



ANZSOM
The Australian and New Zealand
Society of Occupational Medicine Inc

Occupational Health Nurse Recognition Program GUIDELINES

NOVEMBER 2023

GOOD WORK — SAFE WORKPLACES — HEALTHY WORKERS

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The Occupational Nurse Recognition Program has been developed by ANZSOM as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the occupational health nurse profession.

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1. Introduction

Occupational health nurses (OHNs) specialise in caring for the health and wellbeing of people at work. They also work with employers to ensure work practices and the work environment are protective of workers' health. Occupational health nurses often work as part of a multidisciplinary team including generalist OHS practitioners, medical practitioners, return to work coordinators and human resources advisors/managers.

The combination of nursing and occupational health expertise means that OHNs bring a valuable set of skills to workplaces including highly developed communication and problem-solving skills and the ability to work effectively in a team to optimise outcomes for workers and employers.

While this is a highly regarded role, it is not currently recognised as a nursing specialty under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and there is no specific qualification required (over and above a nursing qualification) to work in this field. Any nurse, registered or enrolled, may describe themselves as an occupational health nurse.

The Australian New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine (ANZSOM) is committed to supporting OHNs in their chosen career path and to maintaining the practice, knowledge, and competence of occupational health nurses more broadly. ANZSOM has therefore established the ANZSOM Occupational Health Nurse Recognition Program in order to:

- Provide professional recognition for occupational health nurses achieving defined levels of competency
- Sustain a consistent standard of professional practice among occupational health nurses
- Establish ANZSOM as the lead body for OHN recognition and development
- Support employers in securing suitably qualified and skilled OHNs (noting that ANZSOM recognition does not guarantee a person's suitability for a particular position)
- Facilitate access to suitable postgraduate training for nurses seeking a career in occupational health nursing.

The program is underpinned by the ANZSOM Vision for a society where the highest value is placed on good work, safe workplaces, and healthy workers, and the ANZSOM OHN Competency Standards, which describe the areas of knowledge and skill expected of an occupational health nurse.

This document outlines the process and criteria for occupational health nurses seeking to apply for recognition under the ANZSOM program. The requirements relate to the areas:

- Professional qualifications
- Working in the field of occupational health
- Professional experience
- Professional competence

2. Program governance

The Nurse Strategy Working Group has developed the program and will continue to support program operations, including advising about the review and maintenance of program procedures such as contained in this document. The Nurse Strategy Working Group reports to the ANZSOM General Council and is bound by [ANZSOM Constitution/Rules and policies](#).

The appraisal of applications and awarding of recognition under the program is the responsibility of a Program Governance Committee, which undertakes these tasks in a voluntary capacity on behalf of ANZSOM General Council and in line with the ANZSOM Constitution/Rules and policies, including the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#). The Program Governance Committee provides feedback to the Nurse Strategy Working Group to ensure a robust process, including management of risks for ANZSOM. The Terms of Reference of the Governance Committee, including composition and responsibilities, are outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

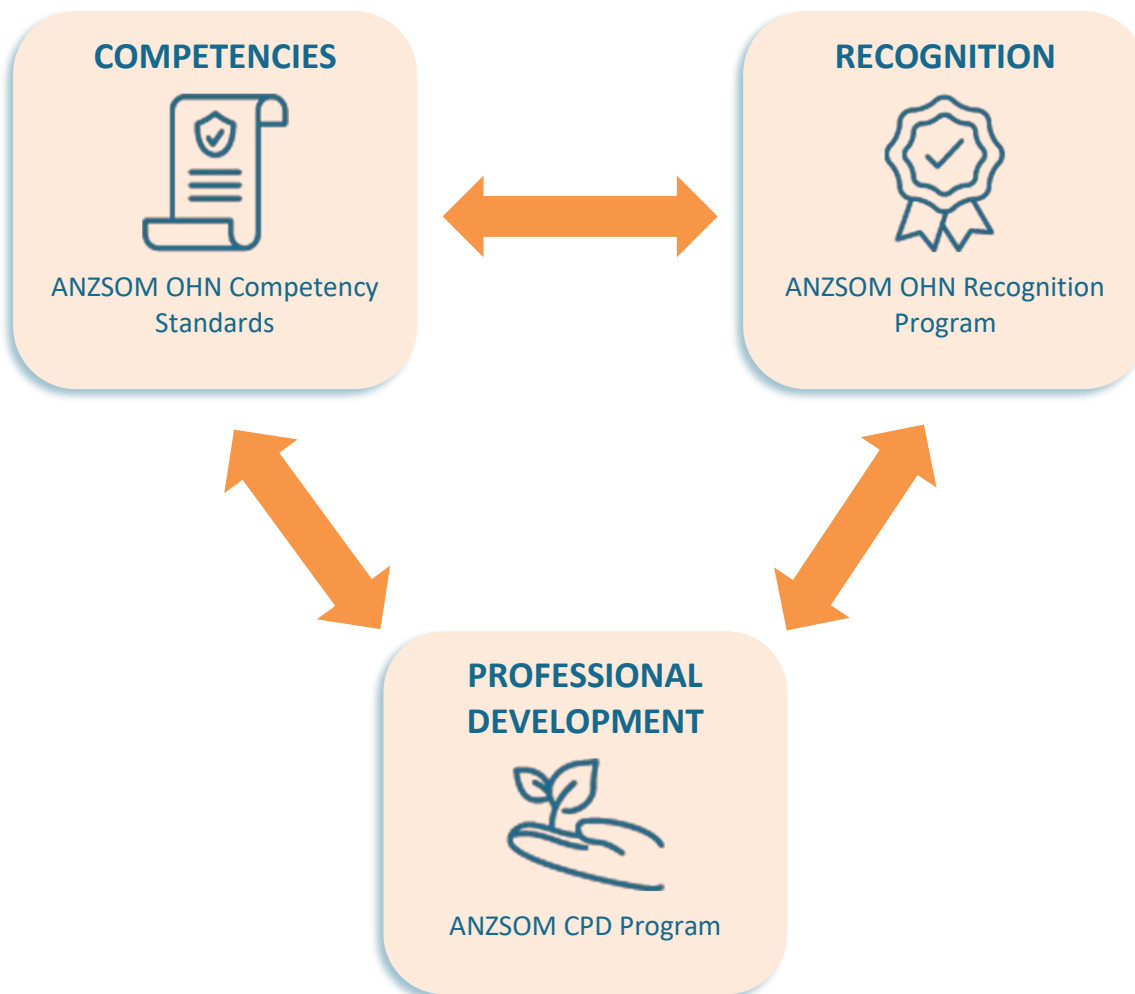
The processes of the Program, the quality of the applications and the processes of the Committee may be subject to audit.



3. Program context and development

The ANZSOM OHN Recognition Program is positioned as one of three initiatives supporting OHNs and the profession of occupational nursing in Australia. It flows from the development of OHN Competency Standards, which were originally developed by the Australian College of Occupational Health Nursing (ACOHN) in 1991¹ and reviewed by ANZSOM during 2020/2021. A further initiative is ANZSOM's commitment to continuing education for OHNs, which is designed to ensure OHNs can source the professional development necessary to maintain their competencies.

Figure 1. ANZSOM Professional Framework for Occupational Health Nurses



¹ Australian College of Occupational Health Nurses (1991). Competency Standards for occupational health nurses.

Development of the ANZSOM OHN Recognition Program has been informed by:

- *ISO/IEC 17024: Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*². This international standard contains the principles and requirements for a body certifying persons against specific requirements and includes the development and maintenance of certification schemes for persons.
- *The National Specialisation Framework for Nursing and Midwifery*³. This document defines the criteria for nursing specialization in Australia.
- *The Coalition of National Nursing (and Midwifery) Organisations' National Nurse Credentialling Framework*⁴. This document provides a nationally consistent framework for nurse credentialling to guide the development of credentialling programs for specialist nurses.
- *AHPRA Nursing and Midwifery Board. Registered nurse standards of practice*⁵.

Also consulted were a range of international models of OHN specialty practice recognition, including those in the United Kingdom, the United States and those under development in New Zealand (refer [Section 7](#) – References).

² ISO/IEC 17024: Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons (2012)

³ The National Nursing Education Taskforce. The National Specialisation Framework for Nursing and Midwifery (2006) Available from http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/nnnet/downloads/recsp_spec_framework.pdf

⁴ Coalition of National Nursing Organisations. National Nurse Credentialling Framework (2011). Available from http://www.connmo.org.au/images/PDF/CoNNO_Credentialling_Framework_FINAL.pdf

⁵ AHPRA Nursing and Midwifery Board. Registered Nurses Standards of Practice (2016) Available from <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/codes-guidelines-statements/professional-standards/registered-nurse-standards-for-practice.aspx>

4. Recognition Program requirements

Participation in the ANZSOM OHN Recognition Program is open to ANZSOM members only.

In addition, the requirements for recognition under the ANZSOM OHN Recognition Program relate to the following areas:

- Professional nursing qualifications
- Current professional nursing registration
- Current employment in the field of occupational health
- Competency in occupational health nursing demonstrated through
 - Additional qualifications and training
 - Professional experience
 - Referees
 - Self-assessment against the ANZSOM OHN Competency Standards based on the above inputs and evidence

4.1 Professional qualifications

A candidate is required to have a Bachelor of Nursing degree (Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)) or an equivalent qualification that enables the person to be registered with AHPRA. Candidates must provide documented evidence of these qualifications, such as a graduation certificate.

4.2 Professional registration

A candidate is required to demonstrate currency of nursing registration with AHPRA. Evidence is provided by citing their AHPRA registration number and/or registration certificate for the current year.

4.3 Currently working in the field of occupational health

Applicants are required to be currently working in the field of occupational health nursing or occupational health more broadly. For the purpose of this program, “current” means employed within the last 6 months and actively seeking employment in the field if not currently employed.

4.4 Demonstrated competency

The ANZSOM OHN Competency Standards broadly describe the areas of competency in nine defined areas:

1. Legislation, standards, codes of practice and guidelines
2. Principles of occupational health nursing
3. Collaboration and communication

4. Prevention of work-related illness and injury
5. Managing injury, illness and return to work
6. Promoting worker health and wellbeing
7. Quality and continuous improvement

The candidate demonstrates achievement against these competencies in several ways:

- Through evidence of additional qualifications and training. This may include general qualifications such as an OHN qualification, Master of Public Health, degree in occupational health and safety, occupational medicine, or specific training such as in audiometry, spirometry, vaccination and so on. The candidate should specifically reference how their education and training has addressed the domains of Competency Standards.
- Through evidence of current and past employment including reference to specific areas of work, programs and outcomes that demonstrate competency across the competency domains. The candidate should provide tangible evidence, including reports, resources and other outputs that demonstrate their competency across the domains. Such materials will be treated with absolute confidence by the assessment committee.
- Through two referee statements aligned with the domains of the Competency Standards and demonstrating familiarity with the work performed by the applicant, testifying to the applicant's duties, responsibilities, work performance and length of experience.
- Through a self-assessment against each of the nine standards drawing on the above.



5. Application and renewal process

Applications are initiated via an online form on the ANZSOM website

<https://www.anzsom.org.au/nurse-recognition-application-form>. This form confirms applicant's eligibility to participate (e.g. current ANZSOM member, registered nurse) and understanding of the program requirements.

Once this form has been submitted, an Application Pack is provided to the applicant, which guides them in making their application and providing the necessary evidence and documentation.

Applications are reviewed initially by the Secretariat for completeness. If the application is incomplete, the Secretariat will request additional information from the applicant. The quality of the application will not be assessed at this point.

Applications and supporting evidence are deidentified and compiled for consideration by the Program Governance Committee.

Applications are assessed by the Program Governance Committee on behalf of the ANZSOM General Council. The Program Governance Committee may seek additional evidence of the applicant's ability to meet the criteria. This may be through request for more information or through interview. All evidence provided to the Committee will be treated in confidence.

Unsuccessful candidates will be provided with feedback regarding the gaps in competencies or other criteria and advice about how these might be addressed.

Grievance relating to the conduct of the Program will be managed according to the Grievance Procedures outlined in Division 3 of the [Rules of the Society](#).

In addition, the applications and the deliberations of the Committee may be subject to audit to ensure transparency, integrity and consistency of decision-making.

Recognition under the program is valid for three years, at which time the OHN must reapply before the expiry date, demonstrating that they continue to meet the requirements, including compliance with the AHPRA 20 hour/year CPD requirement.

There is a cost associated with applying for recognition through the program. This is non-refundable and is applied at initial application and renewal. An unsuccessful applicant may reapply within 12 months at no additional cost. The cost is determined by ANZSOM General Council.

6. Evidence of achievement and use of the Recognition Program brand

Occupational Health Nurses who have been found by the Program Governance Committee to meet the requirements of the Recognition Program will receive a certificate to this effect which provides the main evidence of their standing. They will be permitted to use the program logo and the phrase *ANZSOM Recognised OHN* on their professional communications, business cards, social; media profiles and so on, while they continue to meet the requirements outlined above and while they remain an ANZSOM member.



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Appendix 1 – Governance Committee – Terms of Reference

Background

The Australian New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine (ANZSOM) is committed to supporting OHNs in their chosen career path and to maintaining the practice, knowledge, and competence of occupational health nurses more broadly. ANZSOM has therefore established the ANZSOM Occupational Health Nurse Recognition Program in order to:

- Provide professional recognition for occupational health nurses achieving defined levels of competency
- Sustain a consistent standard of professional practice among occupational health nurses
- Establish ANZSOM as the lead body for OHN recognition and development
- Support employers in securing suitably qualified and skilled OHNs (noting that ANZSOM recognition does not guarantee a person's suitability for a particular position)
- Facilitate access to suitable postgraduate training for nurses seeking a career in occupational health nursing.

The Nurse Strategy Working Group has developed the program and will continue to support program operations, including advising about the review and maintenance of program procedures. The Nurse Strategy Working Group reports to the ANZSOM General Council.

Requirements for recognition under the program

The requirements for recognition under the ANZSOM OHN Recognition Program are outlined in the Guidelines for ANZSOM OHN Recognition Program. The requirements relate to the following areas:

- Professional nursing qualifications
- Current professional nursing registration
- Current employment in the field of occupational health
- Current membership of ANZSOM
- Competency in occupational health nursing demonstrated through
 - Additional qualifications and training
 - Professional experience
 - Referees
 - Self-assessment against the ANZSOM OHN Competency Standards

The application and renewal processes are also outlined the Guide and enabled through the ANZSOM website <https://www.anzsom.org.au/nurse-recognition-application-form>

Recognition under the program is valid for three years, at which time the OHN must reapply before the expiry date, demonstrating that they continue to meet the requirements, including compliance with the AHPRA 20 hour/year CPD requirement.

Program Governance Committee

Roles and responsibilities

The Program Governance Committee is responsible for the appraisal of applications and awarding of recognition under the program. Members of the Committee undertake these tasks in a voluntary capacity on behalf of ANZSOM General Council and in line with the recognition Program Guidelines, the OHN Competency Standards, the ANZSOM Constitution/Rules and other policies.

In addition, the Program Governance Committee provides feedback to the Nurse Strategy Working Group to support a robust and fair process, including management of risks for ANZSOM.

The work of the Project Governance Committee is confidential, and members must not discuss the proceedings or the details of individual applications outside the Committee.

In line with the ANZSOM Conflict of Interest Policy, Members are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest as they arise in the course of their involvement in this program.

Composition

The Program Governance Committee is chaired by a non-voting member, who is a nurse member of ANZSOM and generally a member of the Nurse Strategy Group. Their role is to provide direct engagement with the Nurse Strategy Group, the ANZSOM Secretariat and the ANZSOM General Council.

Remaining voting membership of the Program Governance Committee comprises individuals with suitable expertise and experience, including but not limited to:

- A nursing or non-nursing ANZSOM representative
- At least two non-ANZSOM representatives approved by General Council

Term of involvement

The term of involvement is three years.

Role of the Nurse Strategy Group

The Nurse Strategy Group is charged with the design, development and maintenance of the OHN Competency Standards and the OHN Recognition Program in conjunction with the ANZSOM Secretariat and under the guidance and governance of the ANZSOM General Council.

Other than the Chair of the Program Governance Committee, The Nurse Strategy Group members are not party to the identities of applicants and do not have access to the applications.

Role of the ANZSOM General Council

Recommendations for the awarding of recognition under the Recognition Program are made by the Committee to the ANZSOM General Council.

The ANZSOM General Council holds overall responsibility for the conduct of the Recognition Program, ensuring that it soundly based and fairly administered.

The General Council is informed of the progress and risks of the Program through the Nurse Liaison Officer who chairs the Nurse Strategy Group, is a formal member of General Council and a member of the Executive.

Role of the ANZSOM Secretariat

The ANZSOM Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the Recognition Program in line with the Program Guidelines and for implementing the advice of the Governance Committee, the Nurse Strategy Group and the General Council.

Related documents

[ANZSOM Competency Standards for Occupational Health Nurses February 2023](#)

[ANZSOM OHN Recognition Program Guidelines November 2023](#)

[Rules of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine August 2014](#)

[ANZSOM Code of Conduct October 2022](#)

[ANZSOM Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[ANZSOM Privacy Policy](#)