

Credential for Practice Program (CPP)

GUIDELINES FOR CREDENTIALING

Initial Application

August 2013

1. THE FIRST STEP

Congratulations on taking the first step in your application for credentialing as a specialist mental health nurse.

These Guidelines are designed to assist you with your application. It is recommended that you read them first so that you can complete your application as required.

- The application form provides information necessary to process your application.
- The documentation you submit attached to your application form will provide the evidence to support your application. Therefore it is important that you provide all the documentation requested.

To get started, read or download the following documents from the ACMHN website www.acmhn.org.

- Initial Application form
- Evidenced Based Record form and Guide
- Reference Template and Guide for Referees

Summary of Criteria

In order to meet the requirements and standards for a credential, you must provide evidence of the following:

- A current licence to practice as a registered nurse in Australia
- A specialist or post-graduate mental health nursing/psychiatric nursing qualification
- 12 months experience since having undertaken a specialist/postgraduate qualification; or a minimum of 3 years experience as a registered nurse in mental health
- Recent practice in mental health
- Continuing professional education and practice development in the preceding 3 years.
- Support from two referees who are familiar with your practice and your credentialing application.

Once assessed, and if approved, a 3-year credential is awarded and you will be entitled to use the title **Mental Health Nurse (MHN)**. The award means you are formally recognised by the ACMHN as a specialist mental health nurse.

Points about privacy

- You need to provide all information and documents as requested in this application form. However, you should be aware that the ACMHN may request additional information about you from other persons or organisations relevant to your application.
- Information from the application is entered into a secure administrative database.
- This is a peer review process and your application will be reviewed by a reviewer who has undertaken a special program and who is authorised by ACMHN.

Hints to minimise delays with your credentialing application

Applications are only forwarded to Peer Reviewers once each month. Only applications that are received in advance, and completely ready with all documentation presented as required, will be forwarded for peer review on the designated date.

- READ THESE GUIDELINES and the FAQs. These are available on the ACMHN website www.acmhn.org
- Make sure you use the current form which is the one on the ACMHN website.
- Ensure certified copies of original documents when required are certified as instructed.
- Provide original references. The template provided is a guide only. Referees can write as much as they like to support your application and are not restricted to the spaces in the template.
- CPE and CPD and the Evidenced Based Record (EBR).
 - The EBR is where you summarise the continuing education and practice development activities that you have been undertaking WITHIN THREE (3) years prior to your application.
 - If you use another format such as a spreadsheet, it must contain the same information as requested in the EBR.
 - Only the EBR is submitted with your application, unless specific documentation is requested in the EBR Guide. You hold onto the other evidence and supply this if and when it is requested for auditing.
- MAKE SURE ALL QUESTIONS ARE COMPLETED AND ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS ARE SUBMITTED.
- Contact the ACMHN to ask for clarification or advice, or if you are unsure which documents to include - enquiries@acmhn.org, or 1300 667 079

A Guide to the Guidelines

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2. CREDENTIALING APPLICATION PATHWAY

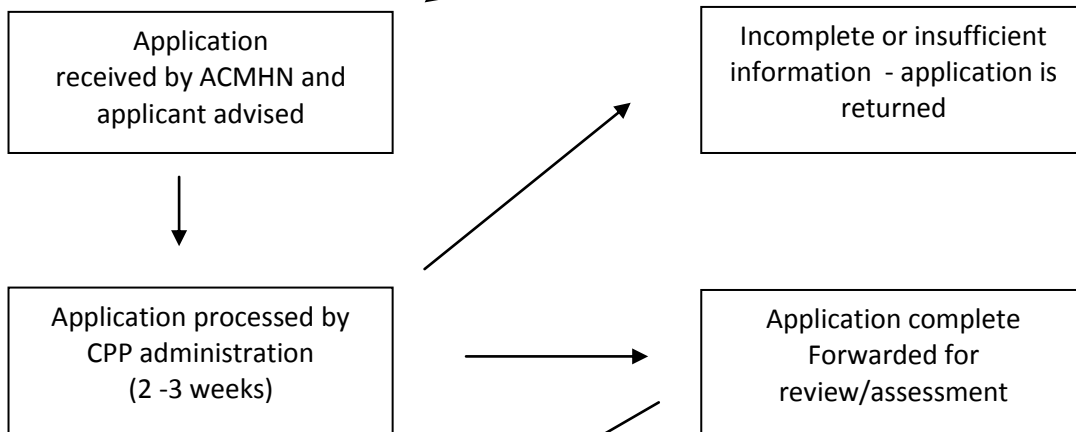
Applications take up to 10 weeks to process.

The time taken will depend on the completeness and complexity of the application.

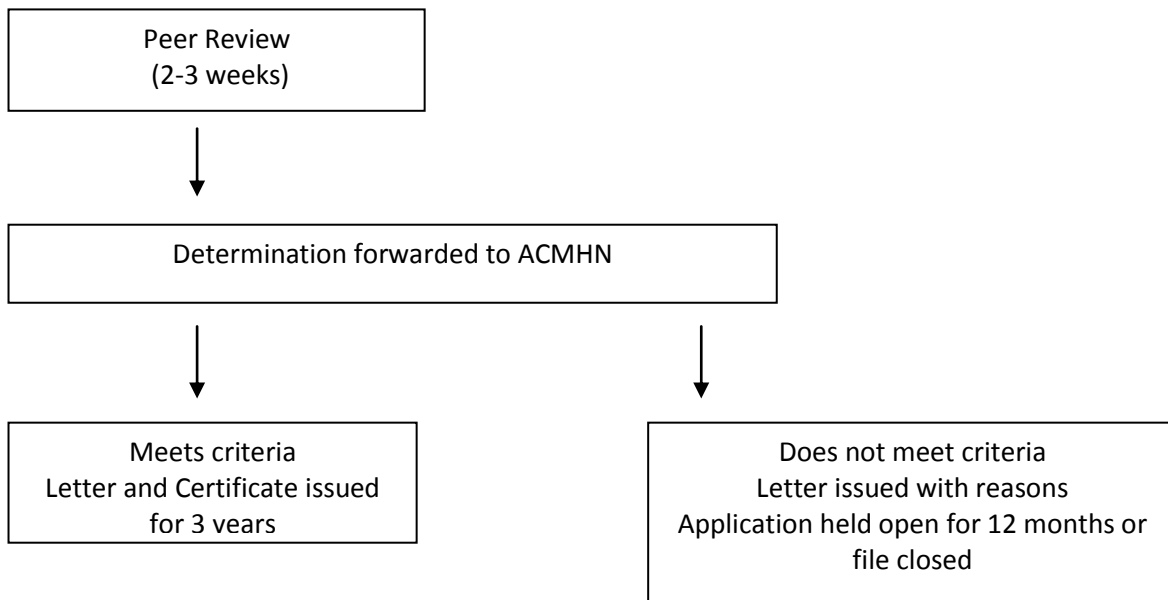
Stage One



Stage Two (Week 1-3)



Stage Three (Week 4-6)



3. CERTIFICATION OF COPIES OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

Where a copy of a document is required to be certified, **it must be certified by one of the following people:**

- Practising lawyer
- Magistrate
- Judge
- Justice of the Peace
- Commissioner of Oaths
- Commissioner for Declarations
- Registrar/Deputy Registrar of the Magistrates Court in Victoria
- Police Officers in Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia
- Minister of Religion
- Certified Practising Accountant

N.B – Medical practitioners, pharmacists, registered nurses and so on **ARE NOT** eligible to certify documents unless they are also one of the people on the list.

When certifying documents, the above person needs to include the following or similar statement **on each page** of each document:

I certify that this is a true copy of the original document.

Signature:

Name:

Designation:

Date:

Number:

Documents incorrectly certified will not be accepted and will be returned. If you are unsure about who can certify your documents, please contact the office.

To find a Justice of the Peace in your area, go to <http://australia.gov.au/topics/law-and-justice/justices-of-the-peace> where you will find a link to your state or territory. Each jurisdiction has a list of Justice's of the Peace which is able to be searched.

4. STATUTORY DECLARATIONS

If you need to submit a Statutory Declaration, these are available from each state and territory or from the Australian Government Attorney General's Department. <http://www.ag.gov.au/STATDEC>
You may have your signature witnessed by any of the people listed on the form.

5. FEE PAYMENT

The fee is an application fee and payment must accompany the application.

If payment is not received, processing will not commence.

The fee provides for the processing of your application and is not refundable. (see ACMHN Refund Policy)

Members of the ACMHN are entitled to a discounted member fee.

If you are a non-member you may submit an application for membership at the same time as you submit your application for credentialing and you will receive ACMHN membership for one year.

6. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Ensure you write your name at the top of each page of the application form in the box provided, and that all documents are attached.

The application must be posted. (It is recommended that you use registered mail if possible.)

Faxed or emailed applications **WILL NOT** be accepted.

Address: Credential for Practice Program, ACMHN, PO Box 154, Deakin West , ACT 2600.

7. CONTACT DETAILS—Questions 1 to 10b

This information will be used to identify you and to contact you. Please complete every section relevant to you and provide the most suitable contact details where you may be contacted during business hours.

Question 4

The ACMHN Credential for Practice Program is only available to Registered Nurses, that is, nurses registered (under Division 1) with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. If you have not undertaken a nursing course leading to registration as a nurse, and if you have never practiced as a registered nurse, you may need to approach another professional organisation for a credential. If you are unsure of your status, please contact the ACMHN.

Question 5

You are not required to be a member of the ACMHN. If you would like to become a member you may submit a membership application form at any time. For more information about membership please visit the website at www.acmhn.org

If you are a non-member you may submit an application for membership at the same time as you submit your application for credentialing and you will receive ACMHN membership for one year.

Question 10

This information alerts administration that you may be seeking credentialing in order to comply with eligibility requirements for certain Commonwealth government programs. It also helps to identify those applicants who are self employed.

8. EMPLOYMENT/PRACTICE DETAILS – Questions 11a to 15

These questions ask for information about your employer to provide for any clarification or verification. Information about your practice setting provides statistical data and is a source of additional background information for peer reviewers.

9. REGISTRATION - Questions 16 to 17b

You are required to provide details of your current nursing registration and current license to practice from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. Attach a copy of the registration certificate and your licence.

Please note, you are required to maintain a current license to practice for the duration of the credential. Also see the declaration at Q38.

Non –practising registration is not acceptable. Nurses who hold this type of registration are ineligible to practise.

The ACMHN Credential for Practice Program is only available to **Registered Nurses** who are currently registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia under Division 1 of the Registered Nurse register.

If you have not undertaken a nursing course leading to registration as a nurse, and if you have never practiced as a registered nurse, you may need to approach another professional organisation for a credential. For information about nurse registration go to www.nursingandmidwiferyboard.gov.au

10. MENTAL HEALTH NURSING QUALIFICATIONS - Questions 18 and 19

Question 18

Completion of a specialist mental health nursing/psychiatric nursing qualification is one criterion to be met for the award of a mental health nursing credential.

With reforms to nursing education and the cessation of hospital based pre-registration and post-registration mental health nursing programs, the qualifications available for specialist practice are conducted through Universities as postgraduate diplomas and degrees.

You must have completed a clearly defined **mental health nursing /psychiatric nursing course**, undertaken in Australia as listed below:

- Clinical Master Degree
- Post Graduate Diploma • Direct entry into mental health nursing/psychiatric nursing undergraduate diploma or degree
- 3-year hospital based course that led to registration as a mental health nurse
- Hospital post-registration course (minimum 12 months full time equivalent) that led to qualifications as a specialist mental health nurse/psychiatric nurse by the relevant nurse registering authority at the time of completion.

Please note, a Postgraduate Certificate only is not accepted.

If you have completed a course as described, proceed to Q18 and provide the requested information.

You need to provide details of your initial qualification/course of study in mental health nursing/psychiatric nursing. If you have undertaken additional formal qualifications in mental health nursing/psychiatric nursing since your initial application, then you may wish to provide copies of these qualifications as well. .

You must attach certified copies of the initial qualification and transcript or syllabus of studies. If you have a certificate of registration as a mental health nurse, then attach a certified copy of this as well. Please contact the ACMHN office if you are unsure about your documents.

Applicants with Overseas Qualifications.

If you have been registered by a nurses' board or council in Australia as a registered nurse on the basis of a direct entry mental health nursing /psychiatric nursing qualification from another country your qualifications may be considered under this section.

You will need to provide evidence of your initial registration in Australia, your initial registration as a /mental health nurse/ psychiatric nurse in the country where you undertook your qualification, a transcript or syllabus of the course and a copy of your qualification. Copies are required to be certified appropriately.

Question 19

You may list here other relevant courses you may have completed since your initial qualification

11. MENTAL HEALTH NURSING EXPERIENCE—Questions 20 and 21

Practice may be clinical, educational, academic, management, health administration, research, consultancy, policy or advisory (public or private) and must be within, directly concerned with, or have a key focus on mental health. The minimum standard for experience is that you have practiced for at least:

- twelve months FTE (1824 hours) experience in mental health since graduating from a specialist/post graduate mental health nursing/psychiatric nursing program identified in Q18,
- OR,
- the equivalent of three years FTE (5472 hours) as a registered nurse in mental health.

FTE= Full Time Equivalent. Please note, FTE calculations are based on 38hrs work per week over 48 weeks.

Some of the experience you have undertaken in mental health must be recent. You must have practiced for at least:

- 3 months (456 hrs) over the last year
- 6 months (912 hrs) over the last 2 years
- 12 months (1824 hrs) over the last 3 years.

If you are employed, you will need to provide a record, or records to verify the information you have provided about your experience. The records must be signed by your employer.

Attach **certified copies** of the records of your experience and a Curriculum Vitae

If you are self-employed, you need to submit a Statutory Declaration attached to your Curriculum Vitae which details experiences and dates, including your recent experience.
Certified copies of records of past or concurrent employment positions should also be attached.

12. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CPE and CPD —Question 22

Within the three years prior to your application you must be able to demonstrate that you have undertaken continuing professional education (CPE) and practice development (CPD) to the equivalent of a minimum of 200 Credential for Practice (CPP) points in total.

CPP Points

CPP points can be claimed for a variety of professional activities and these are listed. **1 point = 1 hour of direct contact** in a relevant CPE or CPD activity unless otherwise specified.

You must be able to claim at least 100 points for CPE and 100 points for CPD.

Evidence Based Record - EBR

Also refer to the Evidence Based Record (EBR) and EBR Examples which contain guidelines for completing the EBR which can be found on the ACMHN website

This EBR is a means for you to document your Continuing Professional Education (CPE) and Continuing Practice Development (CPD) relevant to mental health nursing.

The EBR consists of two parts – Part 1 is for CPE and Part 2 is for CPD. There are seven sections where information is required:

- Category: Activity and Outcome
- Venue/organisation/presenter
- Hours undertaken
- Date/s when the activity took place
- Evidence available
- Points accumulated
- Points claimed

The EBR provides for recognition of a range of learning, practice and professional activities. Many of the activities are formal but there is also provision for informal learning and voluntary activities which contribute your ongoing professional and practice development in mental health nursing.

A specific number of points has been allocated for each category and this ranges from 15-80, although you may have undertaken more CPE/CPD than the maximum allocated. This demonstrates breadth of your CPE/CPD activities. Enter your accumulated points and the maximum points you are claiming for each category that you use.

The activities for which you claim points, must be relevant or directly concerned with/ related to practice in mental health.

You do not have to provide the documents that are evidence of your CPE and CPD when you submit your application. However, you should retain any evidence that you hold of your participation in the activities for which you have claimed points. These may be requested at any time to verify information in the EBR and obtain further information about your CPE/CPD activities.

Auditing

A program of auditing is in place as part of the ongoing quality assurance of the Credential for Practice Program and an audit of your CPE/CPD evidence may be undertaken on your application.

If you are to be audited you will be given 14 days from the date of the notice issued by the ACMHN in which to provide documents, and relevantly certified copies of:

- The supporting evidence of the professional education and practice development activities (portfolio, certificates, letters of verification etc.) undertaken in the year prior to the application as stated in the EBR

This will be submitted for peer review with the application.

13. REFEREES—Question 23

Two references must be submitted with your application. **These must be originals.**

Your application for credentialing is an important process for you and a good quality reference will enhance your application. Therefore:

- ensure your referees understand their contribution to your application,
- inform your referees about your application and go over the application with them,
- download the guide for your referees from the website.

Your referees must:

- have been in a working professional relationship with you for **at least 6 months** in the **last 2 years.**
- able to act independently and fairly, understanding they may be contacted in confidence
- cannot be a work subordinate nor a close relative.

It is recommended, but not mandatory, that at least one referee be a practicing mental health nurse.

The contact details of your two referees are to be provided. Your referees may be contacted so that details may be clarified or verified, and they may be asked to provide further information relevant to your application.

14. CHECKLIST—Question 24

Please ensure you attach to your application all of the documents requested in the format requested.

- Any documents not submitted as requested will result in delays to the application.
- If you believe you are not able to provide particular documents, please contact the ACMHN to discuss, and if a document is still not available after this action, an explanation on a separate page should be attached to the application.

Documents that are required to be certified copies of originals must be certified correctly otherwise they will be returned. **(see section 3 of these Guidelines)**

Where a copy of a document is required to be certified, **it must be certified by one of the following people:**

- Practising lawyer
- Magistrate
- Judge
- Justice of the Peace
- Commissioner of Oaths
- Commissioner for Declarations
- Registrar/Deputy Registrar of the Magistrates Court in Victoria
- Police Officers in Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia
- Minister of Religion
- Certified Practising Accountant

An application must be submitted by post. It is recommended that Registered Post be used. Faxed or emailed documents will not be accepted.

Please seek advice from the ACMHN if you have concerns about your application.

Credential for Practice Program

Australian College of Mental Health Nurses, PO Box 154 Deakin West , ACT 2600

Phone: 1300 667 079 or visit www.ancmhn.org

15. LIST OF CREDENTIALLED MENTAL HEALTH NURSES – Question 25

The ACMHN maintains a list of Credentialed Mental Health Nurses on its website by State and Territory. If your application is successful, you will be requested to provide limited details for this list. You may choose not to provide the details but your name will still be listed.

The ACMHN will also provide verification, if requested, or notification of cessation of your credential to Medicare Australia.

16. APPLICANT DECLARATION—Question 26

The Declaration must be signed and dated by you.

The ACMHN may consult or exchange information with the nursing and midwifery regulatory body and/or any other relevant body in good faith regarding matters that might affect this application in order to reach an informed decision and appropriate outcome.

Failure to disclose information considered relevant could result in the credential being withdrawn at a later date. Such matters will be kept strictly confidential and considered in the interests of fairness, equity, relevance, and significance, as they pertain to maintaining public safety and confidence, integrity of the profession, peers and colleagues, the applicant, and ACMHN.

The ACMHN may review any issues, either disclosed or brought to its attention in accordance with its policies.

17. PAYMENT DETAILS (See also section 5 in these Guidelines)

The application fee required is to be paid in full when the application is submitted.

- Payment can be made by cheque or credit card.
- All payment must be in Australian Dollars.
- Processing of an application will not commence until the payment has been honoured.

The ACMHN will not be held liable for loss of payment incurred due to incorrect payment by the person submitting the application. Nor will it accept responsibility for loss of payment due to means uncontrollable by the ACMHN including loss caused by postal systems.

Credit Card

American Express or Diners Club is not accepted.

Payment can be made by Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard) through electronic transaction. Please provide the card number, type, expiry date and name of the cardholder. Payments are processed electronically on the day of receipt and a copy of the transaction record is made available after processing.

Cheque, Money Order

Payment can also be made by a cheque on an Australian Bank or Australian Post Money Order. Cheques and money orders should be made payable to **'Australian College of Mental Health Nurses'**.