

Registering as a nurse or midwife in the UK

Information for applicants trained outside the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA)

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Introduction

Our role

We regulate nurses and midwives in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We do this to protect the public.

We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance so that nurses and midwives can deliver high quality healthcare throughout their careers.

We make sure that the people on our register keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our professional standards. We have clear and transparent processes to investigate nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards. We maintain a register of nurses and midwives allowed to practice in the UK.

We are not responsible for:

- regulating hospitals or other healthcare settings
- regulating healthcare assistants
- representing or campaigning on behalf of nurses and midwives
- setting levels of staffing.

Working as a nurse or midwife in the UK

All nurses and midwives who want to work in the UK must register with us. Our register consists of three parts.

- nurses
- midwives
- specialist community public health nurses (SCPHN).

The nurse part of the register is divided into four fields of practice.

- adult nursing
- mental health nursing
- learning disabilities nursing
- children's nursing.

You can apply to be on the nurses or midwives parts of the register, as long as you meet our standards. If you've trained as a general nurse, you should apply for registration with us as an adult nurse.

If you want to register on more than one part of the register or field of practice, you should apply for each part/field at the same time.

Once you're registered, you can work in the National Health Service (NHS) or private health. As a regulator, we can't help you find jobs or give references.

To work as a nurse or midwife in the UK, you'll need to meet immigration conditions. Immigration in the UK is handled by [UK Visas and Immigration](#). We can't help with any part of this application process.

All nurses and midwives registered with us must follow our rules and standards, including [the Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives](#) (the Code). They also need to renew their registration annually.

It's a criminal offence in the UK to pose as a nurse or midwife or to provide false or misleading information. If at any point in the application process we discover that your application is fraudulent, we won't continue to assess the application and you may be liable for prosecution.

If, after registration, we discover that any part of the application was fraudulent, we will remove you from the register and you'll be liable for prosecution.

Requirements for applying to join the register

Education requirements

You need to have successfully completed at least 10 years of school education before starting your post-secondary education nursing or midwifery training programme, which lead to registration.

English language requirements

When you apply to register with us we need to know you can communicate effectively in English. Communication is defined as speaking, reading, listening and writing. You must demonstrate competence in these four skills.

There are a number of pieces of evidence that we will accept.

- You have recently achieved the required score in one of the English language tests accepted by the NMC. You must achieve the [required score in each of the four skills](#) of reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- A recent pre-registration nursing or midwifery qualification that was [taught and examined in English](#).
- [You've worked as a registered nurse or midwife for at least one year](#) in a country [where English is the first and native language](#), and an English language assessment was required for registration.

Your evidence of English language will be assessed against the following criteria. It should be:

- recent, objective and independent
- able to clearly demonstrate that you can read, write, communicate and interact with patients, service users, relatives and healthcare professionals in English
- authentic evidence that we can verify.

Important

If you can't send the evidence we request, or we aren't satisfied with what you send us, we won't be able to consider your application.

We highly recommend you make sure you can meet our language evidence requirements before you apply to us. If you feel this is unlikely you may wish to complete a language test before applying to us.

For more information on our language requirements please refer to annexe 1.

Registration requirements

If you've worked as a nurse or midwife in more than one country or state, you need to have been registered with the licensing authority/registration body in all the countries/states where you've worked. We'll need verification from that authority regardless of the length of your registration.

You'll need to declare all registrations you've held, even if they're now inactive or surrendered. You'll need to submit all verification documents as well as your registration certificates.

Practice requirements

Previously, overseas nurses and midwives wishing to apply to join our register must have worked for 12 months after achieving their qualification. We have now removed this requirement, meaning applicants can apply to join our register after qualifying.

Only applicants who are using their registration and practice of at least one year in a country where English is the first and native language as evidence of their English language skills will be required to provide an employment reference as part of their application.

Special advice for refugees and asylum seekers

If you're a refugee or asylum seeker, you should contact us for advice before making an application. You'll need to fill in the application form in full, but if you're unable to fill in any part of the form, we request that you send it to us with a supporting letter explaining why.

At the very least, we need photocopies of:

- your nursing or midwifery diplomas and registration certificates
- your transcript of training
- verification from the relevant licensing authority or registration body, if you were registered

If you're not able to provide any of these documents, we may not be able to assess your application. Agencies that support asylum seekers and refugees may be able to help obtain the information required to apply for registration.

Please keep copies of all the documents that you send to us, as we aren't able to return them. If you decide to apply for registration, you'll need to send us an application form and:

- a copy of your immigration letter
- a copy of your UK Home Office letter confirming your status
- a letter from social security
- a UK Home Office Pin card.

If you can provide these documents, you may not need to pay the application fee.

Specific requirements for nurses applying to join the register

We won't accept an application if you're a second level nurse or the equivalent, for example, an enrolled nurse, a licensed practical nurse, a vocational nurse, a state-certified nurse, a nursery nurse, a nurse-midwife technician or a nurse aid.

We also won't accept medical qualifications as a basis for registration. If you've trained as a doctor or a medical technician, you won't be eligible to register with us, even if this qualification allows you to carry out the duties of a nurse where you qualified.

The training programme must have been entirely focused on nursing.

Adult (general) nursing

You must have completed a programme at post-secondary level leading to registration as a general nurse.

This programme should have been three years in length (or part time equivalent) and contain a minimum of 500 hours of clinical practice; you'll need to submit your full transcript to show this.

Your programme must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

- general and specialist medicine
- general and specialist surgery
- childcare and pediatrics
- maternity (obstetric) care
- mental health and psychiatry
- care of the elderly
- community/primary care nursing.

Mental health nursing

You need to have completed:

- a three-year (or part time equivalent) pre-registration mental health nursing training programme, or
- a 12-month post-registration mental health training programme, after completing a general nursing programme that meets our requirements as outlined above.

Either route must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

- mental health nursing in a range of care settings, including acute

and enduring/chronic illness

- are for children and young people who have mental health problems
- specialist mental healthcare (for example, substance abuse, challenging behaviour and care in secure and locked environments)
- care for elderly adults who have mental health problems
- continuing care and rehabilitation
- community care.

Learning disabilities

You need to have completed either:

- a three-year (or part time equivalent) pre-registration learning disabilities nursing training programme, or
- a 12-month post-registration learning disabilities training programme after completing a general nursing programme that meets our requirements as outlined above.

Either route must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

- learning disability nursing in a range of care environments, including residential and day-care settings
- learning disability nursing in a range of environments to support people who have complex needs and mental health problems
- care for people of all ages who have learning disabilities
- working with families and carers to support people who have learning disabilities
- continuing care and rehabilitation.

Children's nursing

You need to have completed either:

- a three-year (or equivalent) pre-registration children's nursing training programme, or
- a 12-month post-registration children's nursing training programme after completing a general nursing programme that meets our requirements as outlined above.

Either route must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

- care for children in a range of care settings, including specialist medicine and surgery
- care for children in emergency, neonatal and high-dependency environments
- care for children at home, in school and in the community
- working with families and carers to care for sick children of all ages.

Additional information

If you did comprehensive or general nurse training, you'll only be able to apply for registration in the UK as an adult nurse.

We may be able to consider some postgraduate programmes as part of an application to register. However, these programmes can't be the foundation for an application. For example, if you have a certificate in paediatric oncology, we are unable to register you as a children's nurse. Similarly, a certificate in postgraduate forensic psychiatry may not be suitable for registration as a mental health nurse.

If you've completed a specialist branch of training and wish to be considered for registration as a general adult nurse, you'll need to have completed a training course of at least 18 months in adult nursing that covers the areas listed in the adult (general) nursing section.

Specific requirements for midwives applying to join the register

We won't accept your application if the education and training you did wasn't specific to the role of the midwife, allowing you to meet the specific requirements of midwifery practice. Combined nursing, child health and midwifery courses aren't acceptable.

To apply as a midwife, you'll need to have completed a three-year full-time course of at least 156 weeks. Alternatively, if you're already a registered adult nurse in the UK, an 18-month course focused entirely on midwifery, with a balance of half clinical and half theoretical training. The calculation we use is based on the hours of theoretical study and clinically supervised learning.

The practical instruction of your programme should include:

- advising pregnant women, involving 100 pre-natal examinations
- carrying out 40 deliveries, or carrying out 30 deliveries and actively participating in a further 20
- participation in breech deliveries (where this is not possible, because of a lack of breech deliveries, practice may be in a simulated setting)
- the performance of episiotomy and induction in suturing
- supervision and care of 40 women who are at risk in pregnancy, labour or the post-natal period
- supervision and care of 100 post-natal women and healthy babies
- observation and care for the new-born requiring special care
- care of women with pathological conditions relating to gynecology and obstetrics
- introduction to medicine and surgery relevant to women's health
- experience of working as a midwife in a community setting.

How to apply for registration as a nurse or midwife

Before deciding to apply, you should consider if you meet the general and specific requirements described in the previous sections. You should then begin your application online through our website.

The application process

Eligibility

This is the first stage of the application process. You'll need to complete an online self-assessment, which will confirm if you're eligible to apply. As part of this, you'll be asked to confirm that you meet our minimum requirements including good health and good character. You'll also need to confirm that you understand you will be asked to provide us with supporting documents later in the process.

If you complete these declarations and can't provide any supporting evidence later on, we won't progress your application and any costs you've incurred won't be refunded.

Test of competence part one: the computer based test (CBT)

Once you've passed the eligibility stage, you'll be asked to sit the CBT. This is a test of your theoretical practice-based knowledge. The test format is a multiple choice test and can be taken in test centres around the world.

You'll have two attempts at this test and you'll need to pass within six months of completing your eligibility. If you've not completed the CBT within six months of completing your eligibility it will expire and you'll need to complete the online self-assessment again.

If you're unsuccessful in both your CBT attempts, you'll need to wait six months in order to restart the application process.

Our test provider, Pearson VUE, administers their own test fee in agreement with us. You'll need to contact Pearson VUE directly to book and pay for your test.

Application Assessment

After you've passed the CBT, you'll be asked to provide your supporting documents for your application.

You'll need to upload copies of the following documents to us are:

- your current valid passport
- your birth certificate
- your formal qualification certificates for each qualification you're submitting

as part of your application.

- your registration certificates from each country where you've practised and/or been registered. If the country operates state level registration, then you'll need to have registered in each state where you've practised.
- a full, national police clearance certificate for every overseas country you've lived in or visited for more than three months, since the age of 18. You'll need to submit these within three months of the date of issue.
- if you've lived in the UK for more than three months, you'll need to provide us with a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. You'll need to submit this within three months of the date of issue.

You'll also need to download and print the following forms from your online portal and have them completed:

- registration verification from each country where you've practised or where you've been previously registered. Again, if the country operates state level registration, you'll need to have been registered and provide verification forms from each state you've practiced in. These forms need to be completed by the relevant authority and we need to receive them within three months of the date it was signed.
- a completed form to accompany transcript of training (FATT) form and full transcript of your training for all relevant nursing or midwifery qualifications you're submitting as part of your application. These forms need to be completed by your education provider.
- a good health declaration from your general practitioner or the occupational health department at your place of work. They'll be asked to confirm that they've seen you within the last six months of the date they're completing the form and we must receive the form within three months of the date it's been completed. The individual completing your good health declaration must not be a member of your family or your direct employer.

All of the relevant forms required are available to download from your online portal once you reach the assessment stage, but not before.

You'll need to send the relevant forms to the correct authorities to be completed and they must be posted back to us. We do need the original forms that the referee or relevant authority has completed; please don't send photocopies or scans, as these won't be accepted.

All forms must be completed in full and be signed, stamped and dated.

Once we've received all the necessary documents, your application will be assessed by a member of the International Registrations Team.

We aim to assess applications within 60 calendar days of receiving all your supporting evidence.

If we need to ask you for more information following our assessment, we'll assign you a case officer, who will be your point of contact going forwards.

Once we confirmed you've met our registration requirements, your application will be progressed to the next stage, which is the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

Test of competence part two: the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)

The OSCE will assess your clinical knowledge and can only be completed in the UK. The test will be administered by one of our approved university test centres who will administer their own test fee in agreement with us. You'll need to contact the university directly to book and pay for your test.

The OSCE simulates a clinical environment and patient scenarios which all registered nurses and midwives are likely to encounter when they assess, plan, implement and evaluate care. The OSCE contains nursing or midwifery scenarios along with separate skill stations. Each separate clinical examination is known a 'station' and you'll circulate through all the stations within a set timeframe.

Each of the six stations has standardised marking criteria against which everyone is assessed. Everyone is assessed by a panel of examiners and will be filmed for quality assurance purposes.

Both the CBT and OSCE are based on current UK pre-registration standards.

If you started your application before 6 April 2017, you'll have two attempts at the OSCE as part of one application.

Should you be unsuccessful following your second attempt, your application will close. You'll need to start a new application, but you won't be able to sit the OSCE again for a minimum of six months.

If you started your application on or after 6 April 2017, you'll have three attempts at the OSCE, as part of one application.

Should you be unsuccessful in your first OSCE, then you must wait a minimum of 10 working days before your next attempt. If you're unsuccessful in your second OSCE attempt, you must wait a minimum of three months from the date of your second attempt before you can take your next attempt.

If you're unsuccessful on your third attempt, your application will close. You'll need to submit a new application but will not be able to sit the OSCE again for a minimum of six months.

ID check

A face-to-face ID check will take place at the OSCE location on the same day as your OSCE exam. You'll need to bring all of the original documents that you uploaded as part of your application. This includes your passport, registration certificates, police clearances and UK DBS. You can find a checklist on the back of your OSCE letter, which is downloadable from your portal.

If for any reason you don't have all of your original documents on the day, you will still be able to sit your OSCE exam. However, you'll be asked to book in an appointment, either at our office in London or at one of the OSCE locations, to complete your ID check. If this is the case, you won't be able to progress to the last stage of the registration process until you've attended your follow up ID check.

Registration

Once we have received notification that you've successfully completed your OSCE and the ID check, you'll be asked to complete your final declaration and make your registration payment via your portal. Once you've completed both, we'll send you your registration number (Pin).

Important information about the application process

Completing the supporting application forms

Please ensure all sections of the downloadable forms are completed in full and in English. This will reduce the need for follow-up queries and speed up the application process.

Only you should complete your online portal; no one else should do this on your behalf.

If you knowingly withhold any information or provide false or misleading information, this may result in your application being refused. If this is part of a subsequent application and you're already on our register, we may remove you from the register and you may be liable to prosecution.

Please don't download and print multiple copies of the same form (such as the registration verification forms), as each entry on your portal will generate its own unique form. Using duplicate forms may delay your application.

If you've already submitted your application and you think you may have used duplicate forms in error please contact us at overseas.enquiries@nmc-uk.org.

Translations

If one of your original documents is not written in English, please also provide an English translation of it. The translation must:

- be produced by a certified translator
- be attached to the original-language version of the document.

The translator should confirm in English that the translation is an exact translation of the original document. The translator should also provide their contact details (telephone, address and/or email address).

Application process timelines

Once you've passed the self-assessment eligibility stage, you'll have up to six months to successfully complete the CBT. If you don't pass the CBT in this time, your application will close.

Results will be emailed to you within 48 hours of taking the exam. The exam fee must be paid in full each time to Pearson Vue.

Your successful CBT result is valid for two years and you'll need to ensure you complete your registration within this time. Therefore, we advise you to start the assessment stage and provide your supporting documentation as soon as possible once you've passed the CBT.

We aim to assess applications within 60 calendar days, once we've received all required documents. Once you pass the assessment stage, you'll then be invited to sit

the OSCE in the UK. You'll need to ensure that you're able to successfully complete the OSCE within two years of passing the CBT. OSCE results will be emailed to candidates within five working days of taking the examination.

Responsibilities as a registered nurse or midwife

Professional indemnity insurance

All nurses and midwives must hold appropriate cover under an indemnity arrangement in order to practise and provide care. To register with us, you are required to make a self-declaration that you hold, or will hold when you begin practising, appropriate cover under an indemnity arrangement. The Code has been updated to reflect this change.

If the indemnity arrangement is no longer appropriate for the scope of practice and you no longer meets our registration requirements, you must inform us immediately on 0207 333 9333.

Further information about the indemnity requirements is available on our website.

Revalidation

Once on the register, all practitioners are required to revalidate to maintain their registration with the NMC every three years. Taking effect from April 2016, revalidation is a straightforward process and will help you demonstrate that you practise safely and effectively.

Revalidation encourages you to reflect on the role of the Code in your practice, allowing you to demonstrate that you are living the standards set out within it.

The requirements for revalidation are:

- 450 practice hours or 900 hours if revalidating as both a nurse and midwife
- 35 hours of Continuing Professional Development
- five pieces of practice-related feedback
- five written reflective accounts
- reflective discussion
- health and character declaration
- professional indemnity arrangements
- confirmation.

If you become registered with the NMC, you will be required to meet the requirements. For more information on revalidation, please see www.nmc.org.uk/revalidation.

Responsibility and sphere of practice

Registered nurses may work in a variety of health-related settings including the NHS, private hospitals and nursing homes or in the community. In any circumstance, you're accountable for your own practice. This responsibility cannot be delegated elsewhere as you're recognised as an autonomous practitioner.

Practising as a midwife

Being on our register as a midwife only provides evidence of qualification. Midwives are also required to show continuing professional development by targeting required learning and experience to maintain their expertise. Please see www.nmc.org.uk/revalidation for more information on revalidation.

Useful contacts and further information

NMC

23 Portland Place
London, W1B 1PZ
+44 (0)20 7333 9333
www.nmc.org.uk

NHS Careers
PO Box 376
Bristol, BS99 3EY
+44 845 6060 655
www.nhs.uk/careers

NHS Careers international nurses advice line
+ 44 8458 505888 (09:00–17:00 GMT only)
www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/outside-uk

Pearson VUE
www.pearsonvue.co.uk

British Council
5th Floor, Information Centre, Bridgewater House
58 Whitworth Street
Manchester, M1 6BB
+44 161 957 7755
www.britishcouncil.org

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
www.ielts.org

UK Visas and Immigration
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration

Praxis (support for refugees and asylum seekers)
Pott Street
London
E2 0EF
+44 20 7729 7985
www.praxis.org.uk

The Refugee Council
240-250 Ferndale Road
London
SW9 8BB
+44 20 7346 6700
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

The University Of Northampton
Boughton Green Rd
Northampton
NN2 7AL
+44 800 358 2232
www.northampton.ac.uk

Oxford Brookes University
Headington Campus
Oxford
OX3 0BP
+44 1865 741 111
www.brookes.ac.uk

Ulster University
Magee Campus
Northland Road
BT48 7NL
+44 28 7167 5145
www.ulster.ac.uk

Data privacy policy

Personal information we collect about the applicant

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We may collect general personal information about our applicants including their name, address, email address, place of work or study and NMC Pin, if applicable. We may also collect personal information about you if you apply for a job with us, if you provide us with feedback about an area of practice, if a complaint is made about you or if you make a complaint about a nurse, midwife or us.

How we use their personal information

If you're a nurse or midwife, we may collect personal information about you for the following purposes: administering your application to join the register, running and maintaining the register, compliance with our regulatory responsibility to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public, carrying out investigations into any complaint raised against you including making any necessary publication about the investigation, administering any sanctions against you, sending publications and newsletters when requested, dealing with any calls you make to our registrations centre and professional advice service.

Disclosures to third parties

Personal information about registrants that is publicly available on the register will be disclosed as part of our requirement to provide a register.

We may be required to disclose personal information in response to requests from a court, tribunal, regulator, or otherwise as part of the litigation process or to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public. Where possible, we will consult with you prior to making such disclosure and, in order to protect your privacy, we will ensure that we will disclose only the minimum amount of your information and only necessary for the required purpose.

We may share your personal information with third parties such as law enforcement agencies, employers or potential future employers in order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public or in context of an investigation about their conduct should this be necessary.

Access to their personal information

You have the right to request access to the personal information that we hold about you and to ask for information about the purposes for which their personal information is used.

To exercise this right or request further information, use the data protection request form on our website, email us at FOIandDPArequest@nmc-uk.org or write to us at:

Records and Archives
Nursing and Midwifery Council
23 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PZ

Annexe 1: English language requirements

English language tests we accept

We currently accept two language tests as evidence of your ability to communicate effectively in English: the International English Language Test System (IELTS) and the Occupational English Test (OET).

The IELTS and the OET are used across the world. They are often chosen to test the language competency of healthcare professionals in the UK.

International English Language Test System (IELTS)

If you have completed an IELTS examination you must provide an IELTS certificate that confirms:

- at least 7.0 in the listening and reading sections
- at least 7.0 in the writing and speaking sections, and
- at least 7.0 overall.

Occupational English Test (OET)

If you have completed an OET examination you must provide a certificate that confirms:

- at least a B grade in listening and reading, and
- at least a B grade in writing and speaking.

We will only accept results from OET tests taken from February 2016 onwards.

You can achieve the required mark across two test sittings if:

- you sit the tests within six months of each other, and
- you are tested in all four skills at the same time, and
- if you take an IELTS test, all scores in both sittings are above 6.5 and you achieve 7.0 or higher in all four fields when the results of both sittings are viewed together, or
- if you take the OET, all grades in both sittings are above Grade C+ and you achieve Grade B or higher in all four fields when the results of both sittings are viewed together.

Test scores are valid for two years.

Example scenarios

IELTS Example

Example 1

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Test 1	7	7.5	6.5	7
Test 2	6.5	7	7.5	8

This application would be accepted. The applicant has scored 7 in all categories, and no score is lower than 6.5.

Example 2

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Test 1	6	7.5	6.5	7
Test 2	6.5	7	7.5	7.5

This application would not be accepted. The applicant has a score lower than 6.5.

OET Example

Example 1

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Test 1	B	B	C+	B
Test 2	B	C+	B	B

This application would be accepted. The applicant has scored B in all categories, and no score is lower than C+.

Example 2

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Test 1	B	B	C+	B
Test 2	C	C+	B	B

This application would not be accepted. The applicant has scored lower than C+.

Trained in English

If you wish to rely on evidence that you recently trained in English you must be able to satisfy us that:

- the course was taught and examined in English, and
- the programme demonstrates your ability in reading, writing, speaking and listening in a range of environments.

You will need to provide us with the following.

- A university transcript of training, and
- A letter of reference from your training institution (or ask your training institution to complete sections 8a and 8b on the form to accompany your transcript of training).

Your evidence must confirm that your programme was composed of at least 50 percent clinical interaction. At least 75 percent of that must be with patients, service users, their families and other healthcare professionals must have taken place in English.

Please note, by 'recent' we mean evidence related to English language competence that is less than two years old at the point of making an application to us. If the information you provide is not clear, we will need to request further information from you.

Registered and practised in English

If you who wish to rely on evidence that you have registered and practised in English you must be able to satisfy us that:

- you have completed an English language assessment or examination as part of your registration outside of the UK
- you have one year post registered practice in an English speaking setting
- your registration is in a country [where English is the first and native language](#).

You will need to provide us with the following.

- A letter of good standing from your licensing authority.
- Details of the English language assessment that you undertook as part of your registration.
- An Employer Reference form (which can be downloaded from your portal). Your reference must be completed and signed by either a senior nurse, another senior clinician (such as a registered medical practitioner) or your line manager.

If you were not required to sit a language test by the regulator because you were taught and examined in a country where English is the first and native language, you will still meet this requirement.

Last updated September 2018.