

Registering as a nurse or midwife in the United Kingdom

**Information for applicants
from countries outside the
European Economic Area**

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Please note that this is Version 2 of this booklet. We have updated this booklet in preparation for the implementation of the NMC's new Overseas Nurses Programme in September 2005. From time to time we will update this booklet. Please check our website (www.nmc-uk.org) for updated versions of this booklet, or contact our Publications department.

Introduction

This booklet provides information for nurses and midwives who received their training in a country outside the UK or the European Economic Area (EEA). If you were trained outside the EEA and you are now thinking about applying to register in the UK, you will need to be aware of some important changes to the registration process. This booklet will help you decide whether or not you qualify for registration in the UK.

Please keep this booklet safe, as it will help you fill in the relevant forms in your application pack.

About the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

The NMC is the regulatory body for nurses and midwives practising in the UK. Established by the UK government, we protect the public by setting the highest professional standards that nurses and midwives must meet when they provide care. An important part of our role is a duty to promote high standards of professional education and conduct. If you want to work as a nurse or a midwife in the UK you must register with us. If you trained outside the EEA, we will assess your initial training to decide whether you are suitable to go on our register.

Explaining the NMC register

The NMC register has three parts:

- ▶ nurses
- ▶ midwives
- ▶ specialist community public health nurses

If you trained outside the EEA, you are eligible to apply for registration on the nurses' and midwives' parts of the register as long as you meet our standards.

The nurses' part of the register is divided into four fields of practice which relate to the route that students in the UK can take to achieve registration. We can make specific marks on the register to tell us which route students have used to achieve registration.

The fields of practice are:

- ▶ adult (general) nursing
- ▶ mental health nursing
- ▶ learning disabilities nursing
- ▶ children's nursing.

It is likely that you have trained as a *general* nurse in your home country. As a result, you should make an initial application to us for the field of *adult* nursing.

Please see pages 8 to 17 for further information on the educational standards we require for registration on the separate parts of our register.

To apply for registration with the NMC, you will need to show that you have met the education and practice standards we have set.

The Overseas Nurses Programme

If you are applying for registration as a nurse and if your application meets our minimum standards, you will have to undertake all or part of the Overseas Nurses Programme. This aim of this programme is to ensure consistency in preparing all applicants for UK registration and was developed to be comparable to the requirements made of UK-trained nurses. The core component of the programme is 20 days protected learning time (which everyone must undertake) plus, where appropriate, a period of supervised practice.

The programme will contain competencies designed to ensure fitness for practice in the UK. You will achieve these within the field of practice in which you are qualified (adult, mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing). You will receive a copy of these competencies when you are formally informed by the NMC that you must do the programme.

The content of the 20 days protected learning time will include:

- ▶ the UK as a multicultural society
- ▶ the structure of the National Health Service (NHS) and social care services
- ▶ the relationship between the NHS and the independent sector
- ▶ the changing healthcare environment
- ▶ practitioner-client relationships
- ▶ effective communication
- ▶ patient involvement
- ▶ *The NMC code of professional conduct, standards for conduct, performance and ethics*
- ▶ accountability
- ▶ the legal framework within which care is delivered
- ▶ ethical issues
- ▶ clinical governance and how the NMC standards contribute to this
- ▶ evidence-based practice
- ▶ holistic care (including health promotion and education)
- ▶ multi-disciplinary team working, and
- ▶ numeracy skills.

Overseas Nurses Programmes are offered by approved educational institutions and you must apply directly to them for a place on a programme. A list of educational institutions approved to offer the Overseas Nurses Programme can be found on our website at www.nmc-uk.org

In order to qualify for entry to a programme you will need to present the approved educational institution with the original NMC assessment letter, original IELTS certificate, and an appropriate immigration visa. If you have to take a period of supervised practice as part of the programme, you may do this only in practice settings that have been properly audited by the approved educational institution responsible for the programme. The approved educational institution will arrange those placements as part of the programme as well as an appropriate mentor for you. Your mentor will need to be a registered nurse who has qualified in the same field of practice to the one you are applying for, and will have to meet our standards for being a mentor.

Once you have successfully completed all parts of the programme, the approved educational institution will make the final recommendation to us that you become registered. This will include confirmation that you are of good health and good character. At this stage you will become eligible to apply to go on the nurses' part of our register. You will be entered onto the nurses' part of the register once you have satisfactorily completed the registration forms and paid the relevant registration fee.

Important note

If you meet the minimum UK and EU standards in your nursing training, you will have to take the Overseas Nurses Programme before registering with us. There is no exemption from this programme.

Important points about the application process

This booklet explains the registration process and aims to help you make an application that is complete and appropriate. Please read this booklet carefully to decide whether you are suitable to apply for registration. If you think that you qualify for registration, you must make sure that:

- ▶ the information in your application is full and correct; and
- ▶ you have sent us the correct supporting documents.

You must fill in the application form in English and sign and date it. No one else must fill in the form for you.

We charge an evaluation fee to process all applications for registration. We cannot refund this fee in any circumstances.

If you do not think that you are certain to qualify for registration, we strongly recommend that you do not apply for registration.

Warning

It is a criminal offence to pose as a nurse or a midwife or to provide false or misleading information. If at any point in the application process we discover that your application is in any way fraudulent, we will not continue with your application and you may be liable for prosecution. If, after registration, we discover that any part of your application is in any way fraudulent, we will remove you from the register. In addition, you will then be liable for prosecution.

Possible outcomes of your application

After we have considered your application for registration:

- ▶ you will have to successfully complete the Overseas Nurses Programme (if you are a nurse), or
- ▶ you will have to take an adaptation programme (if you are a midwife), or
- ▶ we will not accept you for registration if your application is deemed invalid because you did not meet the minimum educational and practice standards set out in this booklet.

Important note

There is no option for direct entry to the NMC register for any applicant.

If you meet the minimum European Union (EU) and UK standards you will, if you are a nurse, have to take the Overseas Nurses Programme, which is run by approved educational institutions in the UK, before registration. If you are a midwife and your education and training meet the UK and EU standards, you will have to take a midwifery adaptation programme.

However, places across the UK are severely limited for the Overseas Nurses Programme and the midwifery adaptation programme. Before you send us the application fee and documents, you should bear this in mind.

If you are not already living in the UK, we strongly advise you not to travel to the UK without having a confirmed place on the Overseas Nurses Programme or an adaptation programme (as appropriate).

We assess all applications against the education standards we set for entry onto the register. The standards are set out on pages 8 to 17 of this booklet.

Immigration

If you want to work as a nurse or a midwife in the UK, you must meet immigration conditions. Immigration in the UK is handled by Work Permits UK, so you should contact them for information. If you are a refugee or an asylum seeker, you will need to provide evidence of your immigration status (as well as evidence relating to your training and experience). Please see page 21 for more information.

If you wish to apply for registration as a nurse please turn to the next page

If you wish to apply for registration as a midwife please turn to page 13

Applications to join the nurses' part of the register

(For applications to join the midwives' part of the register please see page 13.)

As well as meeting the educational standards set out below, you must have had at least twelve months post-qualification experience in an area of practice related to your qualification.

We compare all applications for the registrations listed with the relevant minimum education and training carried out by UK nursing students.

The UK nurse-training programme is a three-year full-time programme (or the equivalent part time). One-third (one-year full-time) is a common foundation programme that applies to all types of nursing. Two-thirds (two-years full-time) of the programme focuses on gaining knowledge and experience in a specific field of practice. The fields of practice are adult nursing, mental health nursing, learning disabilities nursing and children's nursing.

Education requirements

You must have successfully completed at least 10 years of school education before starting a post-secondary education nursing programme. In the UK, post-secondary school nursing programmes generally start at the minimum age of 17 years and six months. **If you started your training at an age earlier than this, your application is unlikely to be successful.** Your training programme must have been entirely focused on nursing.

Practice requirements

When you apply you must have been practising as a registered nurse for at least twelve months (full-time or the part-time equivalent) after qualifying. Also, if you have been qualified for longer than this, you must have practised for at least 750 hours in the previous five years. This will change on 1 August 2006 and you will have had to have practised for at least 450 hours in the previous three years.

If you do meet NMC requirements, but have not practised as a nurse for more than five years, you will have to take a longer version of the Overseas Nurses Programme (see page 5).

Language requirements

English is the main language that is spoken and written in the UK. You must be able to show that you can communicate clearly and effectively in English. All applicants who apply to become registered nurses with the NMC must demonstrate competence in the English language by achieving a specific mark in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

You must complete the academic version of the IELTS test and achieve:

- ▶ at least 5.5 in the listening and reading sections
- ▶ at least 6 in the writing and speaking sections, and
- ▶ an overall average score of 6.5 (out of a possible 9).

Further information about IELTS can be obtained from www.ielts.org

This test is compulsory, which means you must take it *before* you apply for registration with us. **We will not accept scores lower than those set out above.** We will ask you to declare that you have

done this test. When you are required to undertake the Overseas Nurses Programme *an original* copy of the test result form will be required by the approved educational institution before they can offer you a place.

Can I apply?

The following questions and answers will help you decide whether your nursing education and training are suitable for applying for nursing registration in the UK.

1 What qualifications do I need for registration as a nurse?

We accept applications for registration only if you currently hold a first-level nursing qualification and have effective registration in your home country.

2 What qualifications and training are not accepted by the NMC?

- ▶ We do not accept applications from people who are second-level nurses or the equivalent (eg. enrolled nurses, licensed practical nurses, vocational nurses, state certified nurses, nursery nurses, nurse midwife technicians, nurse aids and so on).
- ▶ The training in some countries would only prepare you for registration in the UK in the field of adult nursing. As a result, applications for mental health or children's nursing, for example, would not succeed unless you met the conditions set out on pages 10 to 11.
- ▶ We do not accept medical qualifications as a basis for registration. If you have trained as a doctor or assistant to a doctor in your home country, you will not be eligible for registration with us, even if this qualification allows you to carry out the duties of a nurse in your home country.

The list of qualifications we do not accept is quite long. If you are not sure whether we class your qualification as first level, please write to or e-mail our overseas registration department for more guidance or visit our website at www.nmc-uk.org. See page 26 for details.

3 Do you accept training at secondary-school level?

No. All pre-registration nursing programmes in the UK are carried out following secondary education and are three-years long (4,600 hours of theoretical and clinical study). If your application is based on training at secondary-school level, it will not succeed. The hours of theoretical study must be directly related to the practice of nursing. Studying any other subjects (such as politics, literature, arts and crafts, and foreign languages) would not be included in the three-year programme.

Any three-year nursing programme that contains what we consider to be a substantial proportion of 'general education' subjects such as those above would not meet the standards for registration.

Adult nursing

In the UK, general nursing is known as the field of 'adult nursing'. The standard of training for general (adult) nursing is common throughout the European Union. The training must be:

- ▶ at least three-years long (or 4,600 hours), all of which must be in nursing studies at a post secondary school level begun after the age of 17 years and six months
- ▶ at least half (or 2,300 hours) in clinical or practice training, in direct contact with patients, and
- ▶ at least one-third (or 1,533 hours) in theoretical training.

The theoretical and practical training and experience *must* include:

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

If appropriate, we may also consider any education and experience you gained after you qualified.

If your application is based on programmes that last less than three years, contain non-nursing related content, or is based on a secondary-school level of education, it will not meet our standards. In that case you should not apply for registration with us.

Mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing applications

You may want to apply for registration in the fields of:

- ▶ mental health nursing, or
- ▶ learning disabilities nursing, or
- ▶ children's nursing.

There are two routes to register for these specialities. You *must* have completed a formal training programme in your chosen speciality, and have either:

- ▶ completed a three-year programme in general nursing which meets the conditions set out above, and *in addition* have undertaken a post-qualification programme of at least 12 months in mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing (meeting the content set out below), or
- ▶ undertaken a three-year training in mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing. The training must have been:
 - three years long (or 4,600 hours), all of which must be in nursing studies in either mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing (as appropriate)
 - at least half in clinical or practical training, and
 - at least one-third in theoretical training.

The theoretical and practical experience for each of the specialities must relate to the speciality and include the content set out on this page and the next page. If appropriate, we may also consider any education and clinical practice you gained after you qualified.

Mental health nursing:

- ▶ mental health nursing in a range of care settings, including acute and enduring/chronic illness
- ▶ care for children and young people who have mental health problems
- ▶ specialist mental healthcare (eg. 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 nursing:

- ▶ 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 (from childhood to old age) who have learning disabilities
- ▶ working with families and carers to support people who have learning disabilities
- ▶ continuing care and rehabilitation.

Children's nursing:

- ▶ care for children in a range of care settings, including general and 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.

If you want to apply for registration as a mental health nurse, a learning disabilities nurse or a children's nurse, you should read the following:

- ▶ If you have completed a 12-month post-registration programme in mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing, we can only consider you for registration if you have also undertaken training of at least three-years in general nursing that meets the standards set out above, and if you have registered as a general nurse in your home country.
- ▶ If you have completed less than a 12-month programme in mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing, your application will not be successful.
- ▶ If you did 'comprehensive' or general nurse training in your home country, you will only be able to apply for registration in the UK in the field of adult (general) nursing.
- ▶ If you did 'specialist' courses after you qualified, their content will not include all the theoretical and practical experience we require. For example, you could not use courses in paediatric oncology, neonatology or paediatric critical care for registration in the field of children's nursing. Similarly, a certificate in postgraduate forensic psychiatry may not be suitable for registration as a mental health nurse. If you have taken this type of programme, you should check with us before you apply.
- ▶ If you did your mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing as a joint course with general nursing, it is very unlikely that it will meet our standards.

Possible outcomes of your nursing application

We will make one of the following two assessments on your application.

1 You will be required to undertake the Overseas Nurses Programme

You will have to enrol with an approved educational institution in the UK and carry out a programme that may include theory and supervised practice elements.

In this case, we will send you an assessment letter explaining what you need to do and how long it will take you. We will give you further information to help you. You can do the Overseas Nurses Programme only in the UK.

You must start this programme within two years of receiving our assessment letter. If you do not start it in that time, you will have to make a new application to us and pay an extra fee. If you do this, we will ask you for evidence of having worked in healthcare during those two years.

2 Your application will be rejected if your education and training do not meet the minimum standards for application, and therefore your application will be deemed invalid

If this is the case, we will explain why we rejected your application and give you advice on the options available to you.

Applications to join the midwives' part of the register

This section applies to you if you are applying for registration to the midwives' part of the register. You must have completed a midwifery education and training programme and be registered as a midwife in your country of training.

Please read this section carefully before sending us your application form and paying your evaluation fee (which we cannot refund). If the documents you send us do not show that you meet the UK and European Union (EU) standards (set out below), we will refuse your application for midwifery registration.

Education and practice requirements

The standard of education and training for midwives is common throughout the European Economic Area (EEA). If you trained outside of the EEA, you must meet the minimum EU standards for midwifery, as well as the standards we set, before you can register as a midwife in the UK.

At the time you apply, you must have been practising as a registered midwife for at least one year (full-time or the part-time equivalent) after qualifying. If you have been qualified for longer than this, you must have practised as a midwife for at least 750 hours in the previous five years. This will change on 1 August 2006 and you will have had to have practised for at least 450 hours in the previous three years.

The UK and EU requirements for midwives are as follows.

- ▶ You must have completed 10 years general school education before starting midwifery training. The minimum age of entry into midwifery training must not be less than 17 years and six months.
- ▶ The midwifery training programme must be entirely focused on midwifery.
- ▶ The midwifery training programme must last at least three-years full-time (156 completed weeks) and meet the EU Midwifery Directives for minimum content.
- ▶ The ratio between the theory and practice parts of the course must be roughly 50:50.

Or

- ▶ If you have already registered as a level 1 (adult) nurse in the UK, you must have also completed at least an 18-month (78-week) midwifery training programme in your country of training. The content and standards are the same as the three-year programme.

Language requirements

English is the main language that is spoken and written in the UK. You must be able to demonstrate that you can communicate effectively in English.

Currently, if you trained outside of the EEA and your first language is not English, you must achieve a specific mark in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). There are two versions of the IELTS test – academic and general. We accept both for overseas midwives.

You must achieve:

- ▶ at least 5.5 in the listening and reading sections
- ▶ at least 6 in the writing and speaking sections, and
- ▶ an overall average score of 6.5 (out of a possible 9).

Further information about IELTS can be obtained from www.ielts.org

Can I apply?

The following questions will help you decide whether your midwifery education and training is suitable for applying for midwifery registration in the UK.

1 What qualifications do I need for registration as a midwife?

You will need to be registered as a midwife in your home country.

2 What qualifications and training does the NMC not accept?

- ▶ We do not accept applications from people who are, for example, maternity nurses, nurse midwife technicians, obstetric nurses.
- ▶ If you have completed a combined nursing and midwifery training programme, we will not accept this for midwifery registration, except if the midwifery part of the education and training meets the UK and EU standards outlined on page 13.
- ▶ Also, we do not accept medical qualifications as a basis for registration. If you have trained as a doctor or an obstetrician in your home country, you will not be eligible for registration with us even if this qualification allows you to carry out the duties of a midwife in your home country. Further information about registering as a doctor in the UK can be obtained from www.gmc-uk.org

3 My training programme is shorter than that which is set out in the UK and EU standards. Can I do a course to make up the difference between my training programme and the UK and EU standards?

There is no course available in the UK in which you can make up the difference in your midwifery training. You will not be credited for midwifery training completed outside of the EU or for other courses you took after you registered. This means that if your initial midwifery training programme does not meet the UK and EU standards, you will need to complete a three-year pre-registration midwifery programme. The only exception is if you are registered as a level 1 (adult) nurse with us, in which case you will need to complete an 18-month pre-registration midwifery programme.

4 Do you accept training at secondary-school level?

No. All pre-registration midwifery training programmes in the UK are carried out after general school education, within higher education. If you have completed your midwifery training as part of your secondary-school education, you will not be eligible for midwifery registration. The hours of theoretical study must be directly related to the practice of midwifery. Studying other subjects (such as politics, literature, languages and physical education) would not be included in our assessment of your midwifery training.

Any programme that contains what we consider to be a substantial proportion of 'general education' subjects would not meet the standards for midwifery registration.

5 My midwifery programme is shorter than that which is set out in the UK and EU standards, but I have practised as a midwife for several years in my home country. Will you consider my experience?

No. We only take account of how recent and extensive your experience is when you have met our initial midwifery training standards.

If you are not sure whether your qualifications and practice meet the UK and EU standards, please write to or e-mail our overseas registration department for more guidance or visit our website at www.nmc-uk.org. See page 26 for details.

The UK and EU content standards for midwifery training

Your education and training must be specific to the role of the midwife, allowing you to meet the unique requirements of midwifery practice. The theoretical and practical training must include, as a minimum:

- ▶ advising pregnant women, involving 100 pre-natal examinations
- ▶ carrying out 40 deliveries, or carrying out 30 deliveries and taking part in a further 20
- ▶ taking part in breech deliveries (if this is not possible because of a lack of breech deliveries, practice may be in a simulated setting)
- ▶ performing episiotomy and induction into suturing
- ▶ supervising and caring for 40 women who are at risk in pregnancy, labour or the post-natal period
- ▶ supervising and caring for 100 post-natal women and healthy newborn babies
- ▶ observation and care for newborn babies who need special care
- ▶ caring for women who have pathological conditions relating to gynaecology and obstetrics
- ▶ theoretical and practice-based introduction to medicine and surgery, and
- ▶ experience of working as a midwife in a community setting.

Possible outcomes of your midwifery application

We assess all applications individually. We will measure your application against the UK and EU standards we have set out in this guide. You will receive one of two decisions:

1 If your education and training meet the minimum UK and EU standards, you will have a decision to undertake a midwifery adaptation programme at an approved educational institution in the UK

We will work out the length and requirements of the adaptation programme. If your first language is not English, you will also have to achieve an overall score of 6.5 in the IELTS test (general or academic), with no less than 5.5 in any one section.

2 If your education and training do not meet the minimum UK and EU standards for midwifery, we will refuse your application.

In this case, we will explain why and give you advice on what options are available to you. If you still want a career in midwifery in the UK, you will have to take a pre-registration midwifery programme.

Details about pre-registration midwifery programmes can be found on the NHS careers website at www.nhs.uk/careers

Midwifery adaptation programmes

If your education and training meet the UK and EU standards, you will have to successfully complete an adaptation programme at an approved educational institution so that you can become eligible for registration as a midwife in the UK. An adaptation programme aims to help

you adapt the knowledge and skills you have already gained to the UK health service, and to help you practise safely and effectively. You cannot use an adaptation programme to make up a shortfall in your initial training programme. Your decision letter will tell you the length and content of the programme you need to take.

You must undertake your adaptation programme at an education institution which has been approved by us for pre-registration student midwives and which is supervised by a lead midwife for education (who runs the programme). You will also need to find a midwifery practice placement that is linked to an approved education institution.

You must start your adaptation programme within two years of the date of your assessment letter. Places on adaptation programmes are very limited across the UK. However, if you have not started a programme within those two years and still wish to practise as a midwife in the UK, you will need to apply again and pay another evaluation fee.

If you fail to meet our standards within the given time period, we may agree to extend your adaptation programme if you, your supervisor of midwives (responsible for supervising your midwifery practice placement) and the lead midwife for education also agree.

When you have successfully completed your adaptation programme, the lead midwife for education will make the final recommendation to us that you become registered. This will include confirmation that you are of good health and good character. At this stage you will become eligible to apply to go on the midwives' part of our register. You will be entered onto the midwives' part of the register once you have satisfactorily completed the registration forms and paid the relevant registration fee.

Summary of educational requirements for each part of the NMC register and field of practice

Adult nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Three year training at a post-secondary level leading to registration as a general nurse ▶ At least one-third theory and at least one-half practice ▶ All study relevant to nursing
Mental health nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A 12-month post-registration mental health training programme, in addition to a three-year general nursing training Or ▶ A three-year pre-registration mental health nursing training programme
Learning disabilities nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A 12-month post-registration learning disabilities programme, in addition to a three-year general nursing training Or ▶ A three-year pre-registration learning disabilities nursing training programme
Children's nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A 12-month post-registration children's nursing programme, in addition to a three-year general nursing training Or ▶ A three-year pre-registration children's nursing training programme
Midwifery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A three-year midwifery education and training programme Or ▶ An 18 month midwifery education and training programme if already registered as a level 1 (adult) nurse with the NMC

Important note

If you do not meet the minimum standards for length and content of programmes as set out above and in the previous section, you should not apply for registration with us.

In addition to the above, you must have at least twelve months' post-registration experience.

The application process

If you decide to apply for registration, having determined that you meet our standards, you will have to pay an evaluation fee. We will then send you an application pack.

We will give you a personal reference number (PRN). You should quote this number whenever you contact us.

The application pack will contain the following forms.

- ▶ application form
- ▶ post-registration experience form
- ▶ two employment reference forms
- ▶ transcript of training form
- ▶ registration authority/licensing body form.

We do not accept photocopies of application forms – only the original bar-coded forms. You should send us the filled-in application form and post-registration experience form, together with the relevant supporting documents, by post or special delivery.

We never accept faxed or e-mailed applications.

We do not keep documents once we have scanned them into the electronic records system. As a result, **when sending us supporting documents you should send us copies of the original documents that have been signed, for example, by a lawyer, to confirm that they are true copies.** If your documents are not in English, you should also send us translated copies. If you do not include both the signed copy and the English translation, your application will be delayed.

Please do not send original documents, as we cannot return these to you.

You must return the filled-in application forms and supporting documents within six months of the date we send them to you. If you do not do so within this time, we will close your file and retain the evaluation fee. If you ask us for a second pack, you will have to pay a second fee. However, if you have difficulty meeting the six-month deadline, you should write to the overseas registrations department to ask for an extension of up to three months. They will grant only one extension.

The documents and evidence we need

Application form

You must fill this in yourself. Please check your personal details on this form to make sure they are correct. Please fill in this form in black ink.

Provide details of all your nursing or midwifery qualifications (or both), as well as information about any qualifications you gained after you registered.

You must tell us about any police cautions or convictions, including the details of what led to the caution or conviction, as well as copies of any official documents relating to it.

You must also send copies of the following documents with your application form. These must be signed, for example, by a lawyer, to confirm that they are true copies.

- ▶ evidence of your initial registration in your home country (registration certificate) and of your current registration status, or evidence from the competent authority in countries that have no regulatory body

- ▶ school and general education certificates to show achievements and length of schooling
- ▶ education certificates (eg. diplomas and degrees)
- ▶ your birth certificate
- ▶ a copy of your passport details page showing a clear photograph
- ▶ a change of name or marriage certificate (if appropriate)
- ▶ nursing or midwifery (or both) education certificates
- ▶ post-registration education certificates
- ▶ evidence of your status if you are a refugee or an asylum seeker, including an immigration letter, a Home Office letter confirming your status or a letter from social security (if appropriate).

Please remember to sign and date your application form. If you do not sign and date it, we will not process it.

Post-registration experience form

You must fill this in yourself.

You should use this form to tell us about all of the professional and employment experience you have had as a nurse or midwife since you qualified.

You must give details of the registration authority or authorities you are registered with.

Please also tell us whether you have ever been found guilty of misconduct or suspended from a regulatory authority or licensing board, or whether you have had any conditions or restrictions placed on your practice by a regulatory authority or licensing board.

Transcript of training form

Your training institution must fill this in.

- ▶ Your training institution needs to provide us with the total number of hours of theoretical and practical/clinical training you have taken. These must be broken down for each subject and area of practice. Practical/clinical training relates to direct patient/client care, and not work in skills laboratories or practical rooms.
- ▶ If your training institution uses credits rather than hours, they must tell us how many hours make up a theory credit and how many hours make up a practice credit. Without this important information, we will not be able to process your application.

References

A senior nurse or midwife must provide the following references (as appropriate) on the forms we supply. The references must relate to the specific registration for which you are applying.

Either

- ▶ A confidential reference from the senior nurse or midwife who is your current employer, to confirm your employment and your ability to deliver safe and effective practice.

Or

- ▶ If you are not currently practising, the senior nurse or midwife who most recently employed you for at least three months.

And, in addition to one of the above

- ▶ A senior nurse or midwife (as appropriate) you have worked with for at least one year within the last five years.

We cannot accept references from nursing agencies.

Verification reference

Only your current registration authority or licensing board can fill this in.

You must send this reference form to your registration authority or licensing board. They have to:

- ▶ give details of your registration or licence to practise
- ▶ confirm that it is current
- ▶ sign the supporting declaration of good health and good character.

Before you send the form to them, you should find out whether they are able to sign the supporting declaration of good health. If they are not able to sign it, you must still send them the form, as they must sign the supporting declaration of your good character.

Important note

If your current registration authority or licensing board are not able to sign the supporting declaration of good health, you must ask one of the following to sign and stamp the supporting declaration of good health section on page 2 of your *application form*:

- ▶ a member of the occupational health department of the organisation that has employed you, based on a health assessment that department has carried out, or
- ▶ a registered medical practitioner who has carried out a health assessment of you within the last six months.

Good health and good character

What is good health?

The NMC has to decide whether your health is good enough for you to be able to practise safely and effectively. If it decides that you are of good health then we can accept you for registration. Employers need to decide if your health is good enough for a specific job. It is possible for you to have a serious or long-term condition and still be fit for registration. For example, you may have depression, epilepsy, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, HIV or hepatitis A or B, but these conditions would not prevent you from being on the register. However, conditions such as HIV or hepatitis A or B might prevent you from working in some jobs.

If you have a condition that can be easily passed to patients, other healthcare workers and the public (eg. active tuberculosis), you may still be able to register but would need to tell an employer. This is because you should not be working and putting patients, colleagues or the public at risk.

In this context good health does not mean having no illnesses or conditions.

What is good character?

Everyone registered with the NMC must follow *The NMC code of professional conduct: standards for conduct, performance and ethics*. This sets out the shared values of all the UK healthcare regulatory bodies and provides specific guidance for nurses and midwives. This includes the requirement to "...act in a way that justifies the trust and confidence the public have in nurses and midwives."

If you have been suspended or removed from the register of another regulatory body because you are guilty of misconduct or are not fit to practise, it is very unlikely that you will meet our standard for good character. We need to know whether you have been convicted of a crime. We will then decide whether or not you meet our standards for good character. We will treat recent crimes as much more serious than those committed years ago.

Warning

It is a criminal offence to knowingly make a false declaration of good health and good character, or to make an incorrect or misleading statement about any cautions or convictions.

Your registration authority or licensing board must sign a supporting declaration on a separate form in the application pack. You must find out from your registration authority or licensing board whether they are able to sign the supporting declaration of good health. If they are not, your doctor or occupational health department must sign and stamp the supporting declaration of good health section on your application form (see page 20).

Refugees and asylum seekers

We will shortly be publishing an information booklet specifically aimed at the needs of refugees and asylum seekers who apply to us.

If you want to apply for registration, you must fill in the application form and post-registration experience form in full.

If you cannot fill in any part of the form, send it to us with a supporting letter saying why. However, you will at least need to send us copies of the following:

- ▶ nursing or midwifery diplomas and registration certificates
- ▶ transcript of training showing your training broken down into theoretical and clinical hours of study
- ▶ employment references confirming your good health and good character.

We would advise you to ask for the help of the agencies who support asylum seekers and refugees, as they may be able to help you to get certain papers that you would need to apply for registration with us. We may be able to accept copies of these documents that have been signed, for example, by a lawyer, to confirm that they are true copies of the original. Please keep copies of these documents, as we cannot return them to you.

If you cannot provide any of the documents, unfortunately we may not be able to assess your application. If this is the case, you should not apply to us without first asking for our advice.

If you decide to apply for registration, you must send to us your 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, or
- ▶ a UK Home Office PIN card.

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

The NMC assessment process

We consider each application individually, so we cannot tell you what our decision is likely to be beforehand.

We check your application form and documents against the relevant standards, depending on the part of the register you are applying for. If we need any more information, we will ask for it at this stage. When we have received and checked all the necessary information, you can expect to receive an assessment within three months.

We cannot assess your application until we have received all of the information we need. Providing all of the necessary information at one time will reduce delays on your application.

However, in exceptional circumstances, we may need to interview you to:

- ▶ ask for details on the information you provide
- ▶ assess an incomplete application if you are a refugee and not able to provide all of the documents we need
- ▶ discuss possible concerns that your application may be fraudulent.

If you do not meet the minimum UK and EU standard your application will be deemed invalid and you will not be accepted for registration. In this case, we will explain why and give you advice on what options are available.

What if I disagree with your decision?

You may disagree with our decision and want to complain to us about this. This may be because:

- ▶ you think that we have not taken account of all your experience
- ▶ you think that we have misunderstood information you have given us, or
- ▶ you have more information that you could send us.

If this is the case, you should write to our registration complaints officer (the address is on page 26) explaining why you disagree and setting out any concerns or questions you have. We will then handle your complaint under our complaints procedure.

You are also entitled to make an appeal to the Registrar if, three months after you have submitted all the documents we require, in their correct format, you have not had a letter from us stating the outcome of our assessment of your application. At the point where documentation is incomplete the application is invalid and not subject to appeal.

However, please note that you cannot complain about our standards. When the NMC sets a standard we develop it in consultation with key stakeholders, before it is approved by the NMC. Our standards are clearly set out on pages 8 to 17 of this booklet. We cannot change a standard to suit your needs – instead you must be able to show that you meet the necessary standard.

What if I disagree with your decision and want to appeal?

An appeal may only be made if the Registrar has made a decision not to register you. The Registrar does not become involved in making decisions on applications from overseas nurses and midwives until they have provided complete evidence that they have met our standards.

When the Registrar has assessed this evidence (including supporting references for good health and good character), a decision may be made as to whether you may go onto our register. If the Registrar turns down your application, you will receive a 'decision letter' telling you so and the

reasons why. The letter will also inform you of your right of appeal and will include guidance on how to make an appeal that is consistent with our legislation. The appeal is to the Council itself, whose decision is final.

Summary of our application forms and what you should do with them

1 The NMC information pack

NMC form	Who needs to fill it in	Details	Checklist
Overseas personal details form	You do.	<p>You should make sure that all your personal details are correct, and that you are applying to the part of our register and field of practice for which you have been trained.</p> <p>If you are a nurse you must have passed the International English Language Test (IELTS)</p>	

Once you have returned the overseas personal details form to us we will send you the full application pack for UK registration.

2 NMC full application pack

NMC form	Who needs to fill it in	Details	Checklist
Application form	<p>You do.</p> <p>Please sign and date this form.</p> <p>* The declaration of good health on this form should be filled in by your doctor or occupational health department if your registration body cannot do this for you (see page 19). If so, this <i>must</i> be signed and stamped.</p>	<p>Please give full details of your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ professional education ▶ post-registration courses ▶ cautions or convictions, and ▶ declaration of good health. <p>Please send signed copies of the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ registration certificate ▶ passport ▶ birth certificate ▶ diploma or degree certificates ▶ marriage certificate (if appropriate). 	

NMC form	Who needs to fill it in	Details	Checklist
Post-registration experience form	You do. Please sign and date this form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Details of all post-registration experience ▶ Details of the organisation you are registered with at home as a nurse/midwife. 	
Two employment references	Two different senior nurses or midwives (as appropriate) who have worked closely with you. These forms <i>must</i> be officially stamped and signed.	We cannot accept references from doctors.	
Transcript of training form	Your school of nursing or midwifery. This form <i>must</i> be officially stamped and signed.	Please include details of the theoretical and clinical hours of your training. Your training school should fill in the NMC form and attach their own official transcript of training.	
Registration authority reference	Your registration authority or licensing board in your home country. This form <i>must</i> be officially stamped and signed.	<p>Please include details of your training, plus confirmation that you are in good standing with that body and that your registration is effective.</p> <p>The declaration of good health should also be filled in on this form if possible (see page 19).</p>	

Important note

All of the above forms should be filled in fully and officially stamped and signed where necessary. If you return forms with no official stamp or which have not been signed, we will not accept them and this will delay your application.

Please also make copies of the documents you fill in yourself and keep them for your own records.

Useful contacts

Nursing and Midwifery Council

Overseas Registration Department
23 Portland Place
London
W1B 1PZ
Phone: 020 7333 6600
Website: www.nmc-uk.org

NMC complaints

International Administrator
Standards Department
23 Portland Place
London
W1B 1PZ

British Council (for the IELTS)

The IELTS Liaison Office
British Council
10 Spring Gardens
London
SW1A 2BN
Website: www.britishcouncil.org

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

www.ielts.org

NHS Careers International Nurses Advice Line

Phone: 08458 505888 (09.00 to 17.00 GMT only)

Royal College of Nursing (Professional body/Trades union)

20 Cavendish Square
London
W1G 0RN
Phone: 0207 409 3333
Website: www.rcn.org.uk

Royal College of Midwives (Professional body/Trades Union)

15 Mansfield Street
London
W1G 9NH
Phone: 020 7312 3535
Website: www.rcm.org.uk

Unison (Trades Union)

1 Mabledon Place
London
W1CH 9AJ
Phone: 0845 355 0845
Website: www.unison.org.uk

Nurses Welfare Service

Victoria Chambers
16-18 Strutton Ground
London
SW1P 2HP
Website: www.nurseswelfareservice.co.uk
Phone: 020 7233 5500

Providing support for refugees and asylum seekers:

Praxis

Pott Street
London
E2 0EF
Phone: 020 7729 7985
Website: www.praxis.org.uk

The Refugee Council

Head Office
240-250 Ferndale Road
London
SW9 8BB
Phone: 020 7346 6700
Website: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

For information about working in the UK and work permits:

Home Office Immigration & Nationality Directorate

Lunar House
40 Wellesley Road
Croydon
CR9 2BY
Phone: 0870 606 7766
Website: www.workingintheuk.gov.uk

For information about working in the National Health Service:

NHS Careers

PO Box 376
Bristol
BS99 3EY
Phone: 0845 6060 655
Website: www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

**NURSING &
MIDWIFERY
COUNCIL**

information·08·05

23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ
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Protecting the public through professional standards