

IQNM: Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) FAQ for internationally qualified nurses and midwives

September 2014

Important general information about the new assessment model for the qualifications of *Internationally qualified nurses and midwives* is published on the [National Board website](#).

See also:

- [IQNM: General FAQ for internationally qualified nurses and midwives](#)

These frequently asked questions (FAQ) answer some common questions relating to AQF.

Australian Qualification Framework

1. What is an AQF level?

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) establishes the quality of Australian qualifications.

We have published detailed information under [IQNM: How we use the Australian Qualification Framework to assess your application](#).

2. How will you use the Australian Qualification Framework to assess my qualification?

The National Board uses the AQF Framework to benchmark international qualifications against Australian qualifications. The AQF outcome is used to assess your qualification against criterion 4 of the assessment criteria. Read our general guidelines on how we use the AQF framework under [IQNM: How we use the Australian Qualification Framework \(AQF\) to assess your qualification](#)

3. Can I request my own assessment to see how my qualification rates against the AQF?

No, AHPRA performs this service on your behalf.

4. Can I upgrade my qualification to meet the Australian qualification standard for registration?

Yes. In order to meet the qualification requirement for registration in Australia, you can enrol in a [Board-approved program of study](#) leading to registration as a [registered nurse or an enrolled nurse](#) or [a midwife](#). You may be able to request recognition of prior learning with the education provider – this is a decision for the education provider to make.

5. I have a Diploma of Higher Education (+/- experience as a nurse). Will my application for registration be approved?

A Diploma of Higher Education alone is generally considered to be AQF level 6 (along with advanced diplomas and associate degrees), which is below the required level for general registration as specified by criterion 4 of the qualification assessment criteria.

Your qualification must be assessed to be *substantially equivalent* to a Board-approved Australian qualification. For example, for registered nurses this must be equivalent to a bachelor degree as defined in the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Level 7.

Where your qualification leading to registration does not meet all eight qualification assessment criteria, the National Board will take into account various factors that may allow you to meet all requirements, including:

- any relevant subsequent nursing qualifications,
- If you meet all other registration criteria, save for criterion 4, and

- received ANMAC approval for skilled migration **before 10 February 2014**, or
- your qualification at AQF level 6 is focused solely on mental health, paediatric or disability nursing.

Alternatively, you may be eligible for a bridging program, which you will be referred to if your qualifications are assessed as AQF level 6 and you meet all other registration requirements.

See also:

- [Composite qualifications](#) on our National Board website.
- [IQNM: Migration FAQ](#)
- [IQNM: How we use the Australian Qualification Framework to assess your qualification](#)

6. I have a Diploma from a university or college. Is this the same as a Diploma of Higher Education?

Generally speaking, no. A Diploma of Higher Education is a specific qualification that is available in the United Kingdom, and is different to a Diploma from a higher education institution.

A Diploma is typically assessed at AQF level 5, whereas a Diploma of Higher Education is assessed at AQF level 6.

See also:

- [IQNM: How we use the Australian Qualification Framework \(AQF\) to assess your qualification](#)

7. Why are AQF level 6 qualifications from the UK no longer eligible for registration as a nurse or a midwife?

A Diploma of Higher Education is generally assessed at AQF level 6, whereas a Bachelor degree is generally assessed at AQF level 7. Under the new model, criterion 4 of the [IQNM qualification assessment criteria](#) requires that qualifications of applicants for registered nursing must be equivalent to an Australian Bachelor degree (AQF level 7). This is to make sure that applicants have qualifications that are 'substantially equivalent' to an Australian-approved qualification, as required by the National Law. This is no more than we expect of our local graduates.

Until 7 October 2013, the National Board took work experience into consideration in establishing whether an applicant was qualified for registration under section 53(b) of the National Law. As a result of tribunal decisions, the National Board reviewed the model for assessing IQNM qualifications and during this process sought legal advice on section 53(b) of the National Law. The new model is designed to implement a policy position that supports the more accurate interpretation of the National Law. As a result the new model now requires the assessment of applicants' qualifications only in establishing whether they are qualified for registration.

Read about [how we use the AQF framework to assess your qualification](#).

8. Why is a Diploma of Higher Education now assessed as an AQF6 rather than an AQF7 level?

A Diploma of Higher Education has always been assessed at AQF level 6. Please read the information on our website about [how we use the Australian Qualification Framework to assess your qualification](#).

9. Who assesses the AQF level of an applicant?

AHPRA assesses overseas applications on behalf of the National Board, which is responsible for the final decision on each application. As part of the assessment process, each overseas qualification is independently assessed to determine its educational level relative to the AQF framework.

10. How do I work as a registered nurse or midwife in Australia if my qualification is an AQF 5?

Criterion 4 of the qualification assessment criteria requires that your qualification(s) must be equivalent to an Australian:

- Bachelor degree for registered nurses and midwives (AQF7), and
- Diploma for enrolled nurses (AQF5).

For registration as a registered nurse or a midwife, you will need to upgrade your current qualification to a Bachelor degree nursing qualification (AQF7) in your country of origin or in Australia.

11. Where do I get more information?

- Information about the new model and a checklist for applicants: published on the National Board website under Registration and endorsement > [Internationally qualified nurses and midwives](#).
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For more information on the requirements for IQNMs: visit the [Internationally qualified nurses and midwives page](#) of the National Board website.
- [Application form for IQNMs](#)
- [Accreditation](#)
- [Approved programs of study](#)
- [Australian Qualifications Framework](#)