

# **Registering as a nurse or midwife in the UK**

**For applicants trained outside the  
European Union and European  
Economic Area**

**Note:** This booklet applies to applicants trained outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).

If the applicant is a European Union (EU) national and is trained in an EU country, they should apply through the EU registration route.

**Warning:** It is a criminal offence in the United Kingdom (UK) to pose as a nurse or midwife or to provide false or misleading information. If at any point in the application process we discover that the application is fraudulent, we will not continue with the assessment of the application and the applicant may be liable for prosecution. If, after registration, we discover that any part of the application was fraudulent, we will remove the applicant from the register and they will be liable for prosecution.

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# Introduction

## About the NMC

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) regulates nurses and midwives in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We set standards for nurses and midwives to meet in their working lives. Nurses and midwives must follow our code of conduct, which states how they must work and behave.

To protect the public, we set standards for education, to make sure nurses and midwives have the right skills and qualities when they start work. We keep a register of all nurses and midwives who have met these standards and have been admitted to our register.

## Our governance

We are governed by our Council. It ensures that we comply with the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 and the Charities Act 1993.

Membership of the Council comprises of lay and registrant members appointed by the Privy Council, including one member from each of the four UK countries.

## Registering to practise as a nurse or midwife

Overseas trained nurses or midwives wanting to work in the UK must register with us. Our register consists of three parts.

- nurses
- midwives
- specialist community public health nurses (SCPHN).

The nurses part of the register is divided into four fields of practice.

- adult nursing
- mental health nursing
- learning disabilities nursing
- children's nursing.

Applicants can apply to be on the nurses or midwives parts of the register, as long as they meet our standards. If an applicant has trained as a general nurse, they should apply for registration with us as an adult nurse.

If applicants want to register on more than one part of the register or field of practice, they should apply for each part/field at the same time.

Once registered, they can work in the National Health Service (NHS) or private health. As a regulator, we are unable to help them find jobs or give references from any of the information provided to us.

To work as a nurse or midwife in the UK, applicants must meet immigration conditions. Immigration in the UK is handled by [UK Visas and Immigration](#). Please note that we cannot help with any part of the work permit application process.

All nurses and midwives registered with us are required to practise in accordance with our rules and standards, including [The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives](#) (NMC, 2015) (the Code), and to renew their registration annually.

# Requirements for applying to join the register

## Language requirement

Applicants must be able to show that they can communicate clearly and effectively in English. They must complete the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and achieve a minimum score of at least seven in all areas.

Applicants may provide two IELTS test certificates to meet the above requirements, but must not have scored below 6.5 in any categories, in either of the test sittings.

The two test sittings must be taken within six months of each other to be considered.

There are no exceptions to this requirement, even if English is their first language.

We will verify the scores with the IELTS organisation. Please note that we will not accept IELTS test results that are more than two years old at the time the registration application is submitted.

For example: if an applicant took an IELTS in April 2015 and sat the test again within six months, they can use the scores from both tests to satisfy our requirements. However, no individual score can be below 6.5.

### Example scenarios

#### Example 1

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Test 1	7	7.5	6.5	7
Test 2	6.5	7	7.5	8

This application would be **accepted**.

The applicant has scored 7 in all categories, and no score is lower than 6.5.

#### Example 2

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Test 1	6	7.5	6.5	7
Test 2	6.5	7	7.5	7.5

This application would **not be accepted**.

The applicant has a score lower than 6.5.

#### Example 3

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Test 1	7	7.5	6	7
Test 2	6	7	7.5	7.5

This application would **not be accepted**.

The applicant has scores lower than 6.5.

## Practice requirements

At the time of the application, the applicant must have practised as a registered nurse or midwife for at least 12 months (full time or the part-time equivalent) after qualifying. This post-registration experience must be relevant to the field of practice the applicant is applying for. Any practice that is not covered by registration cannot be considered for the requirement of 12-month post-registration experience.

If the applicant is a midwife but has not practised midwifery in the five years prior to their application, they must do a return to midwifery practice course in their home country before they can apply to register with us.

## Registration requirements

Applicants must hold a current registration or licence without restriction with the licensing authority or registration body in the country in which they qualified or have been practising.

If applicants have worked as a nurse or midwife in more than one country or state, we require them to be registered with the licensing authority or registration body in all the countries/states where they have worked. We will require verification from that authority regardless of the length of their employment.

Applicants must provide the details of all practice undertaken as a registered nurse or midwife including verification documents and registration certificates.

## Education requirements

Applicants must have successfully completed at least 10 years of school education before starting a post-secondary education nursing or midwifery training programme, leading to registration in their home country as an entry-level registered nurse or midwife.

## Special advice for refugees and asylum seekers

If the applicant is a refugee or asylum seeker, they should contact us for advice before making an application. Applicants must fill in the application form in full. If they are unable to fill in any part of the form, we request that they send it to us with a supporting letter explaining why.

At the very least, we require photocopies of:

- their nursing or midwifery diplomas and registration certificates
- their transcript of training broken down into theoretical and clinical hours of study
- employment references confirming their good health and good character
- verification from the relevant licensing authority or registration body.

If the applicant cannot provide any of these documents, we may not be able to assess their application. Agencies that support asylum seekers and refugees may be able to help obtain the information required to apply for registration.

Please keep copies of all documents that are sent to us, as we cannot return them. If the applicant decides to apply for registration, they must send us, with their application form:

- a copy of their immigration letter
- a copy of their UK Home Office letter confirming their status
- a letter from social security
- a UK Home Office Pin card.

If the applicant can provide these documents, they may not need to pay the application fee.

# Specific requirements for nurses applying to join the register

We will not accept an application if the applicant is a second level nurse or the equivalent, for example, an enrolled nurse, a licensed practical nurse, a vocational nurse, a state-certified nurse, a nursery nurse, a nurse-midwife technician or a nurse aid.

We also will not accept medical qualifications as a basis for registration. If an applicant has trained as a doctor or a medical technician in their home country, they will not be eligible to register with us, even if this qualification allows them to carry out the duties of a nurse in their home country.

The training programme must have been entirely focused on nursing.

## Adult (general) nursing

Applicants must have completed a programme at post-secondary level leading to registration as a general nurse.

The programme should be three years in length (or equivalent) and contain a minimum of 500 hours of clinical practice which must be evidenced by a transcript of training from the applicant's higher education institution.

The programme must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

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

## Mental health nursing

The applicant must have completed:

- a three-year (or equivalent) pre-registration mental health nursing training programme, or
- a 12-month post-registration mental health training programme, after completing a general nursing programme that meets our requirements.

Either route must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

- 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 (for example, 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

The applicant must have completed either:

- a three-year (or equivalent) pre-registration learning disabilities nursing training programme, or
- a 12-month post-registration learning disabilities training programme after completing a general nursing programme that meets our requirements.

Either route must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

- 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 who have learning disabilities
- working with families and carers to support people who have learning disabilities
- continuing care and rehabilitation.

## Children's nursing

The applicant must have completed either:

- a three-year (or equivalent) pre-registration children's nursing training programme, or
- a 12-month post-registration children's nursing training programme after completing a general nursing programme that meets our requirements.

Either route must have included theoretical and practical instruction in:

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

## Additional information

If the applicant did comprehensive or general nurse training in their home country, they will only be able to apply for registration in the UK as an adult nurse.

We may be able to consider some postgraduate programmes as part of an application to register. However, these programmes cannot be the foundation for an application to apply to a specific part of our register. For example, if the applicant has a certificate in paediatric oncology, we are unable to register them as a children's nurse. Similarly, a certificate in postgraduate forensic psychiatry may not be suitable for registration as a mental health nurse.

If applicants have completed a specialist branch of training and wish to be considered for registration as a general adult nurse, they must have completed a training course of at least 18 months in adult nursing that covers the areas listed in the adult (general) nursing section.

# Specific requirements for midwives applying to join the register

**We will not accept an application if the education and training undertaken was not specific to the role of the midwife, allowing the applicant to meet the specific requirements of midwifery practice. Combined nursing, child health and midwifery courses are not acceptable.**

Applicants must have completed a three-year full-time course of at least 156 weeks. Alternatively, if they are already a registered adult nurse in the UK, an 18-month course focused entirely on midwifery, with a balance of half clinical and half theoretical training. The calculation we use is based on the hours of theoretical study and clinically supervised learning.

The practical instruction of the programme should include:

- advising pregnant women, involving 100 pre-natal examinations
- carrying out 40 deliveries, or carrying out 30 deliveries and actively participating in a further 20
- participation in breech deliveries (where this is not possible, because of a lack of breech deliveries, practice may be in a simulated setting)
- the performance of episiotomy and induction in suturing
- supervision and care of 40 women who are at risk in pregnancy, labour or the post-natal period
- supervision and care of 100 post-natal women and healthy babies
- observation and care for the new-born requiring special care
- care of women with pathological conditions relating to gynaecology and obstetrics
- introduction to medicine and surgery relevant to women's health
- experience of working as a midwife in a community setting.

## Post-qualification experience

The applicant must meet the following requirements prior to submitting their application. We will require further evidence of their experience as a midwife and an indication of good health and character.

Applicants must have completed a minimum of one year (full time or part-time equivalent) in midwifery practice following their registration in the country in which they trained. If they have not practised midwifery in the five years prior to their application, they must do a return to practice midwifery course in their home country.

This return to practice course must be for a minimum of 12 weeks (450 hours) full time or equivalent part-time hours. References will be required from employers to assure us that return to competence in midwifery practice was achieved by the end of the course.

## Continuing professional development

Applicants must provide evidence of continuing professional development (35 hours over each period of three years) since the original registration as a midwife.

Applicants must demonstrate evidence of good health and good character by providing two references signed by either senior midwifery managers or a midwifery tutor if their recent experience has been in education.

# How to apply for registration as a nurse or midwife

Applicants must [submit their application](#) to become a registered nurse or midwife on our website. Please note, before deciding to apply, applicants should consider if they meet the general and specific requirements described in the previous sections.

## The application process

### Eligibility

Applicants must complete a self-assessment of their eligibility to apply prior to beginning the application process. They must declare that they meet all of the minimum requirements including good health and good character. They must also confirm that they understand that they must provide supporting evidence of these declarations during the assessment stage of the process. If an applicant confirms the declarations and cannot provide evidence at the assessment stage, their application will not be progressed and their assessment fee cannot be refunded.

### Test of competence – part one

Once applicants have passed the eligibility assessment, they will be asked to sit the first part of the test of competence. This will be a computer based test of theoretical practice-based knowledge. The test format will be multiple choice and can be taken in test centres around the world. Applicants have two attempts at the test. If an applicant fails to achieve the required minimum score after both attempts, they must wait six months in order to restart the application process.

The test provider, Pearson VUE, will administer their own test fee in agreement with us. Applicants will need to contact Pearson VUE directly to book and pay for their test.

### Assessment

Applicants will need to provide the following evidence in order for us to complete an assessment.

- a valid passport – this same document must also be presented at the test centre
- birth certificate
- a qualification certificate for each qualification being submitted as part of the application.
- registration certificates from each jurisdiction where the applicant has practised and/or been registered – if the applicant's country operates state registration, they will need to have registered in each state where they practised.

- Two employment references confirming the applicant's post-registration practice of at least 12 months, their competence and character.
- Verifications from all jurisdictions where the applicant practised or where the applicant has been previously registered.
- Transcript of training for all relevant nursing or midwifery programmes completed by the applicant. These must be calculated in hours or be accompanied by a letter from the training institution with a key to how the credits translate to hours.
- A good health declaration from the applicant's general practitioner or the occupational health department at their place of work.
- For every overseas country in which they have lived for more than three months, they will need to provide a police clearance certificate. If they have lived in the UK for more than three months, they will need to provide us with a standard level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

All of the relevant forms required are available to download from our website once the applicant reaches the assessment stage, but not before. The applicant must send the relevant forms to the correct authorities to be completed and they must be posted back to us. We require the original forms that the referee or relevant body has completed. Uploads or copies of those forms cannot be accepted. All forms must be completed in full and be signed, stamped and dated.

Once all the evidence has been submitted, an assessment officer will review the full application to ensure that it meets the requirements for registration. Providing all documents are correct and the criteria are met, the application will be progressed to the next stage.

Where further information is required from the applicant and provided separately, a full new assessment and decision will be conducted. This allows the complete application to be reassessed in its entirety to ensure that all documents are consistent. Timescales of applications vary and some will take longer if the correct documents are not included with the initial application.

## Test of competence – part two

The second part of the test of competence will assess an applicant's clinical knowledge. The test is an objective-structured clinical examination (OSCE) and can only be completed in the UK. The test will be administered by one of our approved university test centres who will administer their own test fee in agreement with us. Applicants will need to contact the university directly to book and pay for their test.

The OSCE will simulate a clinical environment and patient scenarios which registered nurses and midwives are likely to encounter when they assess, plan, implement and evaluate care. The OSCE contains nursing or midwifery scenarios along with separate skill stations. Each separate clinical examination is known a 'station' and candidates will circulate through all the stations within a set timeframe.

Each of the six stations has standardised marking criteria against which all candidates are assessed. Candidates are assessed by a panel of examiners and will be filmed for quality assurance purposes.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competence through safe and effective practice. The test of competence is based on current UK pre-registration standards.

Applicants have two attempts (an initial sitting and a full or partial re-sit) at the OSCE as part of one application.

## ID check

A face-to-face ID check will take place at the OSCE location on the same day as the OSCE. Applicants will be required to bring all the original documents that they have uploaded as supporting evidence for their application. If applicants cannot produce the documents required, they will have to rebook an ID check at our London office before they can complete the last stage of the process and receive their registration number.

## Final registration

Once we have received notification that an applicant has successfully completed part two of the test of competence and the ID check, they will be invited to complete their final declaration and payment for registration online. Once both have been received, we will send the applicant their registration number (Pin).

## Re-applying for registration

If an applicant fails to achieve the required minimum score after both OSCE attempts, their application will close and a minimum of six months must elapse before they can sit the OSCE again.

If an applicant would like to begin their re-application ahead of the six month OSCE exclusion period they can do so.

In order to re-apply, please contact [overseas.reapplication@nmc-uk.org](mailto:overseas.reapplication@nmc-uk.org). For public protection, we will carry out an assessment, confirm the CBT and IELTS validity period and inform you of the next steps. You may be required to provide more recent documentation following the assessment.

Please note that as of 1 September 2016 an application fee of £140 will apply.

# Important information about

## Completing the application forms

All sections of the application forms must be completed in full. This will minimise the amount of follow-up queries needed and speed up the application process.

Applicants must complete the application forms in English. No one else should fill in

the form for them. If an applicant knowingly withholds information or provides false or misleading information, this may result in their application being refused. If they are already on our register, we may remove them from the register and they may be liable to prosecution.

## Translations

If a document submitted to us is not written in English, we require an English translation of it. The translation must:

- be produced by a certified translator
- be attached to the original-language version of the document.

The translator should confirm in English that the translation is an exact translation of the original document. The translator should also provide their contact details (telephone, address and/or email address).

## Application process timeline

Once the applicant has passed the self-assessment eligibility stage, they have up to six months to successfully complete the first part of the test of competence. When this period expires, the application will close. Applicants have a maximum of two attempts (an initial sitting and a re-sit) to pass the CBT with a minimum of 28 days between each sitting. Applicants who fail both attempts need to wait a minimum of six months before they can reapply for registration. Results will be emailed to candidates within 48 hours of taking the examination. The exam fee must be paid in full each time. The CBT is valid for two years.

We advise applicants to start the assessment stage and provide documentation as soon as they have passed the CBT.

We aim to process the application within 70 days, once we have received all required documents.

If the applicant passes the assessment stage they will be invited to sit the OSCE in the UK. They have a maximum of two attempts (an initial sitting and a full or partial re-sit) to pass the OSCE with a minimum of 10 working days between the first and second attempt. Results will be emailed to candidates within 5 working days of taking the examination. Applicants who fail both attempts can reapply for registration. Provided the applicant passes the NMC assessment, and a minimum of 6 months has elapsed since the last OSCE sitting, they can sit the OSCE again. Applicants must ensure that they are able to successfully complete the OSCE within two years of passing the CBT.

## Health declarations

The individual completing the applicant's declaration of good health must not be a member of their family and should have undertaken an examination of the applicant in the last six months. The declaration must be no more than three months old at the time of the application. If expired, we will not be able to process the application until the applicant provides a more current declaration of good health.

## Employer references

Both references must be completed and signed by either a senior nurse, another senior clinician (such as a registered medical practitioner) or the applicant's line manager.

If the two references are from the same employer, two different individuals must complete the references. References should not be provided by an individual who is related to the applicant by birth, marriage or a similar relationship to marriage.

## Character evidence

Applicants will need to provide us with the following documents:

- For every overseas country in which they have lived for more than three months, they will need to provide a police clearance certificate.
- If they have lived in the UK for more than three months, they will also need to provide us with a standard level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

Please note that these documents must be submitted within three months from the date of issue.

# Responsibilities as a registered nurse or midwife

## Professional indemnity arrangement

All nurses and midwives must hold appropriate cover under an indemnity arrangement in order to practise and provide care. To register with us, nurses and midwives are required to make a self-declaration that they hold, or will hold when they begin practising, appropriate cover under an indemnity arrangement. The Code has been updated to reflect this change.

If the indemnity arrangement is no longer appropriate for the scope of practice and the nurse or midwife no longer meets our registration requirements, they must inform us immediately on 0207 333 9333.

Further information about the [indemnity requirements](#) is available on our website.

## Requirements for renewing registration as a nurse

Registration must be renewed annually. Every three years, evidence of continuing professional development must be provided. This standard requires the applicant to demonstrate that they have completed 450 hours of registered practice activity and undertaken a minimum of 35 hours of learning activity relevant to their practice during the three years prior to renewing. This continuing professional development is known as Prep (post-registration education and practice) and is our professional standard.

## Responsibility and sphere of practice

Registered nurses may work in a variety of health-related settings including the National Health Service (NHS), private hospitals and nursing homes or in the community. In any circumstance, the nurse is accountable for their own practice. This responsibility cannot be delegated elsewhere as the nurse is recognised as an autonomous practitioner.

## Practising as a midwife

Being on our register as a midwife only provides evidence of qualification. Therefore registration alone does not permit midwives to practise.

In order to practise, each midwife must have a named supervisor of midwives (SoM) and must notify their local supervising authority (LSA) annually of their intention to practise. We send each midwife an intention to practise (ItP) form every year. This form enables the LSA to check and monitor that each midwife is eligible to practise.

Midwives are legally required to complete and submit their annual ItP form to their LSA. Midwives are also required to show continuing professional development by targeting required learning and experience to maintain their expertise.

## Supervision of midwives

The UK is the only place in the world where supervision of midwives occurs. Supervision of midwives has been in place since the start of the profession in 1902 and is a statutory requirement protected by law. The function of supervision of midwives is to protect the public by providing professional advice and guidance to practising midwives and to service providers.

Each midwife has a named SoM who is appointed by the local supervising authority's midwifery officer (LSAMO). Supervision of midwives is based within strategic health authorities or health boards, and overseen by us. Women and families, employer organisations and midwives can talk directly to SoMs about any concerns they have about a midwife's practice.

The LSAMO can put in place mechanisms to supervise further education and practice developments for a midwife, or suspend a midwife from practice when the safety of women or babies is at risk. The midwife could then be referred to us for investigation, which may result in removal from the register. This process supports the self-regulation of the profession.

# Useful contacts and further information

## **NMC registration centre**

23 Portland Place  
London, W1B 1PZ  
+44 (0)20 7333 9333  
[www.nmc.org.uk](http://www.nmc.org.uk)

## **NHS Careers**

PO Box 376  
Bristol, BS99 3EY  
+44 845 6060 655  
[www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)

## **NHS Careers international nurses advice line**

+ 44 8458 505888 (09:00–17:00 GMT only)  
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/outside-uk>

## **Pearson VUE**

[www.pearsonvue.co.uk](http://www.pearsonvue.co.uk)

## **British Council**

Information Centre, 5th Floor, Bridgewater House  
58 Whitworth Street  
Manchester, M1 6BB  
+44 161 957 7755  
[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

## **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**

[www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

## **UK Visas and Immigration**

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)

## **Praxis (support for refugees and asylum seekers)**

Pott Street  
London  
E2 0EF  
+44 20 7729 7985  
[www.praxis.org.uk](http://www.praxis.org.uk)

## **The Refugee Council**

240–250 Ferndale Road  
London  
SW9 8BB  
+44 20 7346 6700  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

## **The University Of Northampton**

Boughton Green Rd  
Northampton  
NN2 7AL  
+44 800 358 2232  
<http://www.northampton.ac.uk>

## **Oxford Brookes University**

Headington Campus  
Oxford  
OX3 0BP  
+44 1865 741 111  
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk>

# Data privacy policy

## Personal information we collect about the applicant

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We may collect general personal information about the applicant including their name, address, email address, place of work or study and NMC Pin if they are a nurse or midwife registered with us. We may also collect personal information about them if they apply for a job with us, if the applicant provides us with feedback about an area of practice, if a complaint is made about them or if they make a complaint about a nurse, midwife or us.

## How we use their personal information

If the applicant is a nurse or midwife, we may collect personal information about them for the following purposes: administering their application to join the register, running and maintaining the register, compliance with our regulatory responsibility to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public, carrying out investigations into any complaint raised against them including making any necessary publication about the investigation, administering any sanctions against them, sending publications and newsletters when requested, dealing with any calls they make to our registrations centre and professional advice service.

## Disclosures to third parties

Personal information about registrants that is publicly available on the register will be disclosed as part of our requirement to provide a register.

We may be required to disclose personal information in response to requests from a court, tribunal, regulator, or otherwise as part of the litigation process or to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public. Where possible, we will consult with them prior to making such disclosure and, in order to protect their privacy, we will ensure that we will disclose only the minimum amount of their information and only necessary for the required purpose.

We may share their personal information with third parties such as law enforcement agencies, employers or potential future employers in order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public or in context of an investigation about their conduct should this be necessary.

## Access to their personal information

Applicants have the right to request access to the personal information that we hold about them and to ask for information about the purposes for which their personal information is used.

To exercise this right or request further information, use the data protection request form on our website, email us at [FOlandDPArequest@nmc-uk.org](mailto:FOlandDPArequest@nmc-uk.org) or write to us at:

**Records and Archives**  
Nursing and Midwifery Council  
23 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PZ