

## Recruitment of Nurses and Midwives - Framework

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**Functional Sub group** Clinical/ Patient Services - Nursing and Midwifery  
Personnel/Workforce - Recruitment and selection  
Personnel/Workforce - Workforce planning  
Personnel/Workforce - Industrial and Employee Relations

**Summary** The Policy Directive supplements the provisions in Policy Directive PD2006\_059 "Recruitment and Selection Policy and Business Process - NSW Health Service" in relation to timely action for dealing with frontline nursing and midwifery position vacancies. This variation inserts a new paragraph 6 regarding conversion from casual to permanent employment.

**Replaces Doc. No.** Recruitment of Nurses and Midwives - Framework [PD2007\_055]

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**Applies to** Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Affiliated Health Organisations - Declared, Public Health System Support Division, NSW Ambulance Service, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals

**Audience** Nursing, Directors of Nursing, Workforce Development, Corporate Services, Clinical Operations

**Distributed to** Public Health System, Health Associations Unions, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Department of Health

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**Status** Active

### Director-General

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is **mandatory** for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.

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## RECRUITMENT OF NURSES & MIDWIVES - FRAMEWORK

### 1. Overview

This Policy Directive supplements Policy Directive PD2006\_059 'Recruitment and Selection Policy and Business Process – NSW Health Service' that provides the policy on recruitment and selection for the NSW public health system, as well as a step-by-step assistance to staff involved in recruitment and selection processes for nurses and midwives on a permanent or temporary basis.

Determination of Conditions of Subsidy requires (to the extent permitted by law) non-declared affiliated health organisations to comply with policy directives dealing with the terms and conditions of employment of staff employed in the NSW Health Service and to provide to staff the same conditions of employment as those set out in industrial instruments applicable to staff employed in the NSW Health Service.

Public health system entities are to undertake these processes in a manner that ensures ongoing compliance with the award obligations to allocate reasonable workloads to nurses.

### 2. Definitions

**Employer** means any person authorised to exercise the functions of the employer of staff to which this policy directive applies.

**NSW Health Service** consists of those persons who are employed under Chapter 9, Part 1 of the *Health Services Act 1997* by the Government of New South Wales in the service of the Crown.

**Public health system** includes area health services, declared affiliated health organisations in respect of their recognised establishments or services, statutory health corporations, the Ambulance Service of NSW, Institute for Medical Education and Training, Health Technology, Health Support, Health Asset Services Office and any administrative unit or division under the control of the Director-General or Health Administration Corporation in which staff of the NSW Health Service are employed.

### 3. Context

Effective implementation of Policy Directive PD2006\_059 will assist public health system entities to meet award conditions concerning reasonable workloads for nurses.

The *Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award* contains provisions regarding reasonable workloads for nurses (refer to Clause 53 of the Award). These provisions require the employer to allocate reasonable workloads to nurses. The Award outlines a number of principles to be applied when determining and allocating reasonable workloads.

When calling for applications for identified vacancies, public health system entities should note and promote the relevant Award inclusions that serve to attract and retain nursing and midwifery staff. These will include but are not limited to the Continuing Education Allowance provisions that recognise specialty qualifications.

#### **4. Timely action for frontline nursing position vacancies**

4.1 Nurse managers in facilities (including community and community mental health) should be fully aware of the staffing situation as to employment and vacancies in wards, units etc under their responsibility.

This includes notification of:

- impending transfers, both in and out;
- resignations and terminations upon receipt; and
- positions held for nurses who have been employed but yet to commence duties in the ward/ unit etc.

Routine internal rotations of staff should also be represented in reports of employment and vacancies. In addition, the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) required for each ward, unit etc should be regularly reviewed in response to changes in activity. This will assist in ensuring that at all times the current staffing situation and predicted FTE vacancy is clearly documented and available, to expedite a streamlined recruitment process. This process should not delay any recruitment of frontline nursing staff.

**Note:** Nursing Unit Managers and/or Nurse Managers are not to be involved with the clerical aspects of the recruitment process except for those specified aspects of the interview process, as outlined below.

4.2 A public health system entity should regularly review the discrete nursing positions that impact on frontline activity to confirm the ongoing need for that position with respect to workload and the continued efficacy of its classification and grading. Unless such review demonstrates that there is no longer a need for the position or the classification and grading requires change, recruitment and selection action to fill the position on a permanent or temporary basis (as appropriate) should commence without delay, i.e. as soon as management becomes aware that a vacancy is impending

4.3 Public health system entities are to have in place protocols to expedite the review and recruitment processes referred to in 4.1 and 4.2. Such protocols should ensure there is no prohibition on commencing recruitment until such time as the position occupant actually ceases employment, or a nurse commences an extended period of leave (e.g. Maternity, Long Service Leave). Such a practice is contrary to the efficient and effective management of staffing and financial resources where there is an

accompanying need to engage casual or agency staff, or for permanent and temporary staff to work overtime to cover a vacancy.

- 4.4 To expedite the timely action for frontline nursing positions referred to in 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, the following minimum standards should apply (note that all forms referenced are hyperlinked to the NSW Health intranet site):
- Eligibility lists for nursing positions should be used whenever possible. Nurses placed on eligibility lists should be appropriately screened and undergo pre employment medical examinations (where necessary) in readiness for employment. Human Resources should check the suitability of nurses on eligibility lists prior to placing advertisements and notify nursing management of suitable candidates.
  - Requests to fill frontline nursing positions should be made via the [Recruitment Request Form](#) and should be processed ready for advertising within five working days after approval. The approval process shall be completed within 5 days.
  - Area Health Services should use the [Application for Employment Form](#) and should place it on the Health jobs website.
  - Applicants who apply by email should receive an automatic email acknowledgment before the closing date for applications.
  - Applicants' identity should be verified at interview using the [100 Point Identity Verification Check Form](#).
  - Interviews should be held, referee checks undertaken and selection committee reports completed within ten working days of the position's closing date.
  - Walk-in applicants should be provided with the [Walk-In Application Form](#). The application should be processed and the applicant advised of the outcome within five working days.
  - Letters of offer to nursing staff should be issued by Human Resources within two working days of the selection committee report being received from the convener.
- 4.5 High risk areas should be identified and nursing staff should not commence employment without a criminal record check clearance being obtained. Employment in other than high risk areas should not be unnecessarily delayed. Risk assessments should be conducted in areas considered to be high risk prior to approval being granted for a nurse to commence employment. Where the Chief Executive considers there is an urgent need to fill a position, the letter of offer must include a statement

that the continuation of employment is subject to a satisfactory criminal record check being received.

- 4.6 The recruitment of nursing staff should not be delayed by pre-employment medicals and nursing staff should be given high priority where medical examinations are required prior to commencing employment.
- 4.7 There should not be a delay in the commencement of a nurse because of a lack of vacancies in an Orientation Program unless the Health Service considers it essential that the nurse attend orientation prior to commencing employment.

## **5. Increase in the number of hours of part-time employees**

Where a part-time employee requests an increase in his/her contracted hours, or to convert to full-time status, the public health system entity is to expeditiously review whether the employee's request should be accommodated having regard to required nurse staffing resources and skill mix.

If the public health system entity concludes that such a request can be met there is no requirement for any additional recruitment/interview process over and above that already undertaken for initial appointment to the position.

## **6. Casual Conversion**

In accordance with the provisions in the *Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award*, where a casual employee seeks to convert their employment from casual to permanent employment, the phrase 'regular and systematic basis for a sequence of periods of employment' means work that has occurred within a hospital, Health Service or Public Health Organisation.

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**Director-General**