

Frequently Asked Questions for Clinical Agencies

Course structure

1. What does it mean if a course is NMBA 'approved'?

The criteria for NP endorsement require applicants to complete a Master of Nursing. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia 'approve' some courses as suitable to meet the education criteria for endorsement. Applicants who complete a non-approved pathway of study will need to provide evidence that their study program was equivalent. The Board will process this application via Pathway 2 and will assess whether the applicant's program of study is suitable to meet the education criteria for endorsement.

2. What are the class commitments for the student during the course?

Lectures, tutorials and clinical skill workshops are scheduled in several subjects to support the student to achieve the objects of the subjects. The timetables are available at the beginning of semester to support the student to make appropriate roster requests. The number of hours of on-campus work varies for each subject but may be as much as one morning a week during the teaching weeks of the semester (usually 12 weeks).

3. Can the student complete the program over 1 year by completing full time study?

No – the program is designed to ensure that students have sufficient time to apply theory to practice and develop their clinical competence. Furthermore, the content is sequenced so that students build logically on knowledge and skill as it is acquired e.g. students learn examination skills and diagnostic decision-making before they concentrate medication management.

4. Can the course be completed over 3 or 4 years?

Yes – study plans are available that detail the subject sequencing over three years.

5. Can a student enrol mid-year?

Yes – However, the course cannot be completed over 2 years with a mid-year entry and will be completed over 2.5 years.

Clinical practice – placement and support

6. What are the employment expectations for students?

Students enrolled in this course must be employed by an Australian health service in a advanced practice for a minimum of 32 hours/week. It is expected that the student is employed in the role for the duration of the course (minimum 2 years). In addition, students must also be employed in roles where the focus is clinical practice and they provide patient/client care. In most circumstances this makes management and education roles unsuitable.

7. What is considered 'advanced practice' for the purposes of student employment?

To be considered 'advanced practice' the student must be recognised as a specialist and an expert nurse in their area of practice and they must be responsible for advanced clinical decisions. Advanced

practice is not linked to a position but is consistent with the expectations of the Clinical Nurse Specialist classification (Victoria).

8. Is the student's employer required to provide a candidate role for the student

No – agreement to support a student in this course commits the employer to providing a suitable clinical environment for the student to meet the objectives of the course. This will require allocation of a Clinical Teaching and Supervision Team and approval for the student to complete IPP hours within the organisation during which they will expand their scope of practice (under supervision). However, the university does not require the organisation to commit to a candidate role for the student.

9. Can students be supported if there is not an NP service already in place or a role defined for an NP?

Yes – the program is designed to support students with varying experience and exposure to NP roles.

10. Do we (employer) have any role in guiding the scope of their learning; specifically, the expansion of their scope of practice and the associated knowledge and skill development.

Yes – the program is not designed for a specific specialty or scope of practice. The aim of the program is to extend the decision-making skill of the student. For this reason, students will negotiate with their CTS Team and Clinical Service managers to identify a potential/theoretical scope of practice for a nurse practitioner within the service. This will be approved by the course coordinator and will determine the focus of the student's learning and the scope of the assessments undertaken.

11. Is the student eligible if they don't work 32 hours for a single employer?

If the student is not employed a minimum of 32 hours in one specified clinical field they are not eligible

If the student is employed in one clinical field but across two employers they may be eligible. However, appropriate arrangements for support and supervision across the two employers will need to be made. This may require collaboration between the agencies and/or members of the CTS Team to ensure that the student is appropriately supported and is meeting the requirements of the program. The student should discuss their study plans and potential support options with both employers and the Course Coordinator before applying.

12. What is integrated professional practice (IPP)?

IPP is supernumerary practice which enables the student to develop and demonstrate the NMBA Nurse Practitioner Standards for Practice in their clinical field. The aim is to integrate new knowledge into practice, engage across disciplines and the focus is on developing advanced and extended clinical capability. The emphasis is on learning rather than service delivery to meet key performance indicators, therefore this time is supernumerary, which means that the student must be practicing outside their employed position. A more comprehensive explanation of supernumerary IPP is provided in an ANMAC explanatory statement, which can be found in the Course Overview for Clinical Agencies or on their website.

<https://www.anmac.org.au/document/supernumerary-definition>

13. How many hours of integrated professional practice (IPP) and is this time paid?

All students enrolled in the program complete 300 hours of IPP over their course. These hours are allocated to the clinical subjects in this program (see Course Information for details). Following enrolment, the scheduling of these hours is negotiated between the student and the service providing the IPP and approved by the Course Coordinator. There is no expectation from the University that IPP hours are paid or unpaid only that the student is supernumerary and supported.

14. Where is integrated professional practice (IPP) completed?

It is expected that the majority of the student's IPP hours (260hours) will be completed in the place of employment within their clinical service. The remaining 40 hours will be completed in a complementary service within their place of employment and/or at an external agency. For example; a nurse in a tertiary wound care service may complete IPP hours with the vascular service and the remaining hours with a community health care clinic or district nursing service to complement their experience.

15. Can a student enrol in this course without access to a minimum of 300 hours of integrated professional practice (IPP)?

No – the IPP hours are a mandatory for an accredited NP study program and are a component of several subjects across the program. An agreement to provide IPP placement must be in place prior to commencing the program. Students are encouraged to discuss IPP options with their employer and the Course Coordinator early to allow appropriate arrangements to be made.

16. If the student does not work in our service and we are offering them an IPP placement, what are our responsibilities?

It is considered useful for students to negotiate IPP placements in alternative but complementary services to broaden their expertise. The student is expected to develop specific objectives for this placement in consultation with an appropriate member of the team. The focus of the objectives will depend on the service and whether the student will provide direct patient care or will complete the placement in an observational role. This means that the clinical agency has the capacity to determine what they can reasonably support. It is expected that during their IPP placement they will have regular contact with an appropriate clinician who can support the student to meet the agreed objectives. The Course Coordinator is available to discuss this rotation with agencies to ensure that they are suitable for the student and the agency.

17. What is a Clinical Teaching and Supervision Team and who should be included?

A Clinical Teaching and Supervision team is a small group of clinicians (minimum two) that assist the student to achieve the learning outcomes of the program. The team must include a clinician with prescribing rights (doctor or NP) **who is nominated as the Team leader** and at least one other clinician (ideally from another discipline). Each team must include a nurse leader if the team leader is not an NP. The team will provide clinical education and guidance as the student develops advanced practice capability. Team members will supervise (directly and indirectly) the practice of the student (particularly during IPP) to ensure that they practice safely and effectively while developing competence. The team will also support the student to develop clinical and professional leadership capacity. In addition, CTS team members will complete some clinical assessments of student performance over the duration of the program. *Clinical Information for CTS Team Members* provides more detail about the role of the CTS Team.

18. What commitment is required of CTS Team members and what support is available to assist the CTS team?

The CTS Team will be provided with a Clinical Information Guide for CTS Team members, which details the expectations of the student, the University and the CTS Team. The CTS Team members are all given access to the course materials which includes online access to subjects. Regular forums are scheduled for CTS Team members to orientate the CTS Team to the curriculum, upcoming assessments and the progress of the student cohort. All assessment tools with explanatory notes are provided and the Course Coordinator is available to answer questions and discuss concerns about the program or the student's progress. It is anticipated that members of the team will commit approximately an hour a week to the student. The Clinical Information for CTS Team members document provides more detail about the role of the CTS Team.

19. Can a student enrol in this program without employer support?

No – it is essential that the student's employer supports their enrolment. Students require a Clinical Supervision and Support Team, opportunity to expand their practice (supervised) and access to IPP placements. This requires a commitment by their employer and therefore a completed *Clinical Agency and IPP Agreement* form must be completed before we will enrol the student in this course.

More information

20. Where can we get more information about this program?

There are ways that you can get more information and they include: the [Department of Nursing website](#) and the [University Course Handbook](#). If you still have unanswered questions you can email student administration (nursing_enquiries@unimelb.edu.au) and they can forward your email to the appropriate person.