FAQ for internationally-qualified applicants

Revised 29 November 2011

English language skills registration standard

The following frequently asked questions (FAQ) answer common queries that you might have about the National Board English Language skills registration standard as published under Registration standards on the National Board website.

See related information in the following web pages:

- General FAQ on English language skills registration standard
- Fact sheet on English language skills registration standard

1. Who is an internationally-qualified applicant?

An internationally-qualified applicant is a person who has obtained an initial nursing and/or midwifery qualification in a country outside Australia.

Applicants completing a nursing and/or midwifery program of study approved in one of the recognised countries (excluding Australia and New Zealand) leading to registration as a registered nurse or midwife:

2. I have completed a three-year program of study approved by the recognised nursing and/or midwifery regulatory body in Canada, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United Kingdom, or the United States of America. What evidence do I need to include with my application for registration as a registered nurse or midwife?

You will need to provide evidence of five years’ full-time equivalent education taught and assessed in English in any of the seven recognised countries listed in the registration standard. These countries are:

- Australia
- Canada
- New Zealand
- Republic of Ireland
- South Africa
- the United Kingdom, and
- the United States of America.

The evidence required must demonstrate:

- successful completion of a three-year nursing or midwifery program of study approved by the recognised nursing and/or midwifery regulatory body in: Canada; Republic of Ireland; South Africa; the United Kingdom; or the United States of America, and
- an additional:
  - two years’ full-time equivalent education (in nursing and/or midwifery and/or other studies) undertaken in English at secondary or vocational or tertiary level, or
  - a combination of two or three of these education levels in any of the seven recognised countries.
If you are unable to provide this evidence

- you will be required to undertake a Board-approved English language test (IELTS or OET). See also: General FAQ on English language skills registration standard

Important note on National Board decision

The National Board reserves the right, at any time, to require any applicant for registration or renewal of registration to undertake a specified English language test.

The National Board can also decide, at any time, that an individual is not suitable to hold registration as a nurse or midwife if it believes that the individual’s competency in speaking or communicating in English is not sufficient for the individual to practise as a nurse or midwife.

3. I have completed a two-year program of study approved by the recognised nursing and/or midwifery regulatory body in Canada, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United Kingdom or the United States of America. What evidence do I need to include with my application for registration as a registered nurse or a registered midwife?

You will need to provide evidence of five years’ full-time equivalent education taught and assessed in English in any of the seven recognised countries listed in the registration standard.

The evidence required must demonstrate:

- successful completion of a two-year nursing or midwifery program of study approved by the recognised nursing and/or midwifery regulatory body in Canada, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United Kingdom or the United States of America, and
- an additional:
  - three years’ full-time equivalent education (in nursing and/or midwifery and/or other studies) undertaken in English at secondary or vocational or tertiary level, or
  - a combination of two or three of these education levels in any of the seven recognised countries.

Additional evidence of secondary and/or vocational and/or tertiary education:

4. My secondary education was taught and assessed in English in one of the countries listed in the registration standard, but I did not complete secondary school. Can I use this as evidence towards my five years of education?

Yes. You need to provide evidence of your secondary education that shows what you completed, the timeframe in which you undertook your secondary education and the level you achieved.

For example, you can provide evidence of Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12 (or equivalent).

5. I have undertaken further studies in a course at vocational level which was taught and assessed in English in one of the seven recognised countries listed in the registration standard; however, I did not complete the course. Can I use this as evidence towards my five years of education?

Yes. You need to provide evidence of your vocational education that shows the subjects you completed, the timeframe in which you undertook this education and the level you achieved.

For example, you can provide a certificate of results or an academic transcript. This vocational-level education may be unrelated to nursing or midwifery.

6. I have undertaken further tertiary studies in a course taught and assessed in English in one of the seven recognised countries listed in the registration standard, but I did not complete the course. Can I use this as evidence towards my five years of education?

Yes. You need to provide information of your tertiary education that shows the subjects you completed, the timeframe in which you undertook the education and the level you achieved.
For example, you can provide a certificate of results or an academic transcript. The tertiary-level education may be unrelated to nursing or midwifery.

7. I have current registration with the Nursing Council of New Zealand and/or the Midwifery Council of New Zealand. Do I need to demonstrate English language skills in accordance with the National Board’s English language skills registration standard?

No. Under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997(Cth), the National Board recognises the registration status of a registered nurse, midwife or enrolled nurse from New Zealand, and grants registration with no additional requirement to demonstrate English language proficiency.

New Zealand and Australia have comparable English language requirements for health professionals.

For more information on the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia’s registration standard on English language skills

- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200