



NMC English language requirements for registration

Background

In March 2015 new UK legislation (The Health Care and Associated Professions Order 2015) was approved which introduced new requirements relating to English language competence for certain professions including nurses and midwives. These changes form part of the transposition into UK Law of the EU Directive on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

The NMC ran a consultation period between 1st June 2015 and 21st August 2015. Findings showed support for all but one of the proposed changes and the NMC has now published new requirements of evidence of language competence for all EU Trained nurses and midwives wishing to join or re-enter the register from 18th January 2016.

Why is this necessary?

The NMC believe this is a proportionate approach in order to protect the public by making sure that all nurses and midwives have the necessary English and communication skills to practice safely in the UK.

The NMC also believe it will bring greater consistency between requirements for Non EU and EU nurses. While this is likely to be launched in January 2016, there is still a risk that Parliament do not approve the changes to the NMC Registration Rules and Fitness to Practice within particular timescales. If that happens, the launch would be delayed. However we need to be prepared that this will be launched as planned.

The necessary knowledge of English is described as “knowledge which is necessary for safe and effective practice of nursing or midwifery in the UK”.

If you have questions regarding the new language requirements contact us at: info@primarycarerec.com

Primary Care Recruitment is a licensed Recruitment agency based in Ireland, all services provided to applicants are **free of charge**.

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Who will this affect?

- All EU trained nurses and midwives will need to provide evidence they have the necessary knowledge of English as a prerequisite for registration with the NMC from 18th January 2016.
- All nurses and midwives seeking readmission following a lapse in Registration who originally trained in EU countries.
- Nurses who have a Fitness to Practice action or allegation who already have registration, where concerns are raised about their knowledge of English. In theory this could apply to any EU nurse or midwife currently registered and working in the UK if concerns are raised. Guidance will be released for decision makers and fitness to practice panels to ensure fairness.

How will it be assessed?

Applicants who have trained in the UK will automatically satisfy they meet the requirements.

All EU nurse and midwife applicants from January 18th 2016 trained outside the UK will be required to demonstrate they have adequate language skills in order to complete the registration with the NMC.

The NMC will only ask for evidence once the initial application has been approved in terms of eligibility to register for the NMC. Therefore language controls will only be carried out after the recognition of a professional qualification, but before registration.

This can only take place where an EU trained nurse or midwife holds a qualification for automatic recognition. Should the applicant not meet the language requirements on the basis of their initial application, the registrar may not request further information, documents or evidence until they have first notified the applicant they have recognised their qualification.

The notification must inform the applicant they are entitled to be registered subject to meeting any other requirements for registration. The nurse or midwife can provide evidence at the application phase if they already have proof they meet the requirements if they wish.

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The NMC will accept the following as demonstration of language competence:

- IELTS with a minimum score of 7.0 and at least 7.0 in reading, writing, listening and speaking (valid in the last 2 years) or if the certificate is older than 2 years if the registrant can prove their language skills have not deteriorated in that time. Evidence may be completing post graduate study taught and examined in English, or evidence that they have practiced as a nurse or midwife in a country where English is the first and native language.
- Evidence of a pre -registration course taught and examined in English. The course must be composed of at least 50% clinical interaction. At least 75% of the course's clinical interaction with patients, service users, their families or other health care professionals must have taken place in English.
- Evidence of registration and two years of registered practice with a nursing and midwifery regulator in a country where English is the first and native language where a language assessment was required for registration.

Main Points

When will the NMC request evidence of knowledge of language?

- If the NMC have confidence of English language competence on the basis of information already supplied they will not request further information (see criteria above)
- If the NMC has concerns about English language competence they will request and consider further information
- If concerns remain after further information has been provided or the applicant is unable to provide evidence, the NMC will ask for the applicant to undertake the language assessment before registration.

When further information is released the information will be updated. In terms of how we support the candidates through this process is still being discussed.

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