

# Submission to Paramedicine Board of Australia

Proposed mandatory registration standards:  
English language skills  
Criminal history

February 2018

## Introduction

The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU) thanks the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the Board) for the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry on the *Proposed mandatory registration standards* (the registration standards)

- *English language skills*
- *Criminal history*

Nursing and midwifery is the largest occupational group in Queensland Health and one of the largest across the Queensland government. The QNMU is the principal health union in Queensland covering all categories of workers that make up the nursing workforce including registered nurses (RN), registered midwives (RM), enrolled nurses (EN) and assistants in nursing (AIN) who are employed in the public, private and not-for-profit health sectors including aged care.

Our more than 57,000 members work across a variety of settings from single person operations to large health and non-health institutions, and in a full range of classifications from entry level trainees to senior management. The vast majority of nurses in Queensland are members of the QNMU.

Rather than providing feedback to each of the questions for consideration, QNMU's submission provides a response to each of the proposed mandatory registration standards of English language skills and criminal history.

Nursing and the paramedicine profession are closely aligned and share similarities as first responders. The development of consistent approaches by National Boards across professions including the Board and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) is supported by QNMU in the spirit of cross professional collaboration.

### **Registration standard: English language skills**

The proposed registration standard requirements for English language skills adequately fulfils the Board's requirements of ensuring a high standard of English language skills for the paramedicine profession. In the main, it aligns with the NMBA English language skills registration standard. However, there are two matters QNMU asks the Board to consider around competency 3. *"You have undertaken and satisfactorily completed at least six years' (full time equivalent) continuous education ... "*

The requirement of six years may align with other National Boards however five years may be more reasonable when linked to the length of undergraduate education. The NMBA determined that five years of education is reasonable when linked to the length of nursing

and midwifery undergraduate education which is three years for registered nurses (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, 2017). Given that paramedicine degrees usually take three years to complete, five years of continuous education may be sufficient.

Further, the definition of *six years (full time equivalent) continuous education over a period of six consecutive calendar years without a break from study apart from the education institution's scheduled holidays* is inflexible and does not accommodate any unexpected changes that may occur in a student's life. This may include personal illness, illness of a family member or significant life events, requiring additional short term leave. This definition is inflexible and unreasonable. It is suggested that a process which allows for individual circumstances requiring a break in their education, be included in this standard.

### **Registration standard: Criminal history**

The proposed registration standard for criminal history adequately sets out the factors the Board will consider in deciding whether an individual's criminal history is relevant to the practice of the paramedicine profession.

### **References**

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. (2017). *Consultation: Revised English language skills registration standard*.