
Applying for registration more than five years after qualifying

Standards and guidance

Updated: 12 April 2024



Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) exists to protect the public. We do this by making sure that only those who meet our requirements are allowed to practise as a registered nurse or midwife in the UK, or as a nursing associate in England.

This document confirms the standards that must be met by those who first apply for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved qualification. It also sets out the ways in which five-year applicants can demonstrate they meet those standards.

Background

Our Order and Rules specify that an applicant seeking to register an approved qualification must apply within five years of being awarded that qualification.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to:

- Confirm the standards to be followed by someone who first applies for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved qualification.
- Provide guidance on the ways someone who first applies for registration more than five years after being awarded an approved qualification can meet the standards.

Standards

A five-year applicant must be able to demonstrate, at the point of registering the approved qualification, that NMC standards which currently apply to that qualification are met.¹

A five-year applicant must undertake either an approved test of competence or an approved programme that leads to initial registration on a part of the register in order to demonstrate they meet the current standards which apply to that qualification.

¹ For example, if you were awarded an approved qualification as a midwife in 2018 you would now need to be able to demonstrate, at the point of registering that qualification, that you meet the current standards which apply to midwives. [Standards of proficiency for midwives](#).

Guidance on the requirements

Tests of competence

Five tests have been developed with an approved education institute that are appropriate for five-year applicants who wish to register as a nurse (adult, children's, learning disability and mental health), midwife or nursing associate.

A five-year applicant can undertake competence testing in order to demonstrate they meet the following standards:

- [Standards of proficiency for registered nurses.](#)
- [Standards of proficiency for midwives.](#)
- [Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.](#)

A five-year applicant considering competence testing should contact the NMC to determine whether they are eligible to undertake competence testing.

Undertaking an education and training programme

Alternatively, a five-year applicant may undertake an education or training programme in order to demonstrate they meet any of our standards.² This includes, in addition to the pre-registration nursing and midwifery standards listed above, the following standards:

- [Standards for post-registration programmes.](#)

² Although five-year applicants have always had this option open to them, the NMC has now spelt this out in guidance. In the interests of public protection, we consider this to be the best option for five-year applicants who have not practised in the intervening period.

What we do

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the independent regulator of more than 808,000 nursing and midwifery professionals, we have an important role to play in making this a reality.

Our core role is to **regulate**. First, we promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England. Second, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Third, we investigate concerns about nurses, midwives and nursing associates – something that affects a tiny minority of professionals each year. We believe in giving professionals the chance to address concerns, but we'll always take action when needed.

To regulate well, we **support** our professions and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout people's careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address new challenges. We also support people involved in our investigations, and we're increasing our visibility so people feel engaged and empowered to shape our work.

Regulating and supporting our professions allows us to **influence** health and social care. We share intelligence from our regulatory activities and work with our partners to support workforce planning and sector-wide decision making. We use our voice to speak up for a healthy and inclusive working environment for our professions.



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