

Registering as a nurse or midwife in the United Kingdom

Information for applicants

NURSING &
MIDWIFERY
COUNCIL

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Information for applicants

Protecting the public through professional standards

Contents

General information	5
General nursing applications	8
Mental health nursing applications	9
Children's nursing applications	11
Learning disabilities nursing applications	12
Midwifery applications	13
Further details	16

General information

Introduction

This booklet provides important information for those who wish to register as a nurse or midwife in the United Kingdom. It is published by the Nursing and Midwifery Council [NMC]. We are the regulatory body for these professions. You must register with the NMC before you can work as a registered nurse or midwife in the United Kingdom. The booklet explains the registration process so that you are clear about what information the NMC needs in order to deal with your application speedily and efficiently.

Please carefully read all the information in this booklet. If you then wish to apply for registration, please complete the enclosed application request form and return it to the NMC, along with payment of the application fee. You can pay in various ways. If you already live in the United Kingdom, you can pay by crossed cheque, crossed postal order or crossed money order, made payable to the NMC. If you live outside the United Kingdom, you must pay by bankers draft drawn in pounds sterling. If you pay in a foreign currency, you will incur substantial additional bank charges. This will delay your application. You can also pay by credit card in person at the NMC or through our registration call centre. Please see page 16 for contact details.

There are five possible outcomes to your application. Either you will be:

- accepted for registration
- required to undertake further education in the United Kingdom to develop specified skills and provide a reference supporting your application for registration
- required to undertake a period of supervised practice in the United Kingdom and provide a reference supporting your application for registration
- required to provide further information about your education or practice
- rejected if your education and training was not at least three years in length or if you do not meet the minimum requirements for application as set out in this booklet.

What does the NMC need in order to consider my application?

The NMC assesses whether or not your education, training and experience equip you to carry out the duties of a registered nurse or registered midwife in the United Kingdom. You need to provide details of your pre-registration education and training (both theoretical and clinical) and your post-registration education and practice. The NMC register is divided into parts that indicate different specialities or professions. These currently include general

nursing, mental health nursing, learning disabilities nursing, children's nursing and midwifery. When applying, you must choose the speciality that best fits your training and experience.

The NMC can only accept applications from holders of first level qualifications. We will not be able to accept your application if you hold any of the following or equivalent qualifications:

- enrolled nurse
- licensed practical nurse (LPN)
- vocational nurse
- community nurse
- state certified nurse
- staff nurse (South Africa)
- mother craft nurse
- nursery nurse.

Please note that the NMC is not a government agency. Registration with the NMC does not exempt you from meeting United Kingdom immigration requirements.

Do I need to speak English to be registered with the NMC?

Yes. You must be able to show that you can communicate effectively with patients and clients in English. If you trained in a country whose primary mode of expression is not English, and which is outside the European Union, you will be required to undertake and gain a specific mark in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). You must complete the general module and gain a mark of 5.5 in each category and an overall band score of 6.5 (see NMC Circular 7/2002). You must ensure that you provide all information in your NMC application in English.

What do I need to send with my application to the NMC?

To help us process your application, all documents other than the NMC forms should be submitted as clear copies on plain white single sided A4 paper. We do not accept photocopies of the NMC forms. The originals must be returned through the post. We do not accept faxed copies of the NMC forms.

You must return all of the application forms within six months of the date on which the pack was issued to you. If you have not returned all the forms by the end of this period, your file will be closed. This means that if you wish to continue with your application, you will have to start again. If an application pack has been issued, you will not be eligible for a refund of the payment. It is therefore in your interests to submit your application fully as soon as you can.

What happens when I return the application forms to the NMC?

When the NMC receives your completed application pack, we will make a decision on your application. When you have been notified of this decision, you may need to find a placement to undertake additional education and practice. These are difficult to find and some institutions charge for placements.

Will I be asked to attend the NMC for an interview?

Not usually. However, there are a number of circumstances in which you may be asked to do so. These are if:

- the NMC has received relatively few applications from the country where you trained and we therefore need to clarify the training and role of nurses and midwives in your country
- you are a refugee and cannot provide a complete set of official documents supporting your registration and details of your training in your country
- the information contained in your application is confusing or incomplete
- you are appealing against the decision given on your application
- the NMC has a sound reason to believe that your application is fraudulent.

Interviews are not oral examinations. They are designed to allow you to talk about your training and practice.

What if I am a refugee or asylum seeker?

You may be eligible for registration provided that you can supply us with copies of your nursing diploma(s) and registration documents. If you cannot supply this information you will not be eligible to apply.

If you decide to apply for registration, you must submit along with your completed application request form:

- a copy of your immigration letter
- a copy of the Home Office letter confirming your status
- a social security support letter.

You will be expected to supply a detailed breakdown of the theoretical and clinical content of your training, and, if possible, employment references from your work as a nurse or midwife.

Are you able to give me some idea of whether I will be accepted immediately for registration?

No, because each application for registration is considered individually.

If I am not happy with the decision given on my application, do I have a right of appeal?

Yes. You should appeal in writing to the person who notified you of the NMC's decision and outline the basis for your appeal. It will be considered either:

- by the NMC officer who made the original decision, if you present additional information to support your application or
- by the professional officer responsible for overseas applications.

If you are not satisfied with the professional officer's decision, you may appeal to the NMC's Director of Policy and Standards, whose decision is final. You may be invited to attend an interview to put your case.

If I am not accepted for registration immediately, for how long do I have to undertake any additional education or practical experience?

It depends which decision you were given. The decision letter itself will state the time period for which the placement must take place.

Can I make up any lack of practical experience by working for an agency?

No. Short duration placements are not acceptable.

What do I have to do when I am accepted for registration?

When you are accepted for registration, you will be asked to sign a form agreeing to abide by the NMC's *Code of professional conduct*. You will also need to pay the registration fee. This is currently £60 for three years' registration.

General nursing applications

Introduction

All applications for registration as a general nurse are compared individually to the training undertaken by general nurses in the United Kingdom. In order to be considered for registration, you must either be:

- registered as a general nurse in your own country or
- qualified as a general nurse, if nursing is not regulated in your home country.

The standard of training for general nursing is common throughout the European Union.

What are the education and training requirements for registration as a general nurse in the United Kingdom?

In order to be registered, you must comply with the following minimum education and training requirements and post-registration experience:

- your programme of education and training must have been not less than three years in length
- your programme must have demonstrated a balance of theoretical and practical instruction of not less than one-third theoretical training and not less than one-half clinical/practical training
- your programme must have included theoretical and clinical/practical training and experience in: general and specialist medicine; general and specialist surgery; child care and paediatrics; maternity care (obstetrics); mental health and psychiatry; care of the elderly; and community nursing.

In addition, you will be expected to have completed at least six months continuous post-registration experience before you are eligible for registration.

How can I help the application process?

Please make sure that the transcript of training which you send in support of your application identifies the theoretical and clinical training and experience you have undertaken in each of the areas identified above. You will be given credit for your post-registration experience but please ask your referees to identify any experience and relate it to the areas set out above.

If I am not eligible for registration immediately, what will I have to do in order to meet the NMC's requirements?

You will be asked either to undertake additional training and/or experience in the United Kingdom, or to undertake a period of supervised practice in the United Kingdom. It is not possible to specify in this booklet how long a period of supervised practice might be as it will depend on your education, training and post-registration experience.

Mental health nursing applications

Introduction

All applications for registration as a mental health nurse are compared individually to the training undertaken by mental health nurses in the United Kingdom. In order to be

considered for registration in the United Kingdom, you must either be:

- registered as a mental health nurse in your own country or
- qualified as a mental health nurse, if nursing is not regulated in your home country or
- registered as a general nurse in your own country and have undertaken further training in mental health nursing.

What are the education and training requirements for registration as a mental health nurse in the United Kingdom?

In order to be registered, you must comply with the following minimum education and training requirements and post-registration experience:

Option 1

- your programme of education and training in mental health nursing must have been not less than three years in length
- your programme must have demonstrated a balance of theoretical and practical instruction of not less than one-third theoretical training and not less than one-half clinical/practical training
- your programme must have included theoretical and clinical/practical training and experience in mental health, including the care of: children; adolescents; adults; the elderly; and community care, continuing care and rehabilitation.

In addition, you will be expected to have completed at least six months continuous post-registration experience before you are eligible for registration.

Option 2

- you have completed a programme in general nursing of not less than three years in length (see general nursing applications on pages 8-9 for the minimum education and training requirements) and
- you have additionally completed a post-basic programme in mental health nursing which has been not less than six months in length.

The post-basic programme must have demonstrated a balance of theoretical and practical instruction of not less than one-third theoretical training and not less than one-half clinical/practical training. It must also have included theoretical and clinical/practical training and experience in mental health, including the care of: children; adolescents; adults; the elderly; and community care, continuing care and rehabilitation.

In addition, you will be expected to have completed at least six months continuous post-registration experience before you are eligible for registration.

Children's nursing applications

Introduction

All applications for registration as a children's nurse are compared individually to the training undertaken by children's nurses in the United Kingdom. In order to be considered for registration in the United Kingdom, you must be:

- registered as a children's nurse in your own country or
- qualified as a children's nurse, if nursing is not regulated in your own country or
- registered as a general nurse in your own country and have undertaken further training in children's nursing.

What are the education and training requirements for registration as a children's nurse in the United Kingdom?

In order to be registered, you must comply with the following minimum education and training requirements and post-registration experience:

Option 1

- your programme of education and training in children's nursing must have been not less than three years in length
- your programme must have demonstrated a balance of theoretical and practical instruction of not less than one-third theoretical training and not less than one-half clinical/practical training
- your programme must have included theoretical and clinical/practical training and experience in: paediatric and specialist medicine; paediatric and specialist surgery; care of the neonate; operating theatre technique; and community nursing.

In addition, you will be expected to have completed at least six months continuous post-registration experience before you are eligible for registration.

Option 2

- you have completed a programme in general nursing of not less than three years in length (see general nursing applications on pages 8-9 for the minimum education and training requirements) and
- you have additionally completed a post-basic programme in children's nursing which has been not less than six months in length.

The post-basic programme must have demonstrated a balance of theoretical and practical instruction of not less than one-third theoretical training and not less than one-half

clinical/practical training. Your programme must have included theoretical and clinical/practical training and experience in: paediatric and specialist medicine; paediatric and specialist surgery; care of the neonate; operating theatre technique; and community nursing.

In addition, you will be expected to have completed at least six months continuous post-registration experience before you are eligible for registration.

Learning disabilities nursing applications

Introduction

All applications for registration as a learning disabilities nurse are compared individually to the training undertaken by learning disabilities nurses in the United Kingdom. In order to be considered for registration in the United Kingdom, you must be:

- registered as a learning disabilities nurse in your own country or
- qualified as a learning disabilities nurse, if nursing is not regulated in your own country or
- registered as a general nurse in your own country and have undertaken further training in learning disabilities nursing.

What are the education and training requirements for registration as a learning disabilities nurse in the United Kingdom?

In order to be registered, you must comply with the following minimum education and training requirements and post-registration experience:

Option 1

- your programme of education and training in learning disabilities nursing must have been not less than three years in length
- your programme must have demonstrated a balance of theoretical and practical instruction of not less than one-third theoretical training and not less than one-half clinical/practical training
- your programme must have included theoretical and clinical/practical training and experience in learning disabilities, including the care of: children; adolescents; adults; the elderly; and community care, continuing care and rehabilitation.

In addition, you will be expected to have completed at least six months continuous post-registration experience before you are eligible for registration.

Option 2

- you have completed a programme in general nursing of a minimum of three years in length (see general nursing applications on pages 8-9 for the minimum education and training requirements) and
- you have additionally completed a post-basic programme in learning disabilities nursing which has been not less than six months in length.

The post-basic programme must have demonstrated a balance of theoretical and practical instruction of a minimum of one-third theoretical training and not less than one-half clinical/practical training.

Your programme must have included theoretical and clinical/practical training and experience in learning disabilities, including the care of: children; adolescents, adults; the elderly; and community care, continuing care and rehabilitation.

In addition, you will be expected to have completed at least six months continuous post-registration experience before you are eligible for registration.

Midwifery applications

Introduction

There are two types of training in the United Kingdom for registration as a midwife:

- a three year pre-registration programme
- an 18 month programme available to those who are already registered with the NMC as a general nurse.

The decision given on your application for registration as a midwife will depend upon the length of:

- the education and training you received in the country in which you trained and
- your post-registration midwifery experience.

You can find information about the application process, decisions and appeals in the general information section of this booklet. In order to be considered for registration as a midwife in the United Kingdom, you must be:

- registered as a midwife in another country or
- qualified as a midwife, if midwifery is not regulated in your country.

All applications for registration are compared individually to the training undertaken by midwives in the United Kingdom. However, there are a number of aspects of midwifery

practice specific to the United Kingdom which every applicant will need to experience prior to registration. You will not be registered as a midwife with the NMC until you have acquired a knowledge and understanding of the legal requirements for practice as a midwife in the United Kingdom.

What are the education and training requirements for registration as a midwife in the United Kingdom?

The minimum training requirements for midwives are common throughout the European Union. To be eligible for registration, you must have undertaken the following education, training and post-registration experience. Your course of education and training must have prepared you for your specific role and must enable you to meet the unique requirements of the practical and clinical aspects of midwifery. These include:

- advising pregnant women, involving at least 100 pre-natal examinations
- supervision and care of at least 40 women in labour
- carrying out at least 40 deliveries
- active participation in breech deliveries where possible
- performance of episiotomy and induction into suturing; induction includes theoretical instruction and clinical practice, including suturing of the wound following an episiotomy and a simple perineal laceration
- supervision and care (including examination) of a least 100 post-natal women and healthy new-born infants
- observation and care of the new-born requiring special care; this includes pre-term babies, those with low birth weight and ill babies
- care of women with pathological conditions in the fields of gynaecology and obstetrics
- induction into care in the field of medicine and surgery (which must include both theoretical and clinical practice).

In addition, you will be expected to have undertaken the following before you are eligible for registration as a midwife:

- experience of working as a midwife in a community setting
- at least one year's post-registration experience within the last five years, practising as a midwife in your own country.

What will I have to do to meet the NMC's requirements for midwifery registration?

You will be asked either to undertake additional training and/or experience in the United Kingdom, or to undertake a minimum period of supervised practice in the United Kingdom. It is not possible to specify in this booklet how long a period of supervised

practice might be. It will depend on your education, training and post-registration experience.

Each application is assessed against the standards for midwifery registration in the United Kingdom. It is possible that if the training which you have undertaken in your own country does not compare favourably with United Kingdom standards for midwifery training, or if you have little or no recent experience of practicing as a midwife, the period of education/practice required could be between six and twelve months.

It is essential that you understand that there are currently very few opportunities in the United Kingdom for obtaining the necessary further training and/or experience needed for registration. It is extremely important that, if you are not already resident in the United Kingdom, you do not travel to the United Kingdom without having thought carefully about these potential difficulties and that you recognise that you may be unable to obtain a placement. In a recent survey, less than 50% of approved midwifery educational institutions indicated that they were able to offer programmes for overseas-trained midwives. Those which do have very few places available.

Additional guidance for completing midwifery applications

Detailed instructions for completing the application forms are enclosed with your application pack. This additional guidance is provided to help you in completing the application for registration as a midwife. Your application will be processed more efficiently if you provide the relevant detailed information in the first instance. If you fail to include the information required to process your application, this will result in delay because the information will be requested from you at a later date by the NMC.

Application form

It is important that you include details of all your post-registration midwifery experience, as this may influence the length of the period of further education and/or experience which you will be required to undertake before you are eligible for registration.

References

In addition to the information provided in the enclosed instructions, please note that it is important that at least one reference must be completed by a senior midwife with whom you have worked for at least twelve months. It is preferable that the second reference is also completed by a midwife. References should relate to your post-registration midwifery experience. Each reference must be completed by a different person. References provided by medical staff can only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Transcript of training

To enable the NMC to make a decision on your application, it is helpful if the transcript of training sent in support of your application identifies each of the required educational outcomes set out on page 14. It must include a detailed breakdown of the theoretical content of the programme, the length of clinical experience and details of the number of deliveries and ante-natal examinations undertaken by you during your training. You will be given credit for your post-registration experience, but please ask your referees to identify how your experience relates to the outcomes set out on page 14.

Further details

We hope that you have found this booklet helpful. If you need any further information, please contact the overseas registration section at the NMC as follows:

Overseas Registration

NMC

23 Portland Place

London W1B 1PZ

Telephone 020 7333 9333 (from within the United Kingdom) or + 44 20 7333 9333
(from outside the United Kingdom)

Fax 020 7636 6935 (from within the United Kingdom) or + 44 20 7636 6935
(from outside the United Kingdom)

E-mail overseasreg@nmc-uk.org

NMC website www.nmc-uk.org

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