



Nurse practitioners

A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse endorsed as a nurse practitioner by the NMBA. The nurse practitioner practices at an advanced level, meets and complies with the *Nurse Practitioner Standards for Practice*, has direct clinical contact and practices within their scope under the protected title 'nurse practitioner' under the National Law.¹

The orientating statements found in the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA's) *Nurse Practitioner Standards for Practice* provide a comprehensive overview of the role of the nurse practitioner. In summary these statements recognise that nurse practitioners work in a variety of contexts, across diverse practice settings to deliver high level clinically focused nursing care.

The scope of practice of the nurse practitioner builds upon registered nurse practice, enabling nurse practitioners to manage episodes of care, including wellness focussed care, as a primary provider of care in collaborative teams. Nurse practitioners use advanced, comprehensive assessment techniques in screening, diagnosis and treatment. They apply best available knowledge to evidenced-based practice. Nurse practitioners order and interpret diagnostic tests, and prescribe therapeutic intervention including the prescription of medicines. They independently refer people to healthcare professionals for conditions that would benefit from integrated and collaborative care, which they accomplish by using skilful and empathetic communication with health care consumers and health care professionals. Nurse practitioners facilitate person-centred care, evaluate care provision and enhance safety and quality within healthcare. Although clinically focused, nurse practitioners are also expected to actively participate in research, education and leadership as applied to clinical care.²

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. Within the provision of universal health care, the nursing profession has the right to determine the nature and parameters of nursing care, to examine current practice and to explore new models of nursing care, thereby responding in a dynamic way to changing individual and community needs.
2. A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse whose registration has been endorsed by the NMBA under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*³ (National Law).
3. The title nurse practitioner is protected under the National Law, making it an offence for use of the title by anyone other than those authorised to do so by the legislation.
4. Endorsement to practise as a nurse practitioner is vested in the national nursing and midwifery regulatory authority, the NMBA. To be eligible for endorsement, an applicant must meet the NMBA *Registration Standard: Endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner*.⁴
5. The minimum educational preparation for nurse practitioners is a Masters of Nurse Practitioner program accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) and approved by the NMBA.



6. Nurse practitioners' practice in all clinical areas, across metropolitan, rural and remote Australia, in both the public and private sectors. Nurse practitioner practice is supported by relevant legislation.
7. The career pathway for nurse practitioners is part of the nursing clinical career structure.
8. The classification nurse practitioner is included in nursing awards and agreements at the highest level in the clinical career structure, linked to specific remuneration which recognises the advanced level of practice and the additional responsibilities.
9. Access to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) by nurse practitioners is governed by the *Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Act 2010*.⁵
10. Nurse practitioners must have professional indemnity insurance cover.⁶

Endorsed June 1998

Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2004

Reviewed and re-endorsed December 2007

Reviewed and re-endorsed February 2011

Reviewed and re-endorsed June 2014

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Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2020

References

1. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2014). *Nurse practitioner standards for practice*. Available at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/codes-guidelines-statements/professional-standards/nurse-practitioner-standards-of-practice.aspx>
2. Ibid
3. *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*. Available at <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2009-045>
4. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2016). *Registration standard: Endorsement as a nurse practitioner*. Available at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/registration-standards/endorsement-as-a-nurse-practitioner.aspx>
5. *Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurses Practitioners) Act 2010*. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2010A00029/Amendments>
6. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2016). *Registration standard: Professional indemnity insurance arrangements*. Available at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/registration-standards/professional-indemnity-insurance-arrangements.aspx>