The Mental Health Nurse Credential (MHNC) recognises the skills, expertise and experience of nurses who are practicing as specialist mental health nurses.

The MHNC demonstrates to employers, professional colleagues, consumers and carers that an individual nurse has achieved the professional standard for practice in mental health nursing. The MHNC also increases awareness of the contribution mental health nurses make to the mental health of the community.

Credentialing is a core component of clinical/professional governance or self-regulation where members of a profession set standards for practice and establish a minimum requirement for entry, continuing professional development, endorsement and recognition.

Registered nurses working in specialised fields and other disciplines have developed credentialing as a means to ensure standards of practice and competence within their specialist domain beyond entry to practice are maintained. The Credential for Practice Program is an initiative of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses and has established the only national consistent recognition for specialist mental health nurses.

How do I become credentialed?
If you are a registered nurse practising within the mental health field in Australia, you may apply to be a Credentialed Mental Health Nurse™. If your application is approved, you will be awarded a Credential that is valid for 3 years. The award means you are formally recognised by the ACMHN as a Credentialed Mental Health Nurse™.

To gain a MHNC, applicants must demonstrate that they:

- Hold a current licence to practice as a registered nurse within Australia
- Hold a recognised specialist/postgraduate mental health nursing qualification (as specified in the guidelines for applications available on the College’s website)
- Have had at least 12 months experience since completing specialist/postgraduate qualification OR have three years’ experience as a registered nurse working in mental health
- Meet recency of practice criteria
- Have acquired minimum continuing professional development points for education and practice
- Are supported by two professional referees
- Have completed a professional declaration agreeing to uphold the standards of the profession.

The application process
In general, 1-2 months may be needed to prepare an application. Once received by the ACMHN, an application is checked to ensure it is complete. When it is complete, the application is sent for peer review on a set date each month. This process may take 6-8 weeks but will depend on how complete the application is when submitted.

Membership required?
It is not a requirement to be a member of the ACMHN to become Credentialed. However, there is an application fee discount available to members, or those who join at the time of submitting their application.

More information
For guidelines, frequently asked questions and the application forms, go to www.acmhn.org/credentialing/what-is-credentialing.html