SPECIALIST NURSE CREDENTIALING PROGRAM

Professional Credentialing Application Guidelines

CREDENTIALING
FOR NURSES

Contents

Completing Your Profile

Personal information and change of name documentation

You will be asked to provide your name, date of birth, residential address, postal address, telephone contact numbers (work, home, mobile) and your preferred email contact (work, home).

The name you provide in this application must be the same as the name registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, and the name under which you currently practice.

If any of the supporting documentation you provide is under a different name, please ensure you provide evidence that these documents refer to you e.g. a marriage certificate, birth certificate, evidence of divorce. (Upload original documents as scanned certified copies).

Professional registration

Related Criterion: Hold a current registration as a Registered Nurse (Division 1) General with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Credentialing is only available to nurses registered (under Division 1) with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (Registered Nurses), through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (APHRA).

If you have not undertaken a nursing course leading to registration as a nurse, or if you have never practiced as a registered nurse you are not eligible to become Credentialed as a specialist nurse.

If you are not currently registered, you cannot apply to become credentialed. If you are eligible to be registered, or your registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia has lapsed, you must re-new your registration before proceeding any further with your credentialing application.

During the application process, you will be asked to confirm your registration status and to provide your current registration number. Check online at AHPRA www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners.aspx for your registration number, and, if you are uncertain whether you have any notations, conditions, undertakings or reprimands on your registration.

A Credential is dependent on a nurse maintaining registration with AHPRA. If your registration is at any time revoked, your Credential will also be null and void.

Once credentialed, you are required to inform your specialty immediately (within 14 days) if your registration is revoked, or you are advised by APHRA that you have any notations, conditions, undertakings or reprimands placed on your registration.

Professional membership & your specialty

You will be asked to indicate which specialty you are applying under.

You will also be asked if you are a member of the relevant professional nursing organisation for that specialty. Application prices are different for members and non-members, so it is important to include your membership number and evidence of your current membership when required.

If you do not know what your membership number is, or if you believe your membership may have lapsed, please contact the relevant specialist nursing organisation to confirm.

Application

Qualifications

Related Criterion: Hold qualifications that meet the standard set by the relevant specialist college or organisation

An applicant must demonstrate that they have completed qualifications and education that are deemed relevant to the specialty area of practice, as specified by the specific college or organisation and align with the Qualification Framework for the Specialist Nurse Credentialing Program.

The Qualifications Framework for the Specialist Nurse Credentialing Program should be read in full before completing this section.

The Qualification Criterion recognises that over the years, there have been different pathways by which a registered nurse can undertake educational preparation for specialist nursing practice. In order for an applicant to be eligible to apply for specialist nurse credentialing, they must demonstrate at least 100 points of relevant education in their specialty area of nursing practice, using one of the three available pathways.

The Qualification Framework can be downloaded at: www.accypn.org.au, or from the Resources tab on the Credentialing Page of the ACCYPN Website.

Documents to support your educational achievements:

- Evidence of post graduate qualifications. The original documents are to be uploaded as **scanned certified copies**.

- Academic transcripts or other evidence of course content for each of those listed which specifically relate to your area of specialty (upload original documents as scanned certified copies).

Certification and submission of supporting documents

Evidence of your claims will be required as part of the application process. **Certified copies of qualifications** must be scanned and uploaded as evidence (i.e. your Award and the course transcript), or your application will not be processed.

Original documents are to be photocopied and must be certified by one of the following:

- A Justice of the Peace (JP)

- A health professional registered with AHPRA

- A practising legal professional

- An accountant

- Other responsible professional such as minister of religion, teacher, a serving police officer, a senior public servant.

The signatory should use the following words:

I certify that this appears to be a true copy of the document produced to me on <date>.

Signature

Name

Qualification (e.g. JP, Pharmacist)

Registration Number or equivalent

The person certifying the document is stating their opinion that the document is a true copy, not that the original document is authentic. Certifying a copy does not in any way 'authenticate' either the copy or the original document.

Employment

Related Criterion: Applicants must provide evidence of working a minimum of 12 weeks full time equivalent over the preceding 12 months or the equivalent length of experience over the preceding two years, or over the preceding three years in the area of specialty.

Note: A specialty nursing organisation may choose to set a level of hours greater than the minimum above.

About your practice location

Please include all the relevant details of your current employer, the postcode of your primary place of employment and the remoteness area (RA) classification of your workplace. To do this, please use the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) system. If you are uncertain which RA classification relates to your location, you can check online. See www.health.gov.au/internet/otd/Publishing.nsf/content/RA-Intro for more information.

A Map Locator is integrated into the Australian Government's Doctor Connect website and is available online via: www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/Locator

The Map Locator allows users to choose a location anywhere in Australia and instantly view details on the RA classification and incentives available.

Primary work focus and practice setting

You will need to identify your primary work focus (i.e. clinical, education, management, research, policy etc) and your work practice setting. If you work in more than one workplace, please tell us about your MAIN job only.

There is also a text box where you can provide us with an overview of your current primary field of practice.

Experience and work history within the specialty area of nursing

You will need to provide evidence that you have worked at least 12 weeks full time equivalent (FTE) in your specialty over the last 12 months, or 36 weeks in the preceding 3 years in the area of specialty. You will find the expected requirements and some examples of how to calculate your claim on page 8.

For most applicants, the easiest way to substantiate your claim is to provide a statement from your employer(s). A **Statement from Employer** template can be downloaded from the Resources Tab at: www.accypn.org.au. Please note, some Queensland Health services will not accept the Credentialing employer template. In these instances, please just use the template specific to Queensland Health.

If you are self-employed you will need to provide a **Statutory Declaration** of your work experience over the previous three years, with dates confirming your length of experience in the area of specialty. The table below outlines what information should be included in your statutory declaration. Please use the format found at: www.ag.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Makingastatutorydeclaration.aspx.

Note that the witness to a statutory declaration under the Commonwealth Statutory Declarations Act 1959 is quite broad and includes currently registered nurses.

Where possible, provide additional supporting documentation such as:

- Evidence of undertaking project work in area of specialty (this could be a copy of correspondence confirming a tender, letter of completion, a signed report confirming completion of the work); and/or

- Contracts with organisations where you have undertaken clinical work

---

Information to include in your statutory declaration:

1. Your name

2. Your address

3. Your position

4. Your signature

5. Date of signing

6. Witness name

7. Witness signature

8. Position of witness

9. Place where the declaration has been signed

10. Date of witness signature

11. Work experience in area of specialty, including dates, approximate hours and duties undertaken

---

Calculating your specialist experience

To ensure consistency, please assume the following:

- Full time work equates to 48 weeks of practice per year (allowing for 4 weeks annual leave)

- Part time should be calculated based on the full time equivalent formulae. E.g. 2 shifts per week = 2/5 or 0.4 of full time, 5 shifts a fortnight equates to ½ or 0.5 FTE etc.

- Full time equates to 36 hours/week

- Twelve weeks equates to 432 hours (36 x 12)

- Casual work should be calculated on actual hours worked as indicated on pay slips over the period of time in casual employment in the area of specialty.

In terms of hours, the minimum requirement is:

- 432 hours in the previous 12 months, or

- 864 hours in the previous 2 years, or

- 1296 hours in the previous 3 years

In most circumstances, the calculation will be straight forward, however, if your work is not always in your area of specialty or if you have multiple employers in different facilities, you will need to provide a record which demonstrates the number of weeks you have specifically worked in your area of specialty nursing.

Example 1

John works full time in a community health centre. His work covers a range of community services. His area of specialty, however, is palliative care. In working out the hours in his area of specialty over the last 3 years, John uses the following information about the work he undertakes in palliative care:

Palliative care outpatient service - twice a week or 12 hours in total per week, including the preparation and the follow up he undertakes;

Evening information session to families of patients in the palliative care program. 4 hours per month, including preparation time.

John calculates:

12 (hours) x 48 weeks = 576 hours in palliative care outpatients service

4 (hours) x 11 weeks = 44 hours

Total hours = 576 + 44 = **620 hours** per year

Since 12 weeks full time equivalent per year is 432 hours, John therefore meets the requirements of the length of experience in the area of speciality criterion. John is eligible to apply for credentialing.

Example 2

Sarah undertook a graduate diploma in mental health nursing in 2009, and worked full time as a mental health nurse until 30 June 2011.

Between 1 July 2011 – 31 December 2013 Sarah has worked part time (0.5 FTE) as a nurse in general practice. Her position description did not require her to use her mental health nursing knowledge, even though she occasionally referred patients to GPs because she had identified possible mental health issues. She resigned from this position on 31 December 2013.

She took holidays from 1 January – 1 February 2014, and then commenced work in an inpatient mental health unit, working on a casual basis. Between 2 February and 30 June, she worked a total of 48 shifts. The total hours worked in her area of specialty in this role is: 48 x 7.20 hours = 345.6 hours. (1 shift is assumed to be 1/5th of 36 hours)

As her previous position was not specifically a mental health nursing position, there is no allowance for her time in that position.

Since Sarah worked for less than 432 hours in the preceding 12 months she does not meet the requirements of the length of experience in the area of speciality criterion

Sarah is not able to apply for credentialing at this time.

Employment History Table

You will need to complete the employment history table, which will clearly demonstrate the specialty-related positions you have held.

Please include the start date, finish date, the employer, position title, brief description of the role, and the total hours you worked in the position over the previous 3 years (use the calculations above).

You may also be required to upload a copy of an up to date CV - please check with your specialty organisation whether this is something you need to do; and if it is, upload the document after completing the table.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Related Criterion: Continuing professional development. Applicants are required to provide evidence of completion of a certain number of hours of continuing professional development in the previous 12 months (or 3 years for those who are re-credentialing), which must incorporate:

• A certain number of hours relating to the area of specialty

• A certain number of hours of **education** related activities

• A certain number of hours of **practice** related activities

• Meeting any specific requirements as detailed by specialist colleges/organisations

Very Important Note: Some specialties use different CPD Records and have different requirements around the number of hours required. You will need to upload the right CPD Record for your specialty. Please make sure that you have downloaded the correct document from the home page prior to applying, or check with your specialty organisation if you aren't sure.

Explanation and Rationale

Undertaking continuing professional development is an accepted part of being a nursing professional. The Specialist Nurse Credentialing Program CPD criterion includes the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia CPD Standard for meeting registration requirements, and builds on these in order to demonstrate specialist skills and knowledge applied within the area of specialty nursing.

Definition of Continuing Professional Development

The following definition provides guidance for credentialed specialist nurses:

> *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*
>
> *(Reference: ANMC 2009, cited in Nursing and Midwifery Continuing Professional Development Registration Standard. www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx).*

The Evidence Based Record (EBR) - Education and Practice related activities

The Specialist Nurse Credentialing Program categorises Continuing Professional Development (CPD) into two distinct domains.

1.   Education related activities – Professional Education

2.   Practice related activities – Practice Development

This Evidence Based Record (EBR) is a record of your participation in a broad range of specialty-related learning, practice and professional activities over the previous 12 months (or 3 years if you are recredentialing). It provides an opportunity to demonstrate that you have maintained, improved and broadened your knowledge, expertise and competence in your speciality area.

The following provides guidance on the types of activities that may be included under each domain.

Education related activities: (A minimum of 20 hours to be included in the 50 hours annually)	Practice related activities: (A minimum of 20 hours to be included in the 50 hours annually)
• Formal study such as university or TAFE courses/units relevant to the area of specialty (a maximum of 20 hours can be claimed) • Attending education programs run by specialist or professional nursing colleges • Attending 'In house' education programs, online education programs, courses, workshops, conferences and symposia • Presenting papers at conferences, seminars, symposia • Publications, such as contributing author, editor and author of book chapters • Delivery of formal lectures to others in area of specialty • Providing other education - such as in service training, supervising/preceptoring, or undertaking assessments (nursing, medical, other) • Community support and education to community groups	• Undertaking Clinical Supervision for self or of others • Providing or receiving peer review / mentorship / preceptorship • Contribution to your area of specialist practice and/or the profession (such as membership of professional college(s), sitting on Boards and committees, reviewing documents, reviewing for refereed journals • Conducting clinical research and implementation of EBP interventions, programs, pathways • Leading or participating in projects relevant to the specialty area of practice • Policy and/or procedure development • Participation in quality improvement initiatives in area of specialty including review of critical incidents (RCA panel reviews) and clinical audits • Participation in performance review/ performance appraisal (appraisal of self or as an appraiser of others)

Note: A specialty's professional nursing organisation may choose to establish educational/practice activity guidelines which vary from the above. Please make sure you are using the Evidence Based Record template provided by the professional nursing organisation for your specialty.

General requirements

Nurses must keep written documentation of CPD that demonstrates evidence of completion of a certain number of hours of CPD per year. Nurses are responsible for assessing the number of hours claimed for each activity and for identifying how many hours required by the professional nursing organisation for their specialty .

A minimum number of hours of CPD must be relevant to the nurse's specialty area of practice. Up to 10 hours of CPD which is not directly related to the area of specialty, can be included. This could include CPR, undertaking a computer course, mandatory fire training, manual handling etc.

Nurses should use the Specialist Nurse Credentialing Program Evidence Based Record template, or the Evidence Based Record template for their particular specialty (if this exists), to record their CPD. All templates are vailable to download from the Resource Tab at: www.accypn.org.au.

The template includes dates, domain to which the activity relates, a brief description of the activity, and the number of hours spent in each activity. The EBR demonstrates that nurses have:

- identified and prioritised their learning needs, based on an evaluation of their practice against any relevant competency or specialist practice standards

- participated in effective learning activities relevant to their personal learning goals

Referee Reports

Related Criterion: Support from two referees who are familiar with your practice must be provided to support your application. These must be uploaded with the application.

- The referees must provide an individual reference not prepared by the applicant.

- The referees must be prepared to be contacted by the person assessing your application to clarify or verify details or provide further information

Referees are asked to provide detailed comments and observations in relation to your practice and performance in relation to your specialist area of practice. They are asked to consider how you demonstrate collaborative holistic ethical practice that supports the needs of the consumer(s); evidence based individualised practice through the application of specialist knowledge, and the incorporation of the relevant specialist Standards of Practice.

Selecting your referees –

- It is preferable that your referees have been working in a professional relationship with you in your area of specialty for at least 6 months in the last three years.

- At least one referee should be a person in a senior or supervisory capacity to you, or had direct involvement in assessing your clinical capacity.

- It is preferable that your referees are not subordinate to you; a referee who is subordinate to you should only be selected where there is no other person who is suitable.

- Referees must not be a relative, partner or in another close personal relationship with the applicant.

Applicants should ensure that their referees are familiar with the content of their credentialing application and the credentialing process. Further information can be found at: www.accypn.org.au .

Reference template

A **reference** template is available from the Resource tab of the ACCYPN Website at www.accypn.org.au . Please provide the reference template to your two selected referees and ask them to use this when providing the reference. This will ensure all the required information is obtained and your application will not be unnecessarily delayed.

Resubmitting Updated Documents or providing Additional Information

If you have been asked to submit additional evidence or documentation, your application will be moved from the 'Review Round' back into the 'Application Round' so that you can access and edit it. Your application will once again be listed as 'Incomplete'. Please edit the 'Select Credentials' task, upload the information requested, and then submit your application again.

It is really important that you **delete the document(s) that are no longer required when you upload the latest version**. This will ensure that the Peer Reviewer has the correct version of the document when completing the review of your application. If you don't delete older versions of the documents, this may delay finalisation of your application.

Once you have gathered and uploaded the information required, don't forget to press the 'SUBMIT' button to finalise your application. Your application will then be moved back into the peer review process.

Applicant's Declaration

Applicants must carefully read the declaration before signing and dating the online application. The online system will allow for you to sign the application with your computer mouse.

Specialist Nurse Credentialing Application Pathway

If you submit your application without all the required supporting documentation, it will not be processed. You will be asked to provide the correct information and the application process will be paused until such time as you provide what is required.

Once you have submitted your application with all the required supporting documents, it will be forwarded for assessment by peer reviewer(s).

If peer reviewers identify that further information is required, we will contact you and you will be asked to provide the additional information (see below). Once again, the application process will be paused until such time as you provide the information that is required.

Upon receipt of the requested documents, the application process/timeframes will resume and the peer reviewer(s) will conduct their evaluation of your application. Peer reviewer(s) recommendations are submitted to the relevant specialty professional organisation for endorsement, and once this process is completed, we will advise you of the outcome.

Successful applicants are awarded a Certificate and provided with information about their eligibiliy to promote their credential.

Credentialing Pathway

The following flowchart identifies the credentialing pathway and anticipated credentialing process timeframes for the assessment and notification process.

If all documentation is provided and your application is complete, application processing and review may take up to 8 weeks.
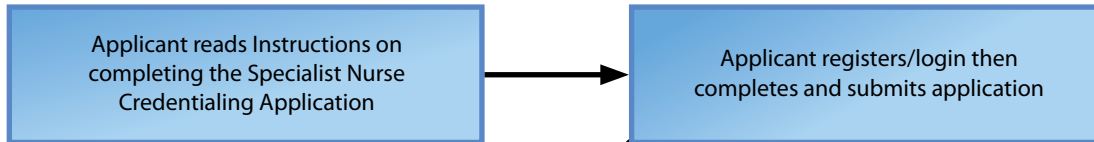
Where applications are incomplete or inaccurate, incorrect or uncertified documentation is provided, and/or where requests for additional information are required, application processing and review will be longer than 8 weeks.

If you have any queries or need support or assistance with your application, please contact ACCYPN - credentialing@accypn.org.au
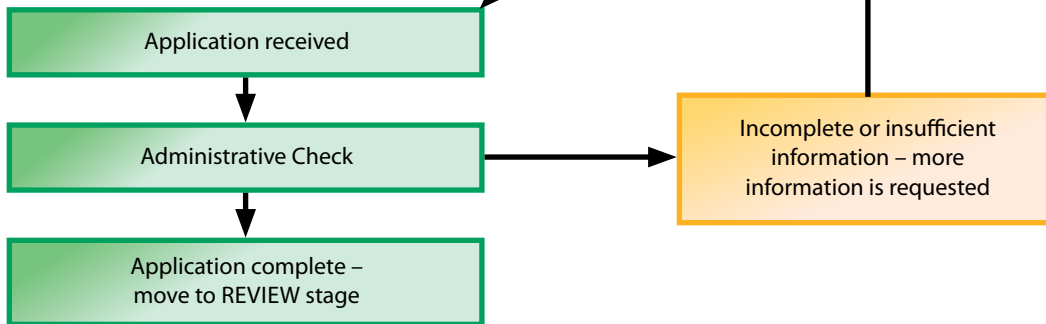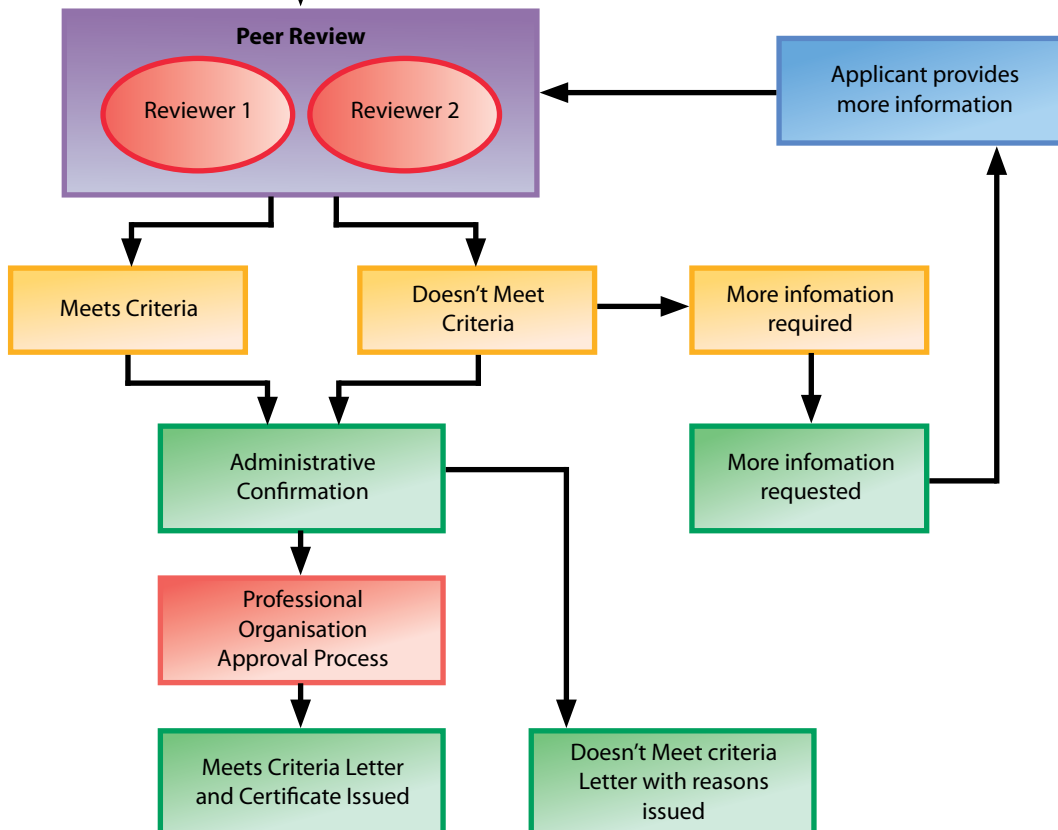
C4N Workflow

STAGE ONE

Applicant reads Instructions on completing the Specialist Nurse Credentialing Application	→	Applicant registers/login then completes and submits application

STAGE TWO
up to 4 weeks

Application received

↓

Administrative Check → Incomplete or insufficient information – more information is requested

↓

Application complete – move to REVIEW stage

STAGE THREE
up to 4 weeks

Peer Review
Reviewer 1   Reviewer 2

Applicant provides more information

Meets Criteria   Doesn't Meet Criteria → More infomation required

Administrative Confirmation

More infomation requested

Professional Organisation Approval Process

Meets Criteria Letter and Certificate Issued

Doesn't Meet criteria Letter with reasons issued

CREDENTIALING
FOR NURSES

Find out more at www.accypn.org.au