taken at Yunnik.

Following completion of the NMC's initial investigation into this issue it concluded that there was evidence of widespread fraud at the Yunnik centre, where a large number of candidates had allegedly fraudulently obtained their CBT. The NMC asked Pearson VUE to provide it with assurance that the data concerning tests taken at Yunnik were accurate, and not the result of a system error, cyber-attack, or other technical issue. Pearson VUE confirmed that, following a detailed investigation into the testing facility at Yunnik and review of the data, Pearson VUE were satisfied that there was no evidence of system error, cyber-attack, or other technical error and that the data was indicative of one or more proxy testers operating at the centre.

The NMC next asked an independent data analytics expert of OAC Limited (OAC), Witness 5, to provide the NMC with an objective analysis of the data provided by Pearson VUE. OAC looked at the times in which CBT candidates at Yunnik took to achieve their CBT pass, compared with times taken by CBT candidates from other test centres in Nigeria and globally. Using this data, OAC then calculated the

probability that each CBT candidate at Yunnik could achieve their CBT pass within the time it took them to complete the test. OAC's analysis of the data supports Pearson VUE's conclusion that there may have been widespread fraudulent activity at Yunnik probably through a proxy tester acting on behalf of test candidates.

On 3 August 2023, the NMC's Registrar decided to use, as a benchmark, the 1:2500 threshold in order to identify tests which were taken at such a speed that it is likely they were conducted using fraud (most likely a proxy test taker).

The Pearson VUE raw data provided to Witness 5 had your times in relation to your CBT taken at the Yunnik on 9 January 2023 as follows:

- Numeracy: 2.93 minutes
- Clinical: 7.05 minutes

Following Witness 5's analysis and exclusion of time taken in introductory and review screens, he cited that the actual times you took to complete your CBT were as follows:

- Numeracy: 2.53 Minutes (Time allocated for test: 30 minutes).
- Clinical: 5.78 Minutes (Time allocated for test: 150 minutes).

Comparing your time to complete your tests with times taken by candidates globally, it was considered very unlikely by the NMC that you could have achieved a pass in her tests within the times it took you to complete them.

Taking into account the times in which your tests were taken, in a centre in which the NMC allege there to have been widespread fraudulent activity, it was considered by the NMC to be more likely than not that your CBT result was obtained fraudulently.

When considering your application to the register, the Assistant Registrar took into account the following documentation:

- Your completed application
- Expert reports by Witness 5 Head of Data Analytics at OAC
- Witness statements of Witness 4, Director of Information Security and Security Services at Pearson VUE
- Witness statements of Witness 6, Executive Director of Professional Practice at the NMC
- Your email dated 24 November 2023

In your correspondence you stated that you have worked hard to study and pass exams and as a result have achieved success.

It was your case that you chose to sit your CBT at the Yunnik test centre in Ibadan as that test centre was the closest to where you were staying at the time. You expressed that you took the exam yourself and were not surprised by the result given your extensive preparation.

The Assistant Registrar considered your explanation. The Assistant Registrar accepted that thorough preparation may increase the likelihood of achieving a pass. However, in their view, this did not explain how you were able to obtain your test result from Yunnik in the time you did when comparing it against times taken by candidates globally. The Assistant Registrar was not satisfied that they had been presented with anything that changed the conclusion that you more likely than not obtained your CBT result fraudulently. The Assistant Registrar therefore determined that you did not meet the character requirements to be considered capable of safe and effective practice.

On 5 December 2023, you were informed that the Assistant Registrar had refused your application onto the register. You appealed the decision on 27 December 2023, within the 28-day time limit.

You first provided a statement to the NMC in an email dated 24 November 2023, in which you denied any wrongdoing in relation to your CBT. You then sent your Notice of Appeal to the NMC on 27 December 2023, challenging the NMC process.

However, on 2 October 2025, you provided a statement of admission to the NMC. The statement dated 2 October 2025 was not before the Assistant Registrar on 5 December 2023 when the decision was made to refuse your entry onto the NMC register.

Evidence

The panel also took account of the written evidence and witness statements from the following witnesses on behalf of the NMC:

- Witness 1: Band 5 nurse in the UK who provided her experience sitting an exam at Yunnik.
- Witness 2: Band 4 Pre-registration nurse in the UK who provided her experience sitting an exam at Yunnik.
- Witness 3: The Deputy Director for Business Transformation and a member of the Executive Team for Professional Regulation.
- Witness 4: Director of Information Security and Security Services at Pearson VUE.
- Witness 5: An independent Data Analyst who provided the NMC with an analysis of the data provided by Pearson VUE.

- Witness 6: Employed by the NMC as the Executive Director of Professional Practice.

- Witness 7: Employed by the NMC as a Senior Nursing Education Adviser and part of the Executive Team in the Professional Practice Directorate

Submissions

Ms Chowdhury, on behalf of the NMC, outlined the background to the case as set out above. By virtue of your admission in your statement to the NMC dated 2 October 2025, Ms Chowdhury invited the panel to find that the fact-finding stage has been satisfied, submitting that it is evident that there was widespread fraud at Yunnik and that you participated in it.

Ms Chowdhury asked the panel to consider and assess, in light of your admitted involvement in the fraud, whether it can be satisfied that you are capable of safe and effective practice. She took the panel through the relevant factors to consider, as set out in the NMC guidance on health and character, in particular 'Factors that we take into account when considering character cases', last updated on 5 September 2024. The factors are as follows:

- *'Your age when the conduct took place.*
- *How long ago the conduct took place.*
- *Whether it was an isolated incident.*
- *Whether the incident(s) were linked to nursing or midwifery practice or employment.*
- *Whether the use of drugs or alcohol was a factor in the conduct.*

- *Reflection and insight about the conduct and obligations as a registered nurse, midwife or nursing associate.*
- *Personal mitigation.*
- *Any explanation offered for the conduct having occurred.'*

You provided the panel with documentation to support this appeal including:

- Certificate of Experience dated 2 February 2023
- 4 further character references

You gave evidence under affirmation.

You stated that you received the Assistant Registrar's decision to refuse your application for registration after you [PRIVATE]. Your husband helped you draft the first response of denial to the NMC dated 24 November 2023 because [PRIVATE] to draft the statement yourself at the time.

You later decided to tell the NMC the truth about how you obtained your CBT results in a statement dated 2 October 2025.

You explained that you had been prepared for the CBT and sat the test at Yunnik because it was close to where you were staying [PRIVATE] at the time. You stated that after arriving at Yunnik you met a man you believed to be in his 60s and a younger woman (a father and daughter). After completing your biometric check, you said the power went out for a brief period. You said you were asked to pay 20,000 naira for fuel for the generator that was in use in order to complete your test. You only had 10,000 naira with you, which you gave to them.

You said that while you were taking your test, you were rushed and it was claimed that the generators would soon run out of power. You questioned this, and at this point the younger woman started giving you the answers. The test was then submitted.

You said that you feel ashamed and regret not taking the test properly at the time. You do not know why you waited so long to tell the truth.

You told the panel that you are currently working as a Healthcare Assistant (HCA) in a care home.

You referred to the character reference you provided from a ward manager dated 16 May 2024 as well as the character references from friends and colleagues in Nigeria. You stated that you asked them to comment on your character.

Ms Chowdhury put questions to you based on your evidence under affirmation.

When asked why you had not told the truth about your CBT in your earlier statements to the NMC, you explained that you were [PRIVATE]. You said that you just repeated what you and your husband had drafted in your initial statement. You expressed regret for doing this and acknowledged that telling the truth would not have caused you any harm.

You affirmed that this was the first time that you had cheated on an exam.

You stated that if you found yourself in a similar situation in the future you would behave differently and act appropriately. You said that you would raise concerns and inform someone senior about what was happening.

You said that you could not remember 'The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives 2015' (the Code) and since receiving the Assistant Registrar's decision, you have not revisited it. However, you said that you are now fully willing to read it. You reiterated that you have not been yourself since you received the decision.

You stated that to be able to call out wrongdoing, a nurse needs to be empathetic, vigilant, resilient, truthful, obedient, an advocate and an example to those around them.

Proposal to hear matters in private

The panel noted that there had been reference to your private life in response to their questions. The panel, of its own volition, considered that any references to your private life should be heard in private. The proposal was made pursuant to Rule 30(1) of the 'Nursing and Midwifery Council (Education, Registration, and Registration Appeals) Rules 2004 (the rules).

Ms Chowdhury did not oppose the proposal.

You agreed with the proposal.

However, the legal assessor directed the panel that as a consequence of Rule 30(1A) Paragraph (1) does not apply where a hearing is conducted by audio or video conferencing [SI2020\364 Schedule,Rule4(6)(b)].

The panel put questions to you based on your evidence under affirmation.

You completed your Masters in Public Health from February 2022 to February 2023.

You outlined the background of your nursing career in Nigeria. You stated that you have five years registered nursing experience since 2017, prior to coming to the UK and you have been more recently working as an HCA since 2022.

You took the panel through the events of the day you took your CBT. You said that you were shocked when you were asked to pay money at the test centre and understood this to be a bribe. You were told that if you refused to pay, you would fail the test and that returning on another day would make no difference. You explained that you feared the situation might escalate and that weapons could be used to threaten you. You were also panicking because you had limited time to undertake the test as you were due to return to the UK later that week.

You explained that there were other nurses at the centre, but they were in a separate room. You did not attempt to speak to them because you did not know them and could not be sure they were not involved.

You said that when you were sat at computer to do your test the young woman (the daughter) sat beside you calling out the answers and rushing you to finish your test quickly before the generator ran out of power. You told the panel that you were overwhelmed because you did not expect to face such a situation when you went to take the test. You did not leave the test centre at that point because you were already there and felt compelled to complete it.

You stated that you [PRIVATE] by the entire ordeal as you had never experienced anything like it before. You said that, in the days that followed, you reflected on what had occurred and recognised that it was wrong. You did not try to contact or inform anyone at the time, although you did try to leave an online review. You agreed that your actions were dishonest and acknowledged your understanding of the importance of honesty in the nursing profession.

[PRIVATE]

You said that the RCN was unable to represent you because you were not a registrant and you had not joined the union when you were in the UK as a student in 2022.

Closing submissions

In making an assessment on your character, in light of the events, Ms Chowdhury asked the panel to take into account that the incident occurred fairly recently, on 9 January 2023. She reminded the panel that your own evidence was that this was an isolated incident and the first time you ever cheated. However, it was her submission that your reflections have been limited, referring to the initial denial of wrongdoing and your very recent admission.

Ms Chowdhury further submitted that your explanation for accepting the proxy's help, namely that you feared the generator would go off, is not a persuasive reason to cheat for such an important exam. Ms Chowdhury argued that as a nurse who has been practising since 2006, you should have appreciated the seriousness of accepting the help of a proxy tester.

The NMC's position is that you have shown that you are not of good character because of your actions. Ms Chowdhury submitted that you displayed poor judgment under pressure and that there is very limited evidence to indicate that you would behave differently if faced with a similar situation in the future. It was her submission that you have not provided any information to satisfy the panel that you are capable of safe and effective practice. Ms Chowdhury therefore invited the panel to dismiss the appeal.

You clarified that you began working as a registered nurse in Nigeria in 2017, not 2006. You also stated that the man and woman at the centre told you that they would turn off the generator if you did not complete the test quickly. You said it was incorrect that you accepted help from the proxy tester because the generator was going to be turned off.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal assessor.

Panel's decision

The panel noted that within the accepted evidence there was some element of hearsay and decided to place appropriate weight on those parts.

In making its decision, the panel first considered whether it had sufficient evidence before it to substantiate the NMC's case that there was widespread fraud occurring at the Yunnik Centre.

The panel had sight of the analysis provided by Witness 5 and Witness 4's data, including diagrams which evidence the time taken globally, including other centres in Nigeria, to complete the CBT, compared to the times achieved at the Yunnik Centre.

The panel considered Witness 5's analysis of your specific data, which provided the following odds of how achievable your test times were:

“Evaluated Clinical Timing: 5.78 minutes: Odds less likely than 1 in 56,478

Evaluated Numeracy Timing: 2.53: less likely than 1 in 58,123”

It is the evidence of Witness 6 that a number of candidates have come forward and made admissions to using proxy testers at the Yunnik Centre.

The panel considered the witness statements of both Witness 1 and Witness 2, who describe attending for the CBT at the Yunnik Centre and subsequently being pressured into using a proxy tester, as you yourself have admitted to doing at this hearing.

The panel noted that there were three other candidates who took the test at the same time as you, and all of them finished it unusually quickly. This raised concerns for the panel and suggested that a proxy tester may have been used that day. Given the history of fraud at the testing centre, it is very unlikely that three candidates sitting for the exam at the same time could complete it so rapidly without help. Considering all this information, the panel was satisfied that there is enough evidence to support the claim that widespread fraud occurred at the Yunnik Centre.

The panel next considered whether it is more likely than not that you used a proxy test taker in obtaining a satisfactory test result from the Yunnik centre in Ibadan, Nigeria. In light of your admission, the panel was satisfied that you did.

The panel noted that in your recent statement to the NMC dated 2 October 2025, you admitted to being assisted in taking your test by a proxy tester. You elaborated on this during your oral evidence, explaining that you were given answers from the start of the test and pressured to complete it quickly. Then panel took into account that you acknowledged this was dishonest and accepted that this was not the right thing to have done in the circumstances. In light of this, the panel was satisfied that your account constitutes an admission of obtaining your test results fraudulently.

Finally, the panel went on to determine whether you meet the character requirements for admission to the NMC register. The panel had regard to the NMC guidance on health and character, in particular 'Factors that we take into account when considering character cases', last updated on 5 September 2024. The panel was aware that it was for you to satisfy the panel that you meet the character requirements for successful admission on the register.

The panel heard that you felt "*pressured*" and "*frightened*" because you were threatened, asked to pay money and told that complete the test quickly or the generator would be turned off. You also stated that you were told that if you refused to oblige with their requests, you would fail the test. Having considered your evidence, the panel was not persuaded by your explanation regarding the extent of the threats you said to have experienced on that day.

Regarding the chronology, the panel noted that you had multiple opportunities to be transparent and honest with the NMC including directly after the test, in May 2023, September 2023 and in your Notice of Appeal dated 27 December 2023. In the panel's judgement, while this may appear to be an isolated incident, the dishonest conduct and your reluctance to admit that dishonesty persisted over a significant period of time.

The panel had sight of the character references you provided which attest to your good character and clinical abilities. However, it noted that none to the character references addressed your reflections or insight and there was no evidence that the authors were aware of the full reasons for writing them.

The panel determined that you have demonstrated very limited insight. It was of concern that you stated you had not chosen to revisit the NMC Code since the incident. Having considered the evidence, the panel could not be assured that you would act differently if faced with a situation as a registered nurse requiring honesty and integrity in the future.

The panel had regard to your personal mitigation and acknowledged that you stated that you were [PRIVATE] when you gave your first false account to the NMC.

However, the panel considered that no expert evidence was provided regarding the [PRIVATE] at the time. Furthermore, based on your oral evidence, the panel concluded that this was a premeditated response to the concerns that had been raised.

The panel bore in mind that honesty and integrity are fundamental tenets of the nursing profession. It considered that, had you intended to be open and honest, you could have been forthcoming with the NMC from the outset. Instead, you continued to be dishonest for an extended period. In light of this, the panel was not satisfied that you are of sufficient good character to practise safely and effectively.

The panel therefore decided to dismiss your appeal, to uphold the decision of the Assistant Registrar, thereby refusing your application to join the NMC register.

You have the right to appeal this decision. If you appeal the decision, you must submit your appeal to the county court within 21 days of this decision.

This will be confirmed to you in writing.

That concludes this determination.