

# GUIDANCE SHEET - ALTERNATIVE

## SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

This guidance sheet is for nurses and midwives who are planning to renew their registration with the NMC but who need alternative arrangements to support them through the process. Reasons why you might need this support include:

- You cannot meet one or more of the revalidation requirement(s) due to exceptional circumstances.
- You need a reasonable adjustment to the online application process due to a disability.
- You need a short extension to your application date.

Below we set out the circumstances in which we will consider offering alternative arrangements, the support we can offer and how to apply for this support.

### Exceptional circumstances

#### What are exceptional circumstances?

Revalidation builds on the previous renewal process (known as post-registration education and practice, or 'Prep'), and includes additional requirements on feedback, reflection and confirmation. We recognise there might be some circumstances when nurses and midwives cannot meet the additional revalidation requirements.

There are two types of exceptional circumstances:

1. You have not been in practice for sufficient time between October 2015, when the revalidation guidance was published, and your revalidation application date, to meet the additional requirements.

For example, you are a nurse whose revalidation application date is 1 September 2016, but you went on maternity leave in November 2015. Other reasons why you might not be in practice for sufficient time might include sick leave or a career break.

We will not normally accept applications for exceptional circumstances due to lack of time if you have been practising for **more than six months since October 2015**. You are responsible for meeting the revalidation requirements in time to submit your application by your revalidation application date. We recommend that you work towards collecting evidence for the requirements on an ongoing basis.

2. A relevant protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (such as pregnancy and maternity, or disability) may affect your ability to meet one or more of the requirements.

The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

## What support will we offer those in exceptional circumstances?

If you are able to establish that exceptional circumstances apply in your case, we will allow you to renew your registration by meeting the Prep requirements.

The Prep requirements are:

- Practice hours: you must have worked in some capacity in nursing or midwifery during the previous three years for a minimum of 450 hours (900 hours for dual registration), or have successfully undertaken an approved return to practice course within the last three years.

Registration	Minimum total practice hours required
Nurse	450
Midwife	450
Nurse/SCPHN	450
Midwife/SCPHN	450
Nurse and midwife (including Nurse/SCPHN, and Midwife/SCPHN)	900 (to include 450 hours for nursing and 450 hours for midwifery)

- Continuing professional development (CPD): you must have undertaken and recorded at least 35 hours of learning activity relevant to your practice during the three years prior to your renewal of registration.
- Professional indemnity arrangement: you must declare that you hold, or will hold, appropriate cover under an indemnity arrangement.
- Health and character: you must declare that you meet the requirements for health and character.

You must also pay your annual registration fee.

## Revalidation requirements

Even if you intend to request alternative support arrangements due to exceptional circumstances, we recommend you try to meet as many of the revalidation requirements as possible before your renewal application is due. This has two benefits:

1. It will allow you to become familiar with the process, which you may need to go through when you renew your registration in the future.
2. Should your circumstances change and you are able to meet all of the requirements by the time your application is due, you will be able to revalidate rather than apply for an exemption.

It is worth remembering that the revalidation requirements build on the previous Prep requirements. Once you have achieved the practice hours and the CPD requirements, most of the additional revalidation requirements can be based on practice you have already undertaken.

For example, you may be able to think of instances when you received feedback in the three years since you last renewed your registration, such as appraisals with your manager, or receiving verbal feedback from a patient – you can make a note of this and keep it in your portfolio. For your reflective accounts you may be able to think of experiences, CPD or feedback you received since you last renewed that you can write a reflection on. Once you have completed the feedback and reflective account requirements, you can have your reflective discussion and confirmation discussion.

If you find you are able to meet the revalidation requirements, you can then apply for revalidation via [NMC Online](#) once your application opens.

More information on all of the requirements, plus supporting forms and templates, can be found on our [revalidation microsite](#).

## How to apply to renew your registration under exceptional circumstances

Your application to renew your registration will open on NMC Online 60 days before your revalidation application date, which is the first day of the month in which your registration expires. Once your application opens you can apply for exceptional circumstances via NMC Online. In this application you will need to provide some details of your practice and declare that you can meet the Prep requirements. We may ask you for evidence of this.

In your application you must state which of the revalidation requirements you are not able to meet and why. You should provide supporting evidence. If we don't receive evidence with your application we will reject it and you will have to revalidate or lapse your registration.

Suitable evidence might include:

- a Maternity Certificate form (MAT B1) covering the relevant time period;
- other evidence of receiving Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) from your employer covering the relevant time period;
- other evidence of receiving Maternity Allowance covering the relevant time period;
- a medical certificate covering the relevant time period;
- agreement from your employer to a career break covering the relevant time period;
- a document from your employer confirming that you have not been working due to illness during the relevant time period, or
- relevant social security documents covering the relevant time period.

Please note we can only accept documents that have been scanned, not photographed. If you are not clear whether the evidence you have is sufficient you should contact registration enquiries on 020 7333 9333.

You must submit your application as soon as possible once your application opens and before your revalidation application date in order that we can properly consider it. We cannot guarantee we will be able to consider applications after that date, and you may put your registration at risk if you submit an application after this date.

**Please note:**

- If we decide that exceptional circumstances do not apply, we will notify you by email. You will then need to complete a revalidation application.
- When you apply to renew your registration, whether by meeting the revalidation requirements or meeting the Prep requirements due to exceptional circumstances, you need to make a health and character declaration. If we accept your application to renew your registration under exceptional circumstances we will then investigate any declared convictions or cautions in accordance with our [Character and health decision making guidance](#). While we carry out this investigation we will hold your registration effective for three months from the date that your application is complete, and the Assistant Registrar will make a decision whether or not to accept your application for renewal.
- If you declare that you are not able to meet the revalidation requirements due to an ongoing health condition, we may investigate your health condition in accordance with our [Character and health decision making guidance](#). We will hold your registration effective for three months from the date of your complete application while we carry out this investigation, and the Assistant Registrar will make a decision whether or not to accept your application for renewal.
- Any false declarations will be viewed as potentially fraudulent and may put your registration at risk.

## Reasonable adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments for nurses and midwives who have a disability that means you may find using NMC Online difficult. If you require a reasonable adjustment please contact us well before your revalidation application opens. The easiest way to do this is by emailing us at [revalidation.escalation@nmc-uk.org](mailto:revalidation.escalation@nmc-uk.org), using the subject **Reasonable adjustments request**. Please include the following information in your email:

- your name;
- your NMC PIN;
- a contact phone number;
- your revalidation application date;
- whether you have an NMC Online account;
- details of your circumstances, and
- the assistance or adjustments that would help you to revalidate.

If you are unable to contact us by email you can telephone Registration enquiries on 020 7333 9333.

## Extensions

Where there is a good reason (for example a sudden serious illness or recent bereavement), we can grant an extension of up to **a maximum of six weeks** to the date when you are due to submit your revalidation application. Please note that if we grant you an extension to your application submission date, you must still pay your annual registration fee by your **original** revalidation application date.

### How to apply for an extension

If you believe that an extension of up to six weeks would help you to meet the revalidation requirements you can request an extension once your revalidation application opens, which is 60 days before your revalidation application date. To make this request you should email [revalidation.escalation@nmc-uk.org](mailto:revalidation.escalation@nmc-uk.org), using the subject **Formal extension request**.

You will need to send us evidence or provide a reason for your request. We recommend that you collect and keep evidence of your circumstances to use as part of your application. This might include:

- a medical certificate covering the relevant time period;
- a document from your employer confirming that you have not been in work due to illness that covers the relevant time period, or
- a document from your employer showing that you are unable to access NMC Online during your 60-day application window.

Please note we can only accept documents that have been scanned, not photographed.

You must submit your application as soon as possible once your application opens and before your revalidation application date in order that we can properly consider it. We cannot guarantee we will be able to consider applications after that date, and you may put your registration at risk if you submit an application later.

In granting an extension, we will take into account:

- whether you have contacted the NMC in advance of the date your revalidation application is due;
- the reason why you cannot submit your revalidation application by the specified date;
- whether you are capable of completing the outstanding revalidation requirements and submitting your application within the additional period of time;
- whether there are any concerns about your fitness to practise, and
- whether the annual registration fee has been or will be paid by the required date.

It is important to note we cannot offer extensions of more than six weeks. You should only apply for an extension if you believe this additional time will help you to meet the revalidation requirements. If an extension will not help you then you may want to consider:

- whether you meet the criteria to apply for exceptional circumstances (see above), and
- whether you need to undertake a **Return to practice course** in order to renew your registration.

If we do grant you an extension we encourage you to inform your employer (if relevant) of the new date on which you are due to submit your revalidation application, so that they are aware that you can continue to practise during the period of your extension as your renewal date will remain the same on the employers' register.

Please note if we do grant an extension on the grounds of health we may investigate your health condition in accordance with our [Character and health decision making guidance](#). We will hold your registration effective for three months from the date of your complete application while we carry out this investigation, and the Assistant Registrar will make a decision whether or not to accept your application for renewal.

If you have contacted us about exceptional circumstances, reasonable adjustments or an extension before you submit your revalidation application, and you find that you do not require the support we have put in place, you can then apply for revalidation as normal via NMC Online.

**Last updated March 2017**