The Prep handbook

We are the nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Islands.

- We exist to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public.
- We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance so that nurses and midwives can deliver high quality healthcare consistently throughout their careers.
- We ensure that nurses and midwives keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our professional standards.
- We have clear and transparent processes to investigate nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards.

Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................... .. 2
You, Prep and the NMC.................................................................................................. 3
The Prep (practice) standard .......................................................................................... 5
Returning to practice....................................................................................................... 7
The Prep (continuing professional development) standard............................................. 8
Prep (CPD) – guidance for recording your learning .................................................... 9
How will the NMC know that you have met the standards?........................................ 10
Important reminders...................................................................................................... 11
Further information ....................................................................................................... 12
Contact us..................................................................................................................... 12
Introduction

Post-registration education and practice (Prep) is a set of Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards and guidance which is designed to help you provide a high standard of practice and care.

This handbook consolidates everything you need to know about the Prep standards and guidance. You should read it in conjunction with The code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives (the code).

If you have any further queries about how to meet the Prep standards, you can contact us in confidence. Our contact details are on the back cover.

Like many professional regulators in healthcare, the NMC is reviewing and updating the standards for the maintenance and renewal of registration. This will form the basis of our approach to revalidation which will be launched in 2014.

Prep helps you to:

- provide a high standard of practice and care
- keep up to date with new developments in practice
- think and reflect for yourself
- demonstrate that you are keeping up to date and developing your practice.
You, Prep and the NMC

The role of the NMC

We are the nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Islands.

- We exist to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public.
- We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance so that nurses and midwives can deliver high quality healthcare consistently throughout their careers.
- We ensure that nurses and midwives keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our professional standards.
- We have clear and transparent processes to investigate nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards.

The NMC register

Registration with the NMC is essential for you to be able to work in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Islands as a nurse or midwife. We maintain a register of all the people who have fulfilled the NMC’s registration requirements and who are, therefore, entitled to practise in the UK and the Islands. The register is at the heart of the NMC’s role in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the public.

Requirements for renewal of registration with the NMC

To renew your registration every three years, you will need to provide a signed notification of practice (NoP) form and pay your renewal of registration fee. The NoP asks you to declare that you have met the Prep requirements (see page 4) and are of good health and good character. Your registration will not be renewed until the NMC has received and processed your completed and signed form, together with your fee payment.

Please note that now the NMC has moved to the annual payment of fees, you will be required to pay a retention of registration fee at the end of the first and second years of the registration period.

Additionally, in order to practise, midwives need to give notice of their intention to practise, in accordance with rule 3 of the Midwives rules and standards. This is done by submitting a completed annual intention to practise (ItP) form every year to their named supervisor of midwives.

If you are not registered with the NMC you cannot be employed to practise as a nurse or midwife in the UK.
The NMC’s Prep requirements

The Prep requirements are professional standards set by the NMC. They are legal requirements, which you must meet in order for your registration to be renewed.

There are two separate Prep standards which affect your registration.

- **The Prep (practice) standard**
  You must have worked in some capacity by virtue of your nursing or midwifery qualification during the previous three years for a minimum of 450 hours, or have successfully undertaken an approved return to practice course within the last three years.

- **The Prep (continuing professional development) standard**
  You must have undertaken and recorded your continuing professional development (CPD) over the three years prior to the renewal of your registration. All nurses and midwives have been required to comply with this standard since April 1995. Since April 2000, you must have declared on your NoP form that you have met this requirement when you renew your registration.
The Prep (practice) standard

1 The aim of this standard is to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public by ensuring that anyone renewing their registration has undertaken a minimum amount of practice. This standard requires you to have practised in some capacity by virtue of your nursing or midwifery qualification for a minimum of 450 hours during the three years prior to the renewal of your registration. If you do not meet this requirement, you will need to undertake an approved return to practice course before you can renew your registration.

Meeting the Prep (practice) standard

2 In order to meet the practice standard you must have undertaken the 450 hours in your capacity as a nurse or midwife. For example, you can only meet the practice standard for midwifery by practising midwifery and similarly for nursing. Any practice that was undertaken when you were not registered cannot be counted towards meeting the practice standard.

3 As a midwife, you will need to continue to submit your intention to practise notification annually to your named supervisor of midwives in accordance with rule 3 of the Midwives rules and standards, if you wish to practise midwifery.

4 The following table is designed to help you to know how many hours you need to complete in order to meet the practice standard and so renew your registration(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Renewing your registration for</th>
<th>Hours required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwifery</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing and midwifery</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing and specialist community public health nursing</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwifery and specialist community public health nursing</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing, midwifery and specialist community public health nursing</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 You can meet the Prep (practice) standard whether you are:

5.1 **in paid work**: for example, when you are employed by an organisation such as an NHS trust, a care home, an independent healthcare provider, a nursing agency, a health authority or health board, educational institution, another type of company or organisation, or if you work in independent practice

5.2 **in unpaid work**: for example, when you are working on a voluntary basis in a role requiring registration, such as for an established healthcare charity
5.3 **not working:** for example, when you are taking a career break within the three year re-registration period, you may still be able to meet the practice standard if you have completed the required hours in practice as a registered nurse at some point during those three years. If you do not meet the Prep (practice) standard, you will need to successfully complete an approved return to practice course before you can renew your registration.
Returning to practice

6 If you are unable to comply with the practice standard, you will have to successfully complete a return to practice programme approved by the NMC. These programmes are designed to allow you to renew your registration and return to practice when your registration has lapsed after a break in practice of three years or more. Courses whose outcomes have been validated by the NMC must include:

6.1 an understanding of the influence of health and social policy relevant to the practice of nursing and midwifery

6.2 an understanding of the requirements of legislation, guidelines, codes of practice and policies relevant to the practice of nursing and midwifery

6.3 an understanding of the current structure and organisation of care, nationally and locally

6.4 an understanding of current issues in nursing and midwifery education and practice

6.5 the use of relevant literature and research to inform the practice of nursing and midwifery

6.6 the ability to identify and assess need, design and implement interventions and evaluate outcomes in all relevant areas of practice, including the effective delivery of appropriate emergency care

6.7 the ability to use appropriate communications, teaching and learning skills

6.8 the ability to function effectively in a team and participate in a multiprofessional approach to people’s care

6.9 the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses, acknowledge limitations of competence, and recognise the importance of maintaining and developing professional competence.

7 An approved return to practice programme will be not less than five days in length. The length and nature of the programme will be determined by the education provider and the particular individual. This will take into account your registration history, previous levels of knowledge and experience, and any relevant experience undertaken while you have been out of professional practice.

8 For further information about return to practice programmes, visit www.nmc-uk.org/approved-programmes where you can search for universities that provide approved return to practice programmes in the UK.
The Prep (continuing professional development) standard

9 The Prep requirements include a commitment to undertake continuing professional development (CPD). This element of Prep is referred to as Prep (CPD). The Prep (CPD) standard is to:

9.1 undertake at least 35 hours of learning activity relevant to your practice during the three years prior to your renewal of registration

9.2 maintain a personal professional profile of your learning activity

9.3 comply with any request from the NMC to audit how you have met these requirements.

10 You must comply with the prep (CPD) standard in order to maintain your NMC registration.

Meeting the Prep (CPD) standard

11 The learning activity which you undertake to meet this standard must be relevant to your practice. However, there is no such thing as approved Prep (CPD) learning activity.

12 You must document, in your profile, your relevant learning activity and the way in which it has informed and influenced your practice. Although there is no approved format for the profile and you can meet the Prep (CPD) standard in many different ways, we have developed a template which you might like to consider when organising your profile. This is outlined in paragraphs 13-14.4 on page 9.
Prep (CPD) – guidance for recording your learning

13 You should document each learning activity you have undertaken in the three years prior to renewing your registration. You should think about how you might like to record what you do, what you learn and how you apply it to your professional practice.

14 We suggest your record covers:

14.1 A list and a description of your work place or organisation and role for the last three years. You should record your work place(s) and your work or role(s) that relate to the learning activity you describe. If you have worked in various places, but in essentially the same role (for example, if you are a bank nurse or an agency nurse), you may want to group this type of work together and summarise it in this section. If you were not working, we suggest you put ‘not working’.

14.2 The nature of the learning activity – what did you do? You should record the learning activity related to the work you identified for the last three years. You should state the date or period when this learning activity took place and state how many hours the learning activity took.

14.3 Description of the learning activity – what did it consist of? Provide a detailed description of what the learning activity consisted of, why you decided to do the learning or how the opportunity came about, where when and how you did the learning and what you expected to gain from it.

14.4 Outcome of the learning activity – how did the learning relate to your work? You should record the effect it has had on the way in which you work or intend to work in the future and any follow-up learning which you maybe planning in the future. You may begin by completing the sentence ‘The ways in which this learning has influenced my work are: …’.

You may find it helpful to routinely collect documentation from any learning activity you undertake such as appraisals, attendance or completion certificates.
How will the NMC know that you have met the standards?

Testing compliance

To demonstrate the rigour of the Prep standards to patients and the public, the NMC has a number of ways in which it can ensure that nurses and midwives are complying with them.

Notification of practice form

Everyone on our register must declare that they have complied with the Prep (CPD) standard and the Prep (practice) standard on their notification of practice (NoP) form which they complete when they renew their registration every three years.

The Prep (CPD) audit

The NMC audits compliance with the Prep (CPD) standard. Nurses and midwives may be asked to provide the NMC with a brief description of their learning activity and the relevance of this learning to their work. If you are asked to take part in the audit, your evidence will need to be provided using Prep (CPD) summary forms which the NMC will send to you. We may also ask for evidence such as appraisals, attendance or completion certificates from your learning activity, so you may find it helpful to routinely collect these items.

The Prep (CPD) summary form

The Prep (CPD) summary form is only issued to those involved in the audit. Please note that the completed contents of the form are used by the NMC only for the purpose of monitoring Prep (CPD) and we will advise you if we require any other correspondence or certificates to be sent with the form. If there is a question with regard to your Prep (CPD) summary form, the NMC will write to advise you.
Important reminders

- If you submit fraudulent information to the NMC, we may commence fitness to practise proceedings against you.

- In accordance with the code, you must always declare any cautions and convictions to the NMC immediately.

- Please ensure your registered address and contact details are always up to date. The most common reason for lapsed registration, which leads to practising illegally, is addresses that haven’t been updated resulting in registration documents being sent to the wrong address.
Further information

The Prep handbook was first published by the former United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC) in January 2001. It was revised in April 2002 following the establishment of the NMC, and again in August 2004 to bring it into line with changes brought about by the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001. Further changes were made in relation to intention to practise notifications in accordance with rule 3 of the Midwives rules and standards. This was altered in November 2004 and a new version of The Prep handbook was published in April 2005.

The rules to establish the new register in August 2004 also required that the time frames for meeting the practice and continuing professional development standards should both be three years. The date for implementation of this rule was August 2006.

Further changes have been made in relation to the standards required for re-registering as a specialist community public health nurse.

This booklet was reissued in a new format in April 2008, with updated practice hours requirements for people on the specialist community public health nursing part of the register.

A new design was introduced in April 2010 with the addition of paragraph numbers for the Prep standards, however the content has not changed.

This current version of The Prep handbook was issued in October 2011, which includes some minor revisions for clarity, such as the removal of some examples.

Contact us

Nursing and Midwifery Council
23 Portland Place
London W1B 1PZ
020 7333 9333

www.nmc-uk.org

This document is also available in large print, audio or Braille on request.