



anf policy

australian nursing federation

nursing education: registered nurse

In Australia there are two categories of nurse licensed to practice: the registered nurse and the enrolled nurse. The registered nurse undertakes initial and ongoing assessment of nursing care needs and delegates aspects of care as appropriate to the enrolled nurse.

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. All nursing care must be provided by appropriately educated nursing personnel.
2. Government must ensure there are sufficient places in the university sector in all States and Territories to meet the community's needs for a registered nursing work force now and into the future.
3. Entry to practice education for registered nurses must be at degree level offered by a recognised university.¹
4. Entry to practice education for registered nurses should be augmented by flexible and innovative means, such as distance and online modes to provide equitable and optimal access for students wherever they live, study and work.
5. The principles of adult learning and the recognition of prior learning must be incorporated into registered nurse education together with the availability of credit transfer and articulation options.
6. Entry to practice education for registered nurses must prepare students to meet the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) national competency standards for the registered nurse and to function as a safe beginning level nurse in a variety of health and aged care settings.
7. Adequate clinical education must be provided to students so they can acquire the clinical experience necessary to meet the competency standards. Staffing levels and skills mix in health and aged care settings providing clinical placement for students must be adequate to optimise the learning experience.
8. Clinical educators must be available with a scope of practice which meets the needs of students in nursing, newly graduated nurses and nurses new to the workplace as well as supporting more experienced nurses with their clinical, educational and mentoring responsibilities.
9. Educational curricula for registered nurses should include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' issues relating to health, culture, history and the social determinants of health.
10. The development of core curriculum elements across disciplines must not compromise the philosophy and integrity of nursing.

11. Registered nurses require support when making the transition from education to practice. This support includes transition to practice programs, orientation programs, access to clinical educators, access to expert and experienced nurses as preceptors, supervisors or mentors, and access to continuing professional education.
12. Transition to practice programs should be available in all health and aged care settings which employ nurses, such as acute care, mental health care, aged care and community care. Transition to practice programs should be available for nurses working in rural, remote and metropolitan settings and in both public and private health care settings.
13. Transition to practice programs should be funded by governments at all levels through relevant public, private and community health and aged care settings.
14. Clinical placements for registered nurse education, either undergraduate or post registration, require active and positive collaboration between the health and education sectors and sufficient resources to assist education providers and facilities in which clinical education occurs to deliver a quality learning experience.
15. Formal mechanisms to support dialogue, interaction and the development of collaborative arrangements between the health and education sectors should continue to be developed and strengthened. The development of professorial units or similar arrangements which combine academic and practice based education and research are supported.
16. Nurse educator positions are supported and mechanisms must be in place to assist them to maintain a safe and current level of practice in their areas of expertise.
17. Increased resources are required for post registration courses for registered nurses, at post graduate diploma, masters and doctoral level, to increase availability and access to education.
18. Post registration courses for advanced and/or specialist nursing practice must be conducted by an agency² or combination of agencies that can ensure an appropriate knowledge and skills/practice balance in the student's learning experience.
19. Providers of post registration education for registered nurses should schedule course provision with consideration for the needs of employers and students and with a view to maximising flexibility and access.
20. Appropriate academic recognition for all post registration courses not conducted within the university sector should be available together with nationally consistent nomenclature, award levels and credit transfer arrangements.

21. The offering of scholarships by governments, employers and other nursing and health related organisations to support post registration education for registered nurses is supported, however bonding to a particular employer or agency on completion of studies as a condition for the awarding of scholarships to nurses is not supported.

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references

1. "University" refers here to a self-accrediting institution which meets the requirements of protocols A and D of the National Protocols for Higher Education Processes (2006), and is established by an Australian legislative instrument, as defined in Part 3 of the National Protocols (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council. 2008. *Position Statement, Registered Nurse and Midwife Education in Australia*. ANMC Website: www.anmc.org.au).
2. The term 'agency' includes, but is not limited to: health services, universities, professional organisations and private providers of education and training such as registered training organisations.