



anf policy

australian nursing federation

nursing and midwifery education: continuing professional development

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) defines continuing professional development as *a life-long process of maintaining and enhancing the competencies of the nurse*. Continuing professional development is necessary for nurses and midwives to keep up to date with the rapidly changing health care environment.¹

The Continuing professional development registration standard developed by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)² states that continuing professional development is:

the means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives. The CPD cycle involves reviewing practice, identifying learning needs, planning and participating in relevant learning activities, and reflecting on the value of those activities.

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. Continuing professional development is both an individual responsibility and the responsibility of the employing health or aged care provider. All nurses and midwives have a professional responsibility to maintain competence and to have a contemporary knowledge and skill base in order to provide best practice nursing and midwifery care.
2. All nurses and midwives must be provided with continuing professional development opportunities, relevant to their context of practice, and must be able to participate in continuing professional development and lifelong learning opportunities.
3. A broad range of formal and informal continuing professional development activities must be available which includes: professional development; personal development; post graduate courses; re-training or skills transfer courses; and re-entry to the nursing/midwifery workforce and register.
4. Employers, including governments at all levels, benefit from the continuing professional development of nurses and midwives, and should contribute both financially and in kind to nurses and midwives accessing continuing professional development, for example: study and conference leave, staff replacement for nurses and midwives on study leave and assistance with the cost of continuing professional development, such as through awarding scholarships.

4. All nurses and midwives are advised to maintain a journal of professional development activities for the benefit of personal reflection and to comply with NMBA requirements. Nurses and midwives on the register are required by the NMBA to participate in at least 20 hours of continuing professional development per year. For those who are registered both as a nurse and a midwife, if the continuing professional development activities are relevant to the nursing and midwifery professions, those activities may be counted as evidence for both nursing and midwifery continuing professional development hours.

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references

1. International Council of Nurses. *The ICN System for the Award of International Continuing Nursing Education Credits (ICNECs)*. Available at: <http://www.icn.ch>
2. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2010. *Continuing professional development registration standard*. Available at Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency website: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/index.php>