

The team enriching
health in millions
of ways every day



NSW Health Pathways into Nursing



Background

Nurses provide care and support for patients and families in many different clinical and community environments. Nursing is an exciting and rewarding career, offering diversity, flexibility, and opportunity across NSW, from the cities to regional and rural environments. Our highly skilled health workforce is encouraged and supported to deliver high quality and innovative care that meets patients' needs, not only today, but into the future.

The NSW public health system is the largest public health system in Australia, providing safe, high-quality healthcare to the citizens of NSW. Our workforce will need to expand over the coming years to meet the changing needs of our diverse population. NSW Health is building a workforce pipeline that is future-ready so that we can recruit and retain high quality staff dedicated to patient care.

Purpose

The *NSW Health Pathways into Nursing* provides a comprehensive summary of the pathways available for entering the nursing profession and securing employment within NSW Health. This resource is designed to assist health leaders, managers, and educators in actively engaging with the workforce pipeline and strategically planning for the development of the nursing workforce.

This document offers advice and guidance on entry points and pathways for assistants in nursing (AIN), enrolled nurses (EN) and registered nurses (RN). These pathways are linked with available NSW Health financial supports. Scholarships and financial supports are an important way for NSW Health to help students and staff complete a study pathway.

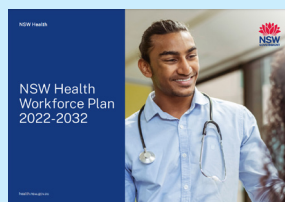
The financial support may assist students with fees, technology, access to employment, travel, or other associated personal costs. Scholarships are offered for undergraduate students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, applicants interested in working in rural and regional NSW, as well as support for travel and clinical placements related to study and work.

Strategic alignment

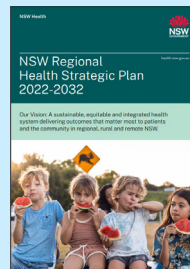
NSW Health Pathways into Nursing aligns with key NSW Health strategic documents.



Future Health 2022-2032 is the NSW Health roadmap for how we will deliver our services over the coming decade. It aims to deliver on our vision for a sustainable health system that delivers outcomes that matter most to patients and the community, is personalised, invests in wellness and is digitally enabled.



NSW Health Workforce Plan 2022-2032 provides a framework to guide the implementation of Future Health's workforce related strategies across NSW Health. The plan outlines priorities, outcomes and activities that will help ensure the NSW Health system can continue to deliver high quality care to those in need.



NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2032 was developed to align with and support Future Health 2022-2032, while addressing issues that are specific to regional, rural and remote communities. The Plan has a specific focus on supporting entry into the nursing profession, which is key to enhancing care in regional communities across NSW.

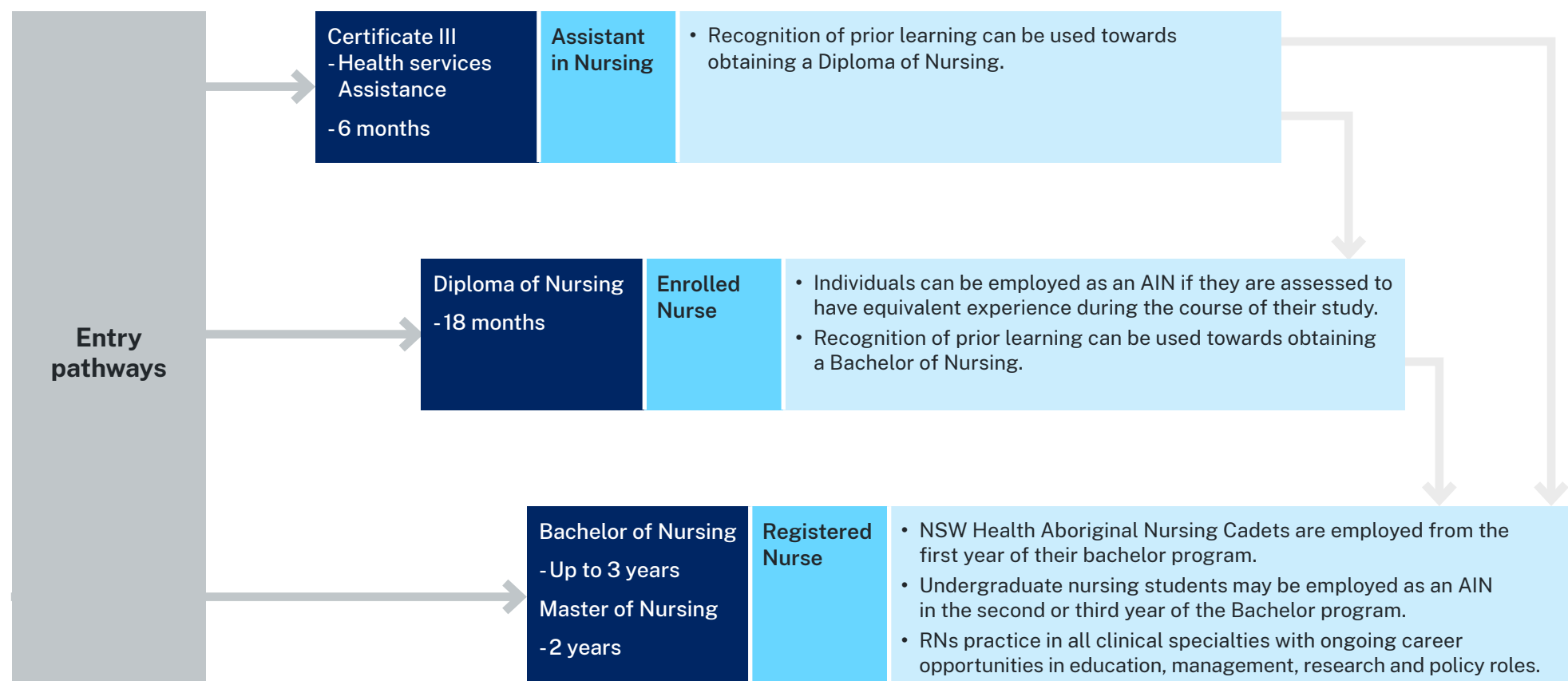


The NSW Health Aboriginal Workforce Composition Policy is intended to provide direction to Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW Health organisations to grow and develop their Aboriginal Workforce. NSW Health is committed to supporting the NSW Health Aboriginal workforce.

Overview of NSW Health Pathways into Nursing

This flowchart shows the different ways to start a nursing career, the options to move through education pathways and opportunities for employment during further study.

There are three education pathways into nursing from a Certificate III Health Services Assistance which can be started in high school, a Diploma of Nursing and a Bachelor of Nursing or post-graduate Masters of Nursing. All pathways can lead to valuable and rewarding employment and careers in nursing.



NSW Health provides a range of dedicated scholarships supporting entry into nursing practice.

Details of NSW Health Pathways into Nursing

This resourceful table presents a comprehensive overview of the pathways available for entering the NSW Health nursing workforce as a RN, EN, and AIN. These pathways illustrate the various entry points, study options, and employment possibilities upon completion. Dedicated financial supports and incentives provided by NSW Health and the Commonwealth government are linked. The interactive format includes links for accessing further information and resources to aid in career development.

	Option 1: High school	Option 2: Vocational Education and Training		Option 3: Tertiary Education
Study options	<p>School based traineeship or VET in Schools High school students can complete a Certificate III Health Services Assistance as part of the Higher School Certificate. The qualification can be completed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Based Traineeship; is a program combining part-time work and study. Students are engaged as trainees. • VET in Schools; is a study program that includes clinical placement. Local Health District and Speciality networks (LHD/SN)s provide the placement opportunity. <p>Course Providers NSW Government – Education Department NSW Health RTO</p>	<p>Certificate III - Health Care Services Assistance A Certificate III qualification in Health Services Assistance is required to be employed as an AIN in NSW Health services.</p> <p>Course Providers TAFE NSW Private providers</p>	<p>Diploma of Nursing A Diploma of Nursing qualification and registration to practice as an EN is required to be employed as an EN in NSW Health services. Many local health districts offer supportive transition to practice programs for new EN's.</p> <p>Course Providers TAFE NSW NSW Health RTO Private providers</p>	<p>Bachelor of Nursing A Bachelor of Nursing (or higher) qualification and registration to practice as a RN is required to be employed as an RN in NSW Health services. NSW Health Local Health Districts and Speciality networks offer supportive transition to practice programs for new RN's.</p> <p>Course Providers NMBA Approved programs of study</p>
Study time	The training can be undertaken over 2 years during school time, after school and during school holidays.	4 – 6 months full time	Up to 18 Months	Up to 3 years full time
Employment options	After completing High School (and Certificate III) applicants can be employed as an AIN.	After completing a Certificate III applicants can be employed as an AIN.	After registration and successful recruitment as an EN. Individuals can be employed as an AIN if they are assessed to have equivalent experience during the course of their study.	After registration and successful recruitment as an RN. NSW Health Aboriginal Nursing Cadets are employed from the first year of their bachelor program. Undergraduate nursing students may be employed as an AIN in the second or third year of the Bachelor program.
	Support to become an AIN		Support to become an EN	Support to become a RN
Scholarships and support	Commonwealth Fee Free TAFE		Commonwealth Fee Free TAFE NSW Health Support and scholarships NSW Health HETI Education scholarship NSW Health Rural Incentives	NSW Health Support and scholarships NSW Health Aboriginal programs and scholarships NSW Health HETI Education scholarship NSW Health Tertiary subsidies NSW Health Rural Incentives

Opportunities to connect with the potential workforce pipeline

It is important to start building awareness and interest in nursing as a career during high school. This is a crucial time when students are preparing for their future and exploring different career paths. Engaging with interested students at this stage can have a positive impact on their career choices later on. This involvement continues as students progress into vocational and higher education, where individuals of various ages are pursuing entry into the nursing profession. By collaborating with schools and higher education institutions, NSW Health can guide students towards considering NSW Health as a future employer, supporting them in achieving their career aspirations.

LHD/SNs can consider the following opportunities to engage with students and all entry points and Pathways into Nursing from student to AIN, EN and RN including:

Build awareness and interest:

- Raise high school student awareness of nursing careers through local schools and careers advisors. This could be through opportunities to attend events and present, or sharing information, guidance and advice.
- Showcase current and future nursing career options at careers and trade expos. Use these opportunities to promote the variety of nursing roles, educational pathways, advantages of working in NSW Health including the availability of financial incentives and supports.
- Use the NSW Health Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for consistent messaging ‘The team enriching health in millions of ways every day’. Promote the pillars that make NSW Health a unique and rewarding career; Working for the greater good; Huge variety of roles and unique employee experiences; Largest health system in Australia; Endless opportunities for professional and personal growth; Supported by a world-class structure designed for impact and innovation.

Enhance engagement:

- Engage with the student pipeline and local education providers (from High School, Vocational Education Training (VET) and Higher Education) to develop and maintain relationships.
- Consider offering work experience opportunities for high school students who demonstrate a keen interest in a nursing career.
- Increase opportunities for students to further develop this interest in a nursing career through VET in Schools programs, school-based and adult traineeships.
- Consider innovative strategies to “grow your own” local workforce including partnerships with education providers which can support students from study through to employment.

Prioritise diversity:

- Invest in Aboriginal workforce strategies at all levels including traineeships, undergraduate and graduate pathways.
 - Implement and promote initiatives to grow the Aboriginal workforce which may include School Based Traineeship and Nursing Cadetship programs.
 - Consider funding opportunities such as the [Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant](#) (EDAEG)
 - Engage with the Nursing and Midwifery Office to discuss workforce opportunities.
- Invest in a workforce that reflects the diverse community we serve.
- Consider innovative recruitment and retention models to achieve staff diversity that meets community needs including Aboriginal, CALD, LGBTIQ+ and disability.

Maximise clinical placement potential:

- Review local student placement co-ordination and strategy to meet future workforce needs.
- Use workforce planning data to identify the facilities and services that will need to attract and recruit nursing staff. Where possible, match placements (for both VET and higher education students) based on this predicted need.
- Engage with students during and after their placement to receive feedback, evaluate their experience to inform local decision making and improve the student experience.

Promote and streamline employment opportunities:

- Identify employment opportunities for students as AINs using the Employment of Assistants in Nursing in NSW Health Acute Care policy and the Assistants in Nursing Working in the Acute Care Environment implementation package. This employment provides students with increased exposure to clinical environments and the opportunity to gain an income while studying.
- Consider capacity to increase training and graduate positions by implementing collaborative models of care and supervision to support novice staff. In areas with lower workforce numbers this may include virtual care and support models
- Facilitate direct entry pathways into ongoing employment in NSW Health for trainees, cadets and existing employees who are advancing their qualifications.
- Actively promote the benefits of working in NSW Health through Employee Value Proposition.

Principles to support employees who are studying on a pathway into nursing

Balancing study and work can be challenging. There are various ways LHD/SNs can support employees who are studying on a pathway into nursing for mutual benefit.

- The [NSW Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' \(State\) Award](#) contains provisions for study leave, annual leave, long service leave, additional days off and leave without pay. Allowing for flexible leave management in accordance with these award provisions can help students meet both study and work requirements.
- Support [Rostering Best Practice](#) principles including, Temporary Individual Roster Arrangements to allow roster flexibility for employees to accommodate work, study and clinical placement responsibilities.
- Consider opportunities for the development of Aboriginal students undertaking School Based Traineeships, Cadetships and tertiary studies through mentoring, cultural support and cultural supervision.
- Ensure managers are familiar with the [Stepping Up](#) website to support recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people.
- Evaluate current graduate programs for registered and enrolled nurses with a focus on continuous improvement. Engage with current and recent graduates to understand their experience, obtain feedback and inform local decision making.
- Actively promote NSW Health scholarships and financial supports to facilitate opportunities for progression.

‘The cadetship went beyond my expectations and the support I received helped guide me through my nursing degree. It gave me the chance to explore different areas of nursing. I’m thankful to have been part of such a great program and encourage all Aboriginal students to apply’

– Aboriginal Cadetship recipient and current RN, Nurse Educator, HNELHD

Roles in the nursing team

Nurses are essential health professionals who care for people in all health care settings. Nurses are the facilitators of the health and care systems and possess the qualifications, knowledge and skills to provide high quality care where and when it is needed.

The [Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia \(NMBA\)](#) regulates the practice for registered and enrolled nurses in Australia.

Registered nurses (RN)

RNs plan and oversee the management of people in their care. RNs provide supervision of and determine what care can be provided by ENs, student nurses and other healthcare workers.

Examples of core RN activities include:

- planning and managing care
- performing treatments and complex care
- starting, administering and monitoring medication and IV therapy
- interpreting test results and reports
- providing emotional and psychological support including advocating for a person throughout their treatment
- supervising nursing students
- participating in medical or surgical procedures as part of a team (for example in surgical wards and operating theatres)

'I put my uniform on and instantly when I walk up to somebody's bed space, there's an inherent level of trust that I will keep them safe, look after their dignity and plan good care for them, with them included.'

- RN, Royal North Shore Hospital, NSLHD

Enrolled nurses (EN)

ENs provide nursing care as part of a team. ENs always work under the supervision of an RN or NP. ENs graduate from a competency-based education framework with essential knowledge to manage and complete nursing care under the supervision of an RN, NP or midwife. The supervision can be direct or indirect.

Examples of core EN activities include:

- providing personal care such as showering, dressing, and assisting with meals
- recording and interpreting clinical observations including temperature, pulse and blood pressure, urine tests, blood glucose and other tests used in specific areas of practice
- providing basic wound care in line with an agreed plan of care
- administering and monitoring medicines and intravenous therapy

'As an enrolled nurse I can work in a medical ward, through a range of specialities, a surgical ward, in theatres, more critical care areas like an emergency department, and clinics. A career in nursing can take you more places than you thought you could go'

- EN, Campbelltown Hospital, SWSLHD.

To find out more,
click on the links below

[NSW Health Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
[Australian Government Nurses and Midwives Professional codes and guidelines](#)

To find out more,
click on the links below

[NSW Health Nursing and Midwifery Office](#)
[Australian Government Nurses and Midwives Professional codes and guidelines](#)

Assistants in Nursing (AIN)

AINs provide support to the nursing team, both enrolled and registered nurses, in the delivery of nursing care in an acute care environment. They are monitored and directed by the RN.

Examples of core AIN activities include:

- patient observation and communication
- room preparation and gathering of equipment
- assisting patients with physical movement
- simple wound dressings assisting in toileting, showering and bathing patients

To find out more,
click on the links below

[School Based Traineeships](#)

[VET In schools](#)

[NSW Health Policy – Assistants in Nursing](#)

[Assistants in Nursing Working in the Acute Care Environment](#)

‘The variety, you know, of working in a rural hospital, you get the opportunity to work in lots of different aspects of nursing, so throughout my career as an AIN, I’ve been able to help at a birth, I’ve been able to help throughout the lifespan of all different ages, and I’ve also been able to help in times in end of life care so you get a taste of everything.’

- AIN, Glen Innes Hospital, HNELHD

Aboriginal Nursing Cadets

Aboriginal nursing cadets are undergraduate nursing students working in nursing teams while undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing degree.

Their scope of practice is determined by progression through their studies. It is expected that Cadets’ scope of practice is reviewed after each university clinical placement.

To find out more,
click on the links below

[NSW Health Aboriginal Nursing Cadetship Program](#)

[School Based Traineeships](#)

Trainees

Trainees are AIN students (school-based or adult) working in nursing teams while undertaking the Certificate III Health Services Assistance.

Their scope of practice is determined by course progression and will broaden as course competencies are completed.

‘In Year 10 I was given the opportunity to apply for a school based trainee with Hunter New England (HNE) Health. I’ve always wanted to be a nurse so I thought that was a great opportunity. So, I applied and was lucky enough to score the school-based trainee job and worked here for two years.’

- School Based Trainee, Glen Innes Hospital, HNELHD

Contacts for more information

For more information on the Pathways into Nursing please contact Ministry of Health, Health Professional Workforce Unit via email MOH-WPTD-HealthProfessionalWorkforceUnit@health.nsw.gov.au

Resource list

1. [Aboriginal workforce composition policy](#)
 - a. [NSW Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy](#)
 - b. [NSW Health Stepping Up Recruitment Resource](#)
2. [Assistants in Nursing Working in the Acute Care Environment](#)
3. [Commonwealth Department of Health](#) – nurses and midwives
4. [Employment of AINs in NSW Health Acute Care](#) (PD_2021_035)
5. [Future Health: Guiding the next decade of health care in NSW 2022-2032](#)
6. [Health Education and Training \(HETI\)](#)
 - a. [Scholarships and grants](#)
 - b. [NSW Health Registered Training Organisation](#)
 - c. [Nursing and Midwifery Superguide](#)
7. [NSW Health Workforce Plan 2022-2032](#)
8. [NSW Department of Education](#)
 - a. [Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment grant](#)
9. [NSW Health Rostering Best Practice](#)
10. [NSW Health Workforce and Employment](#)
 - a. [Tertiary Health Study Subsidies](#)
 - b. [Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme](#)
11. [NSW Health nursing and midwifery](#)
 - a. [Scholarships and financial assistance](#)
 - b. [Aboriginal nursing and midwifery](#)
 - c. [Future nurses and midwives](#)
 - d. [Re-entry to nursing scholarships](#)
12. [NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2032](#)
13. [Nursing and Midwifery Board AHPRA](#)
 - a. [What do nurses and midwives do?](#)
14. [Public Health System Nurses and Midwives \(State\) Award](#)
15. [TAFE NSW](#)
 - a. [Commonwealth Fee free TAFE](#)