



Introduction

This brochure responds to frequently asked questions from nurses considering application for Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) Nurse Practitioner™ endorsement. The two key documents which will guide the process of application are: The Nurse Practitioner™ responding to the health needs in New Zealand, and The Nurse Practitioner™ endorsement guidelines for nurses. These documents are available on www.nursingcouncil.org.nz or a hard copy can be purchased from the Nursing Council by either writing to P.O. Box 9644, Wellington or by phone on 04-8020247.

The Mentor System

NPAC-NZ through its constituent groups has established a mentoring programme which will assist applicants. If you are going to apply for endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner™ and would like to have a mentor, contact your professional organisation. The mentors are nurses who have either become Nurse Practitioners™, or they are nurses who have had education sessions with the Nursing Council and NPAC-NZ for the purpose of being a mentor. Your mentor will assist and guide you with the application process, including the development of your portfolio.

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The following are useful references and websites

The Nurse Practitioner™ Responding to Health Needs in New Zealand
3rd Edition , September 2002

The Nurse Practitioner™ Endorsement: Guidelines for Applicants
September 2002

Nursing Council
www.nursingcouncil.org.nz

College of Nurses Aotearoa
www.nurse.org.nz

New Zealand Nurse Organisation
www.nzno.org.nz

Ministry of Health
www.moh.govt.nz

Australia, New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses
www.icms.com.au

National Council of Maori Nurses
www.hauoramaori.org/hcmn/

Ministry of Health (2002) Nurse Practitioners™ in New Zealand



Frequently Asked Questions

NPAC-NZ

The Nurse Practitioner™ Advisory
Committee of New Zealand

NPAC-NZ

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What should be in my portfolio?

The portfolio provides evidence for each of the competencies that must be achieved to become a Nurse Practitioner™. The portfolio provides you with the opportunity to describe your nursing practice, and how you contribute to the improvement of outcomes for the patients and families in your care. While there is no set outline for the portfolio there are some essential components. These are:

- A statement outlining your scope of practice.
- Documents which illustrate the development and depth of your practice, such as; case studies, exemplars, annotated cases notes, a diary of a typical working week.
- Examples of scholarly inquiry, such as; publications, research activities, development of new nursing knowledge, membership and involvement in professional organisations.
- Educational qualifications.
- Curriculum Vitae.
- Evidence of professional credentials.
- Referees.

The nurse in you should leap out of the pages for the panel to meet. Your focus on nursing practice, your underlying philosophy, advanced assessment skills, utilisation of evidence and continuous quality improvement strategies should be evident to the assessment panel.

Don't forget

...before sending your portfolio for assessment, all supporting evidence must be verified. The verification must include a signature, a date, and the designation of the person verifying the document. Check that this has been done on all necessary documents before sending your portfolio for assessment, as having to go back and obtain verification will slow down the application process.

How should I set out my portfolio?

A professional presentation of your work is important. There is no set format, but it is important that your portfolio is clear and easy for the panel to read. There must be an index and the sections are to be divided by tabbed inserts and the pages numbered. One suggestion for formatting your portfolio is to use each of the competencies as a section, providing evidence that meets each of these separately.

For example: Scholarly Inquiry

You may include in this section any research that you have been involved with, presentations, publications or any documents which demonstrate how you have contributed to the body of knowledge. Remember that the panel members need to find the evidence within your portfolio, so try to make it as easy as possible for them.

What is a scope of practice?

Your scope of practice is unique to you. Your scope of practice must include the community and speciality that you practice within and the parameters of your practice. To put it simply a scope of practice is, what you do as a nurse, who you practice with and how you go about doing that. Many nurses applying for endorsement as a nurse practitioner find this the most difficult to write. While it may be difficult to get started, once you have started you will find, as others have, that this is an opportunity to really think about your nursing practice, and reflect the skills you have and the care that you provide. A useful place to start is to read about scopes of practice in the literature.

The Internet Journal of Advanced Nursing Practice URL at:

<http://www.ispub.com/journals/IJANP/Vol1N2/scope.htm>. Published July1,1997

When your portfolio is complete, return to the guidelines for applicants and check that you have included all the necessary documents.

What does the panel want to see in the journal?

The journal is an opportunity for you to demonstrate reflective nursing practice. The suggestion is that you write a typical week: three to five days. Again there are no set guidelines. The panel should be able to see you providing evidence based care at an advanced level and your reflections of the efficacy of that care. You may wish to provide a commentary about why you made decisions and the outcomes of your decisions.

How do I know if my Masters programme has been approved by the Nursing Council?

The programmes currently endorsed are on the NCNZ website www.nursingcouncil.org.nz. This web-site is frequently updated.

If you are enrolling or are currently enrolled in a Masters programme, ask the education provider if it is a Nursing Council approved programme.

What is Educational Equivalence and how is it assessed?

The educational equivalence option reduces barriers for the many nurses who have not had access to a clinical Masters programme but have achieved advanced nursing knowledge and practice through other pathways. The applicant is required to demonstrate within their portfolio the integration of theory, research and nursing practice in achieving positive outcomes for patients within their scope of practice. The level at which this utilisation of advanced nursing knowledge, critique and analysis is to be demonstrated is at Masters graduate level. There is a separate process to assess the education equivalence to a clinical Masters programme. Firstly an external education advisor assesses the portfolio and makes a recommendation. The Education Committee of the Nursing Council undertakes an assessment and makes a recommendation. It is important to note that the assessment of educational equivalence is not against Nurse Practitioner™ competencies (that is the role of the Nurse Practitioner assessment panel) but against the level of thinking, knowledge and reflection of a Masters graduate.

Who makes up the assessment panel?

Assessment panels are tailored to each applicant's scope of practice. There are essential components of each panel which include

- A professional nurse leader with national/international understanding of advanced nursing practice.
- A nurse with expertise in education, experienced in the assessment of advanced competencies.
- A nurse practicing at an advanced level with ability to critique practice.
- A peer from the same scope of practice, this panel member may not be a nurse.

Generally there are four panel members, but it is possible that the roles maybe combined. An example of this is the advanced practice nurse may also be from the same scope of practice as the applicant. In time, Nurse Practitioners™ will be part of the assessment panels. Other panels members maybe a representative from a particular cultural or consumer group. In addition to the panel members there will be two Nursing Council staff present at the panel assessment. The role of the Nursing Council staff is to ensure consistency between assessments and to provide administrative support.

Do I have the right to challenge members of the assessment panel?

Yes! You can confidentially challenge panel members if you believe that there maybe a conflict in relation to your application. They will be removed from the panel and replaced.

Do I need to have a clinical Masters to apply for endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner?

No! It is not necessary to have a clinical Masters. If you have a Masters which is not approved by the Nursing Council as a clinical Masters, you need to demonstrate through your application, that you are applying advanced nursing knowledge to your practice.

What advice would you give to assist me in preparing for the interview?

Think about the members of the interview panel and what perspective they will be coming from. They will be looking for congruence between what is written and what is said. Identify any areas in your portfolio where the evidence is weak and concentrate your energies there. Anticipate questions around each standard and criterion, for example,

- Articulates scope of nursing practice and its advancement - explain the application/adaptation of advanced nursing knowledge, expertise and evidence-based care to improve the health outcomes for your clients. Prepare examples of your application of new nursing knowledge to practice.
- Shows effective nursing leadership and consultancy
- Tell us about your experience in a leading case.
- A doctor on the panel may want to know that you understand the limitations to nursing judgment and ask you to discuss a case where you needed to.
- Questions would centre on your knowledge and decision- making regarding referrals. Have two or three examples ready to demonstrate this.
- A consumer may be interested in your ability to listen, communicate and advocate as a partner in health care. This needs to be demonstrated.
- Practise, practise, practise. Use a mentor(s) to listen to your answers. Get a coach. If you are nervous, when you enter the room, move something to claim your territory. If you need a break, ask for one.
(From: Preparing for the NP Interview - or can you speak French?, N. Ainge, 5 Nov 2002)

Can I take a support person?

Yes! The role of the support person is to support you during the interview process, rather than taking an active role within the interview. The support person would generally be someone with whom you have a professional relationship, and who understands your scope of practice. If you would like your support person to address the panel as a referee, it is necessary to formally ask the Nursing Council. The support person will address the panel generally prior to the interview commencing.

What advice would you give me if I was to have a site visit?

Not to panic. The addition of the site visit to the assessment process is not designed to catch you out but to enable the representatives of the assessment panel (and it won't be the whole of the assessment panel) to gain an idea of your actual practice. You will be formally advised by the Nursing Council who is performing the site visit assessment, which competencies are requiring further assessment, what evidence is being sought, and with whom the panel members wish to meet. Once you have this information you will need to speak with your Director of Nursing or Professional Nursing Advisor so that they can liaise with Nursing Council. You have the right to refuse a site visit, however if you do wish to, then it would be necessary to provide alternative options to the Nursing Council in order for them to be able to meet the necessary criteria of the assessment panel.