



Visa and registration requirements for nurses and midwives

Overseas qualified nurses and midwives who wish to work as a nurse or midwife in Victoria, need to have a visa that allows them to work and have current registration with the state nursing and midwifery regulatory authority - the Nurses Board of Victoria.

If you are interested in living and working in Victoria, this sheet provides information about the visa and registration steps you will need to complete.

Applying to live and work as a nurse in Australia is a detailed process and you will need to apply to, and submit applications to more than one organisation in order to meet all of the requirements. Even though the applications may be asking similar questions, their requirements may differ. This sheet provides some handy hints to make this process easier.

Visa requirements for nurses and midwives

There are a range of visa options for nurses and midwives wishing to work in Victoria. The best one for you depends on your circumstances. Whether you have a high level of skills and experience or need to gain additional skills, there is a visa to suit you and there are excellent career opportunities with permanent and temporary work available in Australia.

Below is some information that will assist you with applying for a visa:

The Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has developed a website specifically for doctors and nurses to provide information on the various visa options and eligibility <www.immi.gov.au/skilled/medical-practitioners/nurses.htm>.

You can be in or outside Australia when you apply for a visa to work as a nurse. A list of Australian embassies and consulates can be found at <www.dfat.gov.au/missions>.

If you are applying to migrate to Australia under the skilled migration scheme (including employer sponsorship visas) you will need to have your skills assessed as part of your visa application. You will then need to apply for registration with the state or territory nursing and midwifery regulatory authority.

If you are only seeking a temporary visa (up to three months) or a working holiday visa (up to 12 months), you will need to be registered with the nursing and midwifery regulatory authority in the state or territory where you wish to work, as a nurse or midwife.

Step 1: Skilled migration scheme

Registered nurses or midwives from a country other than Australia or New Zealand who wish to migrate under the skilled migration scheme to work as a nurse or midwife in Victoria, need to have their skills (including English language proficiency), assessed as suitable to be eligible for the scheme.

DIAC has authorised the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) to undertake the assessments of Registered Nurses and Midwives who intend to migrate to Australia under the skilled migration category. Through this process the ANMC determines whether nurses and midwives are suitable for migration or whether they may need to undertake further education in order to be eligible for migration.

Migration skills assessments are processed and assessed at the ANMC office in Australia (Canberra). However, the process is based on documents and information you provide in written form, so you do not need to be present.

Detailed information about the process, documents requirements and the application forms are available on the ANMC website <www.anmc.org.au/international/index.php>

The assessment by ANMC will take at least 6-8 weeks (longer in some cases). The process requires:

- comprehensive documentary evidence including qualifications, current registration, English language proficiency, current and previous employment and proof of identity (including change of name if relevant).
- documents to be provided as either originals or certified copies according to the application requirements specified in the application.
- a third party to provide some documents on your behalf (cannot be provided directly by applicant).
- you or your nominated agent to communicate in writing with ANMC.

You will receive a letter of confirmation from the ANMC when they receive your application and it will include a file reference number. This number should be used in all correspondence about your application.

When the assessment is completed, a letter of determination will be provided (by mail) to you. The letter will advise you whether you are suitable or not suitable for migration. This letter will need to be provided to DIAC as evidence of the skills assessment required as part of the visa application.

Step 2: Being registered as a nurse or midwife in Victoria

All nurses and midwives working in Australia must obtain registration and maintain a current practising licence (authority to practise) in order to work in Australia as nurses or midwives. The registration of nurses, midwives and many other health professionals is a responsibility of regulatory bodies in each state or territory (the ANMC does not register nurses and midwives).

To work in Victoria as a nurse or midwife you must be registered under the *Health Professionals Registration Act 2005*, with the Nurses Board of Victoria (NBV). You will need to submit an application form which can be downloaded from the NBV website <www.nbv.org.au/registration/applying-for-registration.aspx>.

The application form asks for detailed information including proof of identity (including change of name if relevant), qualifications, competence to practice, work experience as a registered nurse and English language proficiency. Your application will not be processed until all evidence and supporting documentation is provided.

Assessment for registration by NBV is independent of the assessment done by the ANMC. If you have supplied documents to the ANMC for assessment and are seeking registration in Victoria, you may request them to forward the documents to the NBV, or you may choose to send the documents to the NBV with your application, yourself.

Registering in more than one state or territory

You can be registered in more than one Australian state or territory at the one time. You need to first be registered in one state or territory, and then seek registration under a process known as 'mutual recognition' in another state or territory. Similarly, an agreement exists between New Zealand and Australia to allow nurses and midwives to gain registration through a simplified process.

Tips and hints for making your applications

Organising all your papers together for visa, skills assessment and registration can be time consuming and detailed. The process is based on submitting documents and the relevant authorities have legislative requirements to approve only those who are appropriately qualified and registered.

In some cases fraudulent documents have been provided which has resulted in the strict process now in place. Having the correct information and understanding the process from the beginning will assist you in completing the process successfully. Here are some helpful hints:

- Leave yourself plenty of time – it can take longer than you think.
- Keep a record of when you send documents and who and when you speak to someone about your application.
- Read the instructions, checklists or guidelines supplied carefully.
- Complete the whole application- incomplete applications may not be processed.
- Proofread your application and consider getting it read by someone else.
- Don't use jargon or acronyms.
- Make sure you submit your application in the required format (paper or electronic).
- If mailing, consider using registered or certified mail.
- Pay special attention to your contact information and include your email address – it will save time if the organisation needs to contact you to correct something in your application.
- Keep your own copies of all documents submitted.
- Bring additional copies to Australia when you arrive – you may need them to open bank accounts for example.
- If the application process specifies original documents, do not submit copies even if they are certified.
- If copies of documentation need to be certified make sure this is done exactly as specified by the organisation – for example using a seal or stamp, and correct wording.
- If you need to have documents translated into English, make sure they are translated in accordance with the stated translation requirements.

Additional support

Victorian Government scholarships, *Pre-registration Scholarships for International Nurse Graduates*, are available to assist international nurse graduates in becoming eligible for registration in Victoria. These scholarships are only offered to those nurse graduates who have had their qualifications assessed by the ANMC or the NBV.

Scholarships are available for applicants who meet Department of Human Services' eligibility criteria and who are undertaking a Nurse Policy Branch approved pre-registration course. For details of this program go to the Nursing in Victoria website <www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing/career/overseas>.

The Victorian Government and the Nurses Board of Victoria also jointly fund a Cultural Diversity Education Program for overseas trained nurses. The program, which aims to assist eligible nurses to practice in the Australian health care context, is offered in both metropolitan and rural areas and is cost neutral for nurses who participate. Information on this program is provided to all overseas nurses registered by the Nurses Board of Victoria.

Steps for registering to work as a nurse or midwife in Victoria, Australia

