

Frequently Asked Questions – Special Registration/Enrolment

(A) Eligibility

1) Who is eligible to apply for special registration/enrolment under the Nurses Registration Ordinance, Cap. 164, Laws of Hong Kong?

Nurses trained outside Hong Kong who meet the following criteria should be eligible to apply for special registration/enrolment:

- (a) have obtained a qualification outside Hong Kong and the curriculum of the programme leading to the award of the qualification is broadly comparable to the curriculum of the programme of a recognised training course;
(i.e. have completed a pre-qualification general/psychiatric nursing programme of normally not less than three years (for registration) or two years (for enrolment));
- (b) possess a valid certificate to practise general/psychiatric nursing issued by a certifying body recognised by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong from time to time as constituting sufficient evidence of the applicant's competency to practise nursing;
- (c) have completed a post-qualification training programme that is relevant to the area of practice in nursing;
(i.e. have successfully completed a post-qualification training programme relevant to the area of practice in nursing with structured content and assessment components)
- (d) have at least three years of full-time post-qualification clinical experience in a clinic or hospital;
- (e) have been selected for full-time employment as a person with special registration/enrolment in a specified institution; and
(for the list of specified institution, please refer to Question 2)
- (f) are of good character and have good professional conduct.

2) What are specified institutions that can employ non-locally trained nurses under special registration/enrolment?

At present, these specified institutions include –

- (i) Department of Health; and
- (ii) Hospital Authority.

3) Can an applicant apply for exemption from any of the eligibility criteria?

No exemption will be granted.

4) Does the Nursing Council of Hong Kong (“the Council”) establish a list of recognised non-local nursing qualifications?

No, the Council assesses each application on an individual basis with regard to the theoretical and clinical training hours and contents of the nursing training programme completed by the applicant. The curriculum of the non-local programme should be broadly comparable to the curriculum of an accredited nursing programme in Hong Kong.

5) If the nursing programme completed by the applicant is not broadly comparable to the curriculum of an accredited nursing programme in Hong Kong, what should the applicant do?

For those applicants who do not meet the Nursing Council of Hong Kong (“the Council”)’s requirements, the Council may consider, on a discretionary basis, whether to take the applicants’ post-qualification training / clinical experience into consideration, on a case-by-case basis.

6) What kind of post-qualification training programme is recognised by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong?

An applicant should complete a post-qualification training programme for at least 30 hours which is relevant to the area of practice in nursing and has structured content with assessment components. The applicant should provide documentary proof(s), such as certificate of completion, programme outline and record of training hours, etc. If the number of training hours are recorded in weeks/months, please request the training institute to provide supporting document, indicating the number of hours/minutes per week/month (60 minutes per hour).

7) Can an applicant apply for special registration/enrolment right after graduation outside Hong Kong?

No, an applicant should possess a valid certificate to practise nursing issued by a certifying body recognised by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong from time to time, and have at least three years of full-time post-qualification clinical experience in clinic or hospital.

(B) Application Procedures

8) How does a nurse trained outside Hong Kong apply for special registration/enrolment?

An applicant should submit the duly completed application form for special registration/enrolment together with originals and photocopies or notarised copies that are duly legalised/authenticated (i.e. a copy of the original document certified by a qualified person, such as practicing lawyer, notary public, etc.) of the following documents (either in person or by post) to the applicant's employing institution:

- (i) Hong Kong Identity Card/Passport
- (ii) Nursing graduation certificate
- (iii) Valid certificate to practise nursing from the registration authority outside Hong Kong
 - (i.e. (i) practising certificate or other equivalent documentary evidence of entitlement to practise nursing outside Hong Kong; and
 - (ii) registration/enrolment certificate or official document from the registration authority outside Hong Kong verifying the applicant's "date of initial registration/enrolment".)
- (iv) Documentary proof(s) certifying that the applicant completed post-qualification training programme that is relevant to the area of practice in nursing
- (v) Documentary proof(s) certifying that the applicant possessed at least three years of full-time post-qualification clinical experience in clinic or hospital issued and/or certified by the applicant's employer(s)
- (vi) Two unmounted copies of a photograph (passport size) of the applicant taken not more than two years before the date of application

The employing institution should certify the application and submit the application to the Nursing Council of Hong Kong on behalf of the applicant.

9) Can an applicant submit application directly to the Nursing Council of Hong Kong?

No. Only submission via the employing institution will be accepted.

10) Is an applicant required to pay any application fee?

No application fee is required. Upon approval for special registration/enrolment, an applicant will be required to pay the prescribed fees for registration/enrolment of HK\$1,190 and practising certificate of HK\$230 in accordance with the Nurses (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations and Enrolled Nurses (Enrolment and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations. The fees are subject to revision.

11) What is the deadline of application?

Applications are accepted and processed all year around.

(C) Vetting Procedures

12) How long does it take before an applicant receives the result of his/her application?

Upon receipt of the application submitted by the employing institution, “Verification of Training Details” (i.e. Form 1(a)) and “Verification of Original Registration/Enrolment Outside Hong Kong” (i.e. Form 1(b)), the Nursing Council of Hong Kong conducts checking on the information and seeks clarification with the employing institution when necessary. It is expected that employing institution will be notified of the result in three months’ time, subject to submission of completed and correct applications. Partially or incorrectly completed applications will incur delay in processing.

13) If an application is incomplete or contains inconsistent information, will the applicant be notified?

If the application is incomplete or contains inconsistent information, the Nursing Council of Hong Kong will require the applicant/employing institution to provide supplementary information and/or clarify the discrepancy. This will result in prolonged processing time of the application.

14) Can the Nursing Administration of an employing institution, instead of the Human Resources Management, certify and complete the application form for its potential employees?

Yes. Authorised person(s) appointed by the employing institutions, including but not limited to Human Resources Management and supervisors who are responsible for handling matters relating to the applications, can certify the corresponding documents and complete the application form as appropriate.

(D) Others

15) What is the validity period of the special registration/enrolment of a nurse?

The special registration/enrolment will take effect from a date specified by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong, and last for a period not exceeding three years. The validity period will be specified in the practising certificate.

16) When will the special registration/enrolment of a nurse expire?

The special registration/enrolment of a nurse is in force until the earliest of the following –

- (a) the expiry of the employment period not exceeding three years;
- (b) the termination of the person's employment in the specified institution; or
- (c) the removal of the person's name from the register/roll of nurses under an order made by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong.

17) How can an applicant enquire his/her application status?

The Nursing Council of Hong Kong will normally inform the respective employing institutions directly about any outstanding action of the applications (e.g. provision of incomplete information or clarification for inconsistent information). They will also be notified directly about the results of applications. An applicant should approach the person's employing institution for any enquiries about the application status.

18) Where can the public obtain information on the list of nurses with special registration/enrolment?

List of nurses with special registration/enrolment is available on the website of the Nursing Council of Hong Kong.

19) Can a nurse trained outside Hong Kong apply for both limited registration/enrolment and special registration/enrolment?

No. An applicant is eligible for limited registration/enrolment or special registration/enrolment after being selected for full-time employment as a person with either limited registration/enrolment or special registration/enrolment in a designated or specified institution.

20) Is a nurse with special registration/enrolment eligible for full registration/enrolment after a specified period of time?

A nurse with special registration/enrolment is eligible for full registration/enrolment if –

- (a) the person has, within a period of time specified by the Nursing Council of Hong Kong (“the Council”), served as a person with special registration/enrolment in one or more specified institutions for at least five years in aggregate;
- (b) the specified institution, or each of the specified institutions, certifies that it is satisfied with the person’s performance by reference to the criteria specified by the Council; and
- (c) the Council is satisfied that the person is of good character and has good professional conduct.

21) Can a nurse with special registration/enrolment change the employment institution during the validity period of the special registration/enrolment?

No. The validity of the special registration/enrolment will be expired upon the termination of the person’s employment in the specified institution. The nurse should make a fresh application for special registration/enrolment through the new specified institution with full-time employment.

22) Can a nurse with special registration/enrolment change the area of nursing practice within the same specified institution during the validity period of the special registration/enrolment?

Yes. A nurse with special registration/enrolment can work in the areas of nursing practice within the same specified institution, unless the Nursing Council of Hong Kong imposes any conditions to the person.

23) What should the employing institution do if the employment of the nurse with special registration / enrolment has been terminated?

The employing institution should notify the Nursing Council of Hong Kong by submitting the supporting document (e.g. letter on termination of employment) by post or email immediately.

Note: If there is any inconsistency or ambiguity between the English version and the Chinese version, the English version shall prevail.