Information for overseas nurses

Anyone wanting to work in the UK as a nurse must register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) [1].

Nurses trained outside the UK and EEA

They can apply to be on the NMC [2] Register, providing they meet its standards. The NMC [2] will compare the training in your country with that required in the UK. Registration with the NMC [2] does not provide the right to work in the UK.

The requirements for registration are different for nurses who trained in the UK and EEA to those who trained outside the UK and EEA.

Process for nurses educated outside the EEA

Since October 2014, the only route to registration for all nurses trained outside the UK and EEA with the NMC [2] is through a 2-part application process.

- **Part one** – a computer based multiple-choice examination which will be accessible in many countries around the world for applicants to access in their home countries.
- **Part two** – a practical objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) [3] which will always be held in the UK.

This process does not require applicants to complete a period of supervised practice.

For further information about the application process and the test of competence please visit the NMC website [4]

EEA nationals who have trained outside the EEA will not be eligible for automatic recognition of their qualification under the EU Directives as they have not trained within an EU member state. Further information is available from the NMC website [1]

Nurses trained outside of the UK must also meet the English language standards set by the NMC [2]. This can be demonstrated:

- by successfully completing a language test such as the International English Language Testing System [5] (IELTS) or the Occupational English Test [6] (OET).

IELTS is a universally recognised international test of English language proficiency and measures language ability of people who wish to study and/or work where English is the main
language of communication. Those taking the IELTS need to achieve achieving a minimum overall level of 7 (from 5 December 2018, although, a minimum overall level of 7 is required, a level 6.5 in writing will be accepted alongside a level 7 in reading, listening and speaking).

Further details about IELTS can be found on the IELTS website [5]

The OET is an international English language test designed specifically for the healthcare sector and in the UK is an option for doctors, nurses and midwives.

It assesses the language communication skills of healthcare professionals who wish to register and practise in an English-speaking environment. Nurses taking the OET need to achieve a minimum of a level B.

Further details about the OET can be found on the OET website [6]

- through evidence that their pre-registration nursing programme was taught and examined in English and that at least 50 per cent of the programme involved clinical interaction using English

Read more about registering with the NMC, including language competency requirements and guidance on the NMC website [7].

Overseas-trained nurses holding EC Treaty Rights who have had their qualification recognised in another EU member state and have practised in the EU/EEA for three years, will continue to be processed through the EU route.

**Nurses trained in the EEA**

Nurses who trained in the EEA must also meet the standards of the NMC [2] before they can be considered for registration. The NMC [2] will compare the training in your country with that required in the UK.

Following the recognition of qualification, and before entry to the register, all applicants are required to supply evidence that they have the necessary knowledge of English. Communication is defined as speaking, reading, listening and writing.

Read more information about EEA registration on the NMC website [8].

Nurses who trained in the EEA who are not EEA nationals may be required to undertake one or both parts of the application process above.

**Recruitment agencies**

Many NHS organisations contract with agencies to help them with their overseas recruitment campaigns, in line with NHS Employers’ code of practice [9]. The code of practice includes key principles such as not requiring candidates to pay a fee up front, and not targeting developing countries for recruitment where it would be unethical to do so.
If you are asked to pay a fee up front for promises of NHS accommodation or work, please report the request to Action Fraud [10].

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/information-overseas-nurses

Links
[2] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NMC
[3] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Objective_structured_clinical_examination_OSCE
[10] https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/