

Employment of Assistants in Nursing (AIN) in NSW Health

Summary This Policy Directive facilitates a consistent approach to employing and supporting AIN roles in NSW Health facilities. It outlines the employment requirements that apply to this employment category, and links to supporting resources relevant to the role and classification in NSW Health.

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Employment of Assistants in Nursing (AIN) in NSW Health

Policy Statement

NSW Health is committed to ensuring a consistent and standardised approach to employing Assistants in Nursing (AIN) in the NSW Health system.

This Policy Directive facilitates a consistent approach to employing and supporting AIN roles in NSW Health facilities. It outlines the employment requirements that apply to this employment category, and links to supporting resources relevant to the role and classification in NSW Health.

As a non-regulated workforce, AINs operate under the supervision of registered nurses or midwives and are accountable for the care activities delegated to them. In NSW Health, Assistants in Nursing are paid under the StaffLink position classification of Assistant in Nursing (aged care or multipurpose service (MPS) if appropriate).

Policy Requirements

NSW Health supports the employment of Assistants in Nursing (AINs) across NSW Health, ensuring roles and responsibilities align with clinical standards and regulatory frameworks.

Employment and selection follow a merit-based, equitable recruitment process as per NSW Health policy. Selection depends on work context, location, and role requirements.

Qualifications and pathways include:

- Certificate III in Health Services Assistance (Acute Care)
- Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing)
- Undergraduate Nursing Students
- Diploma of Nursing Students
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Undergraduate Cadets.

This Policy Directive does not apply to students on clinical placement.

Revision History

Version	Approved By	Amendment Notes
PD2026_015 March-2026	Deputy Secretary People, Culture and Governance	Updated policy changes include: • Format updated to current NSW Health policy template. • Removal of reference to COVID-19 supernumerary roles. • Employment criteria specified to avoid misinterpretation and ensure consistency across NSW Health.
PD2021_035 September-2021	Deputy Secretary People, Culture and Governance	Updated Policy to include First Year Undergraduate AINs supernumerary roles as part of the COVID-19 Pandemic Response.
PD2018_017 May-2018	Deputy Secretary People, Culture and Governance	Updated Policy to reflect course codes and hyperlinks.
PD2010_059 September-2010	Deputy Director- General, Health System Support	Updated Policy to recognise expanded employment criteria for AINs in acute care health services.
PD2005_214 August-2001	Director-General	New Policy.

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1. Background

Assistants in Nursing (AIN) have long been a valued part of the NSW Health nursing workforce. AINs contribute to nursing teams across acute care, aged care, mental health services and other speciality areas.

1.1. About this document

This Policy Directive outlines standardised processes for NSW Health organisations to employ AINs in NSW Health facilities. This Policy Directive also supports the implementation of the [Healthcare Assistant Initiative](#), which aims to strengthen the health assistant workforce through a consistent employment approach.

1.2. Key definitions

Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Undergraduate Cadet	An Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Undergraduate Cadet (Cadet) participating in the NSW Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship Program.
Assistant in Nursing/Midwifery	Means a person, other than a registered nurse, Enrolled Nurse (EN) or Enrolled Nurse without medication qualification, who is employed in nursing/midwifery duties in the NSW Health system.
Equivalent experience	Assessed on a case-by-case basis to identify skills, experience, and qualifications which meet local requirements with consideration of the context of proposed practice.
Nursing and Midwifery Board Australia (NMBA)	The NMBA sets policy and professional standards for nurses, midwives and students under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	An assessment process that allows experienced individuals to gain one or more units of competency by recognising what students know and have achieved in the recent past.
Registered Nurse	Means a person registered by the NMBA as a Registered Nurse (RN).
Registered Midwife	Means a person registered by the NMBA as a Registered Midwife (RM).
StaffLink	StaffLink is the statewide platform for managing the key operational aspects of NSW Health's people and the rest of its assets.

1.3. Legal and legislative framework

This Policy Directive is to be read in conjunction with the following authorities and any other applicable industrial instruments, including any applicable Public Sector Determinations and/or policies.

Where these policies are updated or replaced, the updated or replaced version applies.

Legislation

- [*Industrial Relations Act 1996*](#) (NSW)
- [*Health Services Act 1997*](#) (NSW)
- [*Workers Compensation Act 1987*](#) (NSW)
- [*Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998*](#) (NSW)
- [*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*](#) (NSW)
- [*Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966*](#) (NSW)

Award

- [*Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' \(State\) Award*](#)

NSW Health Policy Directives

- *Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service* ([PD2023_024](#))
- *Service Check Register for NSW Health* ([PD2021_017](#))
- *Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks* ([PD2019_003](#))
- *Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases* ([PD2026_004](#))
- *Medication Handling* ([PD2022_032](#))

NSW Health Registered Training Organisation Policies and Procedures

- [*Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure*](#)

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) frameworks

- *Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's* [*Decision-making framework*](#)

2. NSW Health employment of AINs

Assistants in Nursing (AINs) can be employed in NSW Health facilities and services following the assessment process outlined in the NSW Health [Assistants in Nursing Working in the Acute Care Environment](#).

2.1. Clinical requirements

Nursing and midwifery staffing of all [clinical services](#) must adhere to the provisions set out in the [Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' \(State\) Award](#) (the Award). The number and skill level of the nurses and midwives required to provide the day-to-day care should be based on the number and acuity of the patients within each ward, unit and department within a clinical service and, where relevant, the Award provisions for that area.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) [Decision-making framework](#) for nursing and midwifery should guide all decisions related to the delegation of care from a registered nurse or midwife to an AIN.

As a non-regulated workforce, AINs work within a plan of care under the supervision, and delegation of a registered nurse or midwife when providing aspects of patient care. While an AIN will be responsible for their own actions, they remain accountable to the supervising registered nurse or midwife for all delegated duties.

An AIN will be delegated aspects of patient care activities that are within the parameters documented in the NSW Health [Assistants in Nursing Working in the Acute Care Environment](#) sample position description. This document also includes supporting resources such as implementation considerations, associated activities and task lists.

2.2. Employment requirements

Employment and selection must be based on the NSW Health Policy Directive *Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service* ([PD2023_024](#)).

AINs are employed in NSW Health through a merit-based, fair, equitable and systematic recruitment and selection process. In NSW Health, Assistants in Nursing are paid under the StaffLink position classification of Assistant in Nursing (aged care or multipurpose service (MPS) if appropriate).

Selection for the role is based on work context, location and the care activities required of the role. Criteria for the role in NSW Health includes one or more of the following:

2.2.1. Certificate III (or higher) qualification in Health Services Assistance (assisting in nursing work in acute care)

NSW Health supports the qualification, [HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance \(Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care\)](#) skills pathway for AINs working in acute care environments who are not undergraduate students of nursing.

NSW Health has identified preferred units of competency (Group B electives) for students to complete as part of their qualification, to support their employment as acute care AINs in NSW Health.

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NSW Health organisations are encouraged to support existing AINs employed in NSW Health to convert or upgrade their current qualifications to the HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance (Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care) skills pathway, through a “recognition of skills” process.

Existing workers employed as AINs at the date of issue of this Policy Directive are encouraged but not required to obtain formal qualifications.

2.2.2. Certificate III (or higher) in Individual Support (aging)

AINs who are employed in dedicated NSW Health aged care facilities must have successfully completed a relevant Certificate III (or higher) qualification in individual support (aging). For example, [CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support](#) (Group A electives – Aging specialisation) OR meet another employment criteria outlined in this Policy Directive.

2.2.3. Undergraduate Students of Nursing

NSW Health supports the employment of undergraduate nursing students (Bachelor or graduate entry masters [GEM]) in the role of AIN.

The employment of undergraduate nursing students as AINs does not form part of their formal education program. This employment provides students with increased exposure to a range of clinical environments, in preparation to practice as a nurse or midwife and the opportunity to gain an income while studying.

Undergraduate nursing students may be employed as AINs after successful completion of their first year of study (full time equivalent) of either a Bachelor or GEM program including one clinical placement.

2.2.4. Diploma of Nursing Students

Students enrolled in the [HLT54121 Diploma of Nursing](#) may be employed in NSW Health as an AIN after completion of core subjects deemed essential for the role they are to be employed into (examples of relevant core subjects can be found in the [appendix](#)). This is to be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the local health district (LHD)/ specialty network (SN). A minimum of 80 hours of clinical placement should be undertaken prior to employment.

2.2.5. Recognition of Prior Learning or equivalent experience

Eligibility for this criterion is on a case-by-case basis at the delegation of the LHD/SN. Some examples may include:

- Relevant experience from a partially completed undergraduate health-related degree which aligns to nursing or midwifery. Consideration should be given to relevant subjects and clinical experience obtained with evidence provided.
- Longstanding experience as an AIN without formal training within Australia or overseas.

- Internationally qualified nurses or midwives who do not meet the NMBA initial registration requirements and may need to undertake additional study before gaining registration as a registered nurse or midwife in Australia.

2.2.6. NSW Health Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Undergraduate Cadets

The [NSW Health Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship Program](#) is not an Assistant in Nursing role. However, Cadets may hold AIN qualifications during their program and be employed as both a Cadet and an AIN.

The Cadetship offers Aboriginal students undertaking study in an undergraduate nursing or midwifery degree to complete work placements days, in addition to university required clinical placements.

The role of a Cadet during work placement is of a nursing or midwifery student. It is different to the role of an AIN. A Cadet's clinical skills will mimic the level of clinical experience in accordance with their undergraduate education. Therefore, it is expected that a Cadet's clinical skills will broaden annually.

3. References

- [Future Health: Guiding the next decade of health care in NSW 2022-2032](#)
- [NSW Health Workforce Plan 2022-2032](#)
- [NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2032](#)
- [NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2024-2034](#)
- [NSW Health Working with Assistants in Nursing](#)
- NSW Health Policy Directive *Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service* ([PD2023_024](#))
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) [Decision-making framework](#) (DMF)
- NSW Health [Guide to the Role Delineation of Clinical Services](#) (2024)
- NSW Health Policy Directive *Aboriginal Workforce Composition* ([PD2023_046](#))
- [NSW Health Pathways into Nursing](#)
- [NSW Health Pathways in Midwifery](#)
- [Australian Government National Training Register](#)
- [NMBA Internationally qualified nurses and midwives](#)

4. Appendix

Example of Diploma of Nursing core subjects that are relevant to NSW Health employment may include:

Core subjects

HLTINF006 Apply basic principles and practices of infection prevention and control

HLTWHS002 Follow safe work practices for direct client care

HLTENN035 Practise nursing within the Australian health care system

HLTENN036 Apply communication skills in nursing practice

HLTENN037 Perform clinical assessment and contribute to planning nursing care

HLTENN038 Implement, monitor and evaluate nursing care

HLTENN041 Apply legal and ethical parameters to nursing practice

HLTENN045 Implement and monitor care of the older person

HLTAAP002 Confirm physical health status

Suggested electives:

BSBMED301 Interpret and Apply Medical Terminology Appropriately

HLTAID011 First Aid certificate

CHCAGE011 Provide Support to People Living with Dementia

Note: these are subject to change and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis for equivalency.