Fact sheet

Updated 21 September 2012

Enrolled nurses and medicine administration

About this document

This document is an updated version of Explanatory note: Enrolled nurses and medicine administration which was previously published on the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the National Board) website.

Background

Under the National Registration and Registration Scheme (the National Scheme), which came into effect on 1 July 2010, there are no endorsements for administration of medicines by enrolled nurses (ENs). The National Board made this change in recognition that there is a growing number of enrolled nurses, including all new graduates, that have the required education and can administer medicines compared with the diminishing number of enrolled nurses who do not have the required education to administer medicines.

This means that enrolled nurses are not able to administer medicines unless they have completed the relevant medicine administration education units. This is essential to better protect the public by ensuring that only enrolled nurses who are trained in administering medicines are able to do so.

Graduates from Board-approved enrolled nurse courses on the website from 2008 onwards have completed the relevant medicine administration units as these are covered as part of the curriculum.

Graduates who have not completed these courses have a notation on their registration, which is published on the register of practitioners. The notation states: ‘Does not hold Board-approved qualification in administration of medicines’. This notation will remain in place until the enrolled nurse provides evidence of having completed a Board-approved administration of medicines unit.

See below for information about enrolled nurses with a notation on their registration limiting their practise to mothercraft nursing only.

What used to happen before the introduction of the National Scheme

Before the introduction of the National Scheme, arrangements relating to enrolled nurses and the administration of medicines varied between states and territories. Some offered training programs for enrolled nurses on the administration of medicines and, in some jurisdictions, this led to an endorsement.

On transition to the National Scheme on 1 July 2010, all enrolled nurses who had an endorsement from their state or territory board transitioned to the scheme without a notation on their registration, and were able to keep administering medicines.

1 18 October 2010 in Western Australia
In other jurisdictions, enrolled nurses were not differentiated on the register as to whether they could administer medicines or not. It was the enrolled nurse’s professional responsibility to undertake administration of medicines only when their scope of practice allowed for it i.e. they were educated and competent to administer medicines.

On transition to the National Scheme on 1 July 2010, those enrolled nurses who did not have the requisite education and competence to administer medicines were required to identify themselves to AHPRA and have the notation ‘Does not hold Board-approved qualification in administration of medicines’ placed on their registration.

**Board-approved programs and essential units of study**

Board-approved program of study are published on the [National Board website](http://www.nationalboard.org). These are programs of study for nursing and midwifery which have been accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) and approved by the National Board.

In order to have a notation removed, enrolled nurses with a notation must satisfactorily complete two essential Board-approved units of study for administration of medicines:

- Analyse health information HLTAP501C, (previously identified as HLTAP501A or HLTAP501B), and
- Administer and monitor medications in the work environment, HLTEN507C (previously identified as HLTEN507A and HLTEN507B).

It is important to note that Board-approved units of study may have pre-requisite units of study to complete, as well as the two essential units of study. Enrolled nurses are advised to get in touch with the education provider to find out whether they may be eligible for recognition of prior learning, or whether they will be required to complete all or part of the pre-requisite units before commencing the two essential units of study.

**Mothercraft nurses**

All mothercraft nurses (including Division 5 nurses in Victoria) transitioned to the National Scheme on 1 July 2010 (18 October 2010 in Western Australia) to an enrolled nurse registration with a notation limiting their practice to mothercraft nursing only. This group of enrolled nurses is not eligible to enrol into a Board-approved medication course and is therefore unable to administer medicines.

**Local drugs and poisons legislation**

Local state and territory drugs and poisons legislations laws, and relevant policies, specify the routes and schedules of medicines that enrolled nurses are able to administer. This means that enrolled nurses who are able to administer medicines must adhere to their local laws and practise within their scope of practice.

Employers of enrolled nurses need to ensure they are familiar with the local drugs and poisons requirements, and that they have processes in place to ensure that their employees have and maintain required qualifications and competence to administer medicines.

**Agreed principles and scope of practice**

Through their employment arrangement, enrolled nurses need to be guided by the principles of determining scope of practice and the agreed principles of delegation and supervision, as set out in the National Board’s [professional practice framework](http://www.nationalboard.org).

All nursing activities must take place in the context of agreed principles of delegation and levels of supervision at the local level.

These should be supported by the policies, procedures and protocols that have been developed in accordance with service needs and intended outcomes of the workplace.
All enrolled nurses are accountable for making decisions about their own practice, and about what is within their own capacity and scope of practice.

**Administering intravenous (IV) medicines**

It is important to note that not all enrolled nurses without a notation are able to administer intravenous medicines. This is because the intravenous unit of study ‘Administer and monitor intravenous medication in the nursing environment’ HLTEN519C (previously identified as HLTEN519A and HLTEN519B) is a separate and elective unit in the Diploma of Nursing.

Therefore, an enrolled nurse may not have a notation but may also not have completed the required education.

Enrolled nurses must ensure that they practise within their scope of practice and understand what activities are appropriate for them to undertake.

Employers must ensure that there are processes in place to make sure employees have completed approved educational requirements and are qualified for any nursing activity they undertake.

**Enrolled nurses in Western Australia and Victoria who registered through an approved exit point**

Some Bachelor of Nursing courses in Western Australia and Victoria have approved exit points that allow eligible students to register as enrolled nurses while they complete their undergraduate studies for registration as a registered nurse.

This option, and the point at which it occurs, varies between programs and students need to discuss this directly with their education provider.

**Enrolled nurse in Victoria who registered through an approved exit point**

**Notation on the register**

The notation ‘Does not hold Board-approved qualifications in administration of medicines’ applies to all undergraduate students that undertake an approved Bachelor of Nursing or double degree program with an approved predetermined point in which they are able to apply for registration as an enrolled nurse.

In Victoria, before being able to register as enrolled nurses, Victorian students must undertake the two Board-approved essential units of study. In addition, they need to be assessed in a clinical setting to jointly meet the National Enrolled Nurse competency standards and have completed a module on the roles and responsibilities of the enrolled nurse. Once this has been successfully completed, the education provider can then submit details of the eligible student to AHPRA.

**Why are the units and clinical competencies in my program leading to registration as a registered nurse not adequate for enrolled nurse registration without a notation?**

Pharmacology and medication units vary between Bachelor of Nursing programs, and competency is not achieved until the program leading to registration as a registered nurse is completed. Any pharmacology completed to the approved point for enrolled nurse registration may not be equivalent to the units contained in either the Diploma of Nursing or Certificate IV in Nursing program.

**For more information**

- Refer to the website (www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au) for:
  - EN competency standards, published under Codes and guidelines
- Follow the Board on Twitter: NurMidBoardAust
- Visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under Contact us to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200