

Nursing Professional Development Recognition Programme

Applicant Handbook

Version 1.0



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Purpose

This handbook is for all nurses completing their PDRP portfolio as a resource to support completion of your PDRP portfolio. Further resources can be found here:

[Professional Development Recognition Programme – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

- Nursing Professional Development Recognition Programme Framework 2025
- Nursing Professional Development Recognition Programme Policy 2025
- HNZ Artificial Intelligence Policy
- PDRP levels of practice – Registered and Enrolled Nurses

If you have accessed these resources and still have a question, please contact the appropriate PDRP Coordinator for your district/region.

Further resources:

- NZNO (2021) Education and Professional Development Guideline: Reflective writing. [LinkClick.aspx](#)

Revision History

Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Version
02.03.2026	Mahi tahi project group	First draft	1.0

Approvals

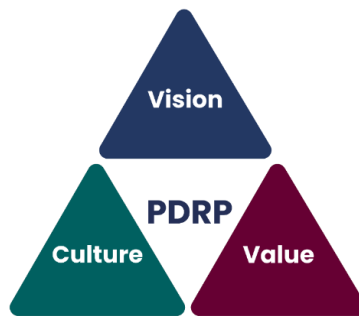
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Introduction



The Professional Development Recognition Programme (PDRP) is a programme designed to recognise and reward nurses for their individual level of practice and their contribution to nursing. Centred on the pillars of Vision, Culture and Value, PDRP aims to:

- Uplift and celebrate the nursing profession,
- Bring greater visibility to diverse nursing expertise,
- Reflect the core principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Pae Ora,
- Make engagement with professional development a choice, not a chore,
- Ensure every nurse is supported to thrive in their role both today and into the future.

PDRP acknowledges and celebrates growth, excellence and leadership in nursing ensuring that recognition is meaningful, aspirational and aligned with professional development.

It is the professional responsibility of all practising nurses to maintain their competence to practise. Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) sets continuing competence requirements under the HPCA Act 2003 and monitors these through the recertification audit process. The Health NZ PDRP is an NCNZ approved recertification programme meaning nurses engaged in an approved PDRP are exempt from NCNZ recertification audit.

Dual competency PDRP option for Māori nurses

Nurses who identify as Māori and seek recognition of dual competency, clinical and cultural informed by Te Ao Māori, are encouraged to engage with Huarahi Whakatū PDRP [Huarahi Whakatū PDRP – Te Rau Ora](#).

Huarahi Whakatū is an online NCNZ approved PDRP specifically tailored by, and for, Māori Registered Nurses.

Huarahi Whakatū PDRP promotes the philosophy of 'dual competency', that is clinical and cultural competencies. Clinical competencies are drawn from the NCNZ, whereas cultural competencies are informed by Te Ao Māori.

Any nurse who is interested in engaging in Huarahi Whakatū should contact the coordinator in the first instance for guidance through the process and communicate their engagement with their line manager and/or appropriate other. The level of practice should be agreed prior to completing Huarahi Whakatū. The remainder of the process will be led by Huarahi Whakatū. Evidence of the assessment outcome should be provided to the line manager.

Practice levels

Nursing practice is recognised across a continuum of competence, encompassing both Enrolled Nurses (EN) and Registered Nurses (RN). Each nurse brings a unique scope of practice, shaped by their education, experience, and regulatory requirements.

All nurses who hold a current annual practicing certificate (APC) are deemed competent by NCNZ. Competence is defined as the standard required for safe and effective nursing practice.

PDRP levels for Enrolled Nurses

Competent

The competent EN is confident in familiar situations and can manage and prioritise client care and workload appropriately.

This level is intended for graduate nurses at the end of their first year in practice.

Proficient

The proficient EN uses broad experiential and evidence-based knowledge and contributes to the teaching of others and participates in change. They have an in depth understanding of enrolled nursing scope and practice.

Expert

The Expert EN demonstrates advancing knowledge and skills in their clinical area. They hold additional responsibility within the team and contribute to leadership activities.

PDRP levels for Registered Nurses

Competent

The competent RN effectively applies knowledge and skills to practice. They can manage and prioritise assigned client care/ workload.

This level is intended for graduate nurses at the end of their first year in practice.

Proficient

The proficient RN demonstrates in depth understanding of the complexity of client health outcomes. They contribute to clinical learning for colleagues and participate in quality improvements and change.

Expert

The expert RN contributes to specialty knowledge and demonstrates innovative practice. They deliver quality care in unpredictable, challenging and/ complex situations and influence at service, professional or organisational level.

Designated Senior Nurse

The designated senior nurse is appointed into senior nurse positions. They influence the practice of others and lead quality initiatives. They facilitate change.

Further information on these levels can be found in the PDRP levels for Registered and Enrolled Nurses document **Professional Development Recognition Programme – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora**

Registered Nurse Prescribers

The assessment against the prescribing competencies is currently separate to PDRP and requires a recertification process which is managed by NCNZ. However, RN Prescribers are expected to apply for PDRP at Proficient level or above as well as undertaking the prescribing requirements of NCNZ.

Nurse Practitioners

Nurse Practitioners (NP) do not participate in the PDRP pathway. The process for NPs to demonstrate their scope of practice is managed by NCNZ. However, NPs can support the PDRP by acting as portfolio assessors providing, they meet the assessor requirements.

Portfolios

What needs to be in a portfolio?

A portfolio is a record of professional practice, activities and achievements to evidence competency to practice. It is a professional document and should be presented in a way that reflects this.

All nurses are required to submit the following:

1. Copy of APC – downloaded from the [Public Register](#)
2. Evidence of 450 practice hours (completed in the last 3 years)
3. Professional Development Record (PDR) demonstrating 60 hours within last 3 years with each activity listed linked to one of the Pou.
4. Self-assessment showing competence and PDRP level against the scope of practice (EN or RN)
5. Manager or delegated other, attestation
6. Applicant declaration

Portfolio submission

The preferred Health NZ portfolio submission is via e-Portfolio

- Log onto Ko Awatea Learn <https://koawatealearn.co.nz> or Health Learn <https://www.healthlearn.ac.nz/>
- Find learning and search for PDRP
- Click the e-Portfolio link to access your district's e-Portfolio site
- Follow the detailed instructions to complete and submit your portfolio.

Paper based, verbal and/or audio submissions may also be completed. Please contact your PDRP coordinator for advice to use these options.

It is an expectation that a portfolio is submitted every 3 years. You may submit earlier if changing levels.

The **date of submission** is the date your complete portfolio with all required documents is received into the district, regional, partner organisation PDRP office and/or placed in the relevant PDRP database and accepted for assessment (recognised as the first successful submission). This is also the **anniversary date**.

Approval Date: Is the date the portfolio is assessed as meeting the requirements of PDRP.

Districts may set submission dates throughout the year to manage workload. Please check the HNZ PDRP site to see if these apply for you.

Privacy

Your examples from practice against the scope of practice must uphold the principles of confidentiality and privacy. Outside of your details there should be no individually identifiable information in any part of the portfolio. The inclusion of evidence which breaches privacy in any way will require return of a portfolio and immediate correction of the privacy breach.

Use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

You must not use AI to generate examples for PDRP portfolio. Self-assessment is a reflection of your practice and should be in your own words.

As AI tools become increasingly accessible it is tempting to use AI generated evidence for your recertification audit. However, you must use actual examples from your nursing practice to demonstrate your competence for your scope of practise without relying on AI.

You will be asked to declare that your evidence relates to your own nursing practice, is true, correct and authentic, and has not been generated using AI.

Manager / Delegated other attestation

This is completed by your direct line manager or their authorised delegate. This shows they support the level of practice applied for and attest that the practice examples and statements in the assessment are a true and accurate reflection of your practice.

If the attestation is required to be completed by several nurses to attest to specific practice examples, it must be clear who has completed which part of the attestation. This is done automatically on e-Portfolio.

Assessment

Following submission your portfolio will be sent to a trained PDRP portfolio assessor.

Portfolio assessment should be completed within 10 weeks from submission to return to you if the appropriate evidence is provided. The timeframe may be extended if further evidence is required.

You will be contacted directly notifying you of the outcome of your PDRP application as soon as the assessment process is complete.

FAQ

I have just been employed; how soon can I apply?

Newly employed nurses may complete and submit a portfolio as soon as they feel confident that they can provide examples from practice at the level they are applying for. A nurse can apply directly to any level but should discuss this first with their manager for endorsement of that level.

I work in the primary or community sector, how do I apply?

Your employer needs to be partnered with a HNZ or another PDRP programme. Please contact the local PDRP coordinator for advice.

I am a nurse employed in more than one role, what do I do?

If a nurse works in more than one organisation only one portfolio is required. It is recommended that this be for the primary employer, if there is one, but in all cases, this should be discussed, agreed and documented, by both employers.

Nurses who work in two different areas where their practice is at the same level may complete a single portfolio. They must demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the level applied using examples from either area. Their attestation may be provided by nurse(s) from one or both areas. In these circumstances both managers must endorse the PDRP level being applied for.

Nurses who work in two different areas where their practice is not at the same level, please discuss with the districts PDRP Coordinator for guidance.

I work on the Bureau/Casual/Agency, what are my options?

You can discuss with your charge nurse/manager or relevant senior colleague to establish the level that best reflects your consistent day to day practice.

Can I apply straight to Expert level?

Progression is based on consistent day to day practice and not linear. Therefore, direct application to any level is welcome if the requirements for that level are consistently being met and your manager supports and endorses the application.

Do I have to wait for the three years to apply to a higher level on the PDRP?

No, a portfolio can be completed at any time, if the requirements for the level are consistently being met in day-to-day practice. This must be endorsed by your manager.

Do I need to have done Postgraduate Study to apply for Expert Level?

Postgraduate study is not a requirement for expert level portfolio submissions.

I am leaving or I have left my job: can I still submit my portfolio for assessment?

Nurses who are resigning from their role and wish to have a portfolio assessed prior to leaving will need to submit their completed PDRP portfolio, including full self-assessment with manager's endorsement, ten weeks prior to last day of employment.

Portfolios submitted after this date may not be assessed.

This process does not apply to those who are going on extended leave (e.g. parental leave).

What happens if my portfolio due date occurs when I am on parental leave?

If the portfolio is due while the nurse is on parental leave, then the nurse should either submit before they go on leave or once returned to work. If the nurse chooses to submit after the expiry date, any allowances will cease unless the line manager has approved an extension due to special circumstances.

I have been selected for audit by NCNZ, what are my options?

If you have a current portfolio on the PDRP, you need to provide evidence of this to NCNZ.

If you do not have a current portfolio then you are encouraged to complete a PDRP portfolio at a level endorsed by your manager. NCNZ may give you an extension of time to complete a portfolio. However, you may also decide to complete the NCNZ's audit process. If you decide to complete audit, then please follow the instructions they provide you.

I am a returning employee. What do I do with my PDRP?

If an employee on the PDRP resigns and then returns within three years of achieving their portfolio, their PDRP level will be re-established. Please follow the PDRP transfer process below.

Nurses whose portfolios have expired or who did not complete a full PDRP portfolio prior to leaving cannot have their level re-established.

If I am already on a PDRP, can I transfer this when I start a new role?

HNZ supports nurses who have a NCNZ approved PDRP at a previous place of employment to transfer their portfolio.

Nurses can transfer their portfolio until the expiration date of the original portfolio.

For non-HNZ PDRP, **please contact the PDRP coordinator** for that organisation.

How do I transfer my PDRP?

A transfer application must be completed and sent to the PDRP coordinator as soon as possible. This application form can be obtained from the PDRP page on the organisation's website. You must include evidence of currency on a NCNZ approved PDRP e.g. a copy of a PDRP certificate or letter/email of confirmation from the PDRP Coordinator at the previous place of employment. We do not need to see your previous portfolio.

What if I can't meet the level requirements after transferring?

Your manager will discuss the options if the requirements are not met. This discussion will include strategies and a negotiated time frame to meet them. Continuation of allowances is at the discretion of the manager during this time. Voluntary regression down the PDRP is allowed at any time.

What is the difference between the portfolio requirements for initial application to a level and application to maintain a level?

There is no difference in the portfolio requirements or assessment process for progression to a level or maintenance of an existing level.

What happens if I don't reapply?

A successful assessment of a new portfolio is required prior to the expiry date. If this is not done, you will be removed from the PDRP and any associated allowances and benefits will stop. In addition, you may then be selected for NCNZ audit.

Please note: The timeframe for portfolio assessment is up to 10 weeks from the date of portfolio submission.

What happens if I am on a performance improvement plan?

If nurses are on an individualised performance improvement plan, this is managed separately to the PDRP process. If this process results in the nurse having their level changed or being removed from the PDRP, the appropriate process must be followed. A portfolio cannot be submitted until the successful completion of the plan.

Removal from the PDRP

If at any time a nurse breaches nursing conduct or there are competency concerns this nurse may have their PDRP status reviewed. Their manager, Nurse Director/Director of Nursing, Human Resources, and NZNO/PSA (as appropriate) will decide whether removal of the PDRP status is an appropriate action. The Chief Nurse or delegate is ultimately responsible for the decision to remove a nurse from the PDRP.

How do I appeal the assessor's decision?

If a portfolio assessment is unsuccessful, you can appeal the decision.

Send a letter stating the reasons for the appeal to the PDRP coordinator within one month of the date of the assessment. If hardcopy portfolio, send the original unchanged portfolio and assessment tool with the letter.

- Competent and Proficient level portfolios will be reassessed by the PDRP coordinator. Another assessor will be assigned if the PDRP coordinator was the original assessor.
- Expert portfolios will be reassessed by two different assessors allocated by the PDRP coordinator.
- Do not alter the portfolio from the original submission prior to the appeal process.
- Request a meeting with the PDRP coordinator to present the grounds of the appeal. A support person may also attend.
- The appeal assessors will consider the applicant's original portfolio, the assessment tool from the original assessment and the applicant's statement about the appeal. The original assessor/panel may present their case directly to the appeal assessors. The PDRP coordinator /appeal assessors' aim is to decide if the original decision is to be upheld or not. If it is upheld, the assessors will advise the applicant what is required for a successful portfolio.
- The applicant is given the decision with supporting evidence in writing within one month of the appeal request.
- If a decision cannot be agreed between the appeal assessors, this will be escalated to the relevant Nurse Director.

Is the Professional Development and Recognition Programme moderated or audited?

An audit of the programme is undertaken every five years by NCNZ. This is managed by the PDRP Coordinator.

Are portfolios moderated?

Moderation of portfolios occurs in a range of ways to ensure accuracy, consistency and fairness in assessment. When you submit your portfolio, you consent to it being involved in moderation. All documents must be left in the paper or electronic portfolio in case of moderation. However, moderation cannot change the result of your portfolio.

Are there entitlements or allowances linked to the PDRP?

This depends on your employment contract and/or employer collective agreement.

Is there additional leave available for nurses working on their PDRP?

You should check the PDRP entitlements in your employment agreement to see if you are entitled to additional leave to undertake research or study associated with meeting the PDRP requirements. Any leave requests should be discussed with your manager.

When are PDRP allowances allocated?

Nurses are paid their PDRP allowance from the date their PDRP was submitted.

Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
APC	Annual Practicing Certificate
CCF	Continuing Competence Framework
CNS	Clinical Nurse Specialist
EN	Enrolled Nurse(s)
e-Portfolio / e-PDRP	Electronic portfolio
HNZ	Health New Zealand
HPCA Act	Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003
NCNZ	Nursing Council of New Zealand
NZNO	New Zealand Nurses Organisation
PDR	Professional Development Record
PDRP	Professional Development and Recognition Programme
RN	Registered Nurses(s)

Terminology

Health consumer: includes any recipient of nursing care e.g. patients, clients, residents, turoro and can include family, whānau, significant others or people of importance to the health consumer

Manager / Line Manager: is the person you report to

Portfolio assessor: a nurse with a current PDRP at the same level or higher to that being applied for. They must have completed the appropriate assessment education.

Primary sector: refers to health care provider / organisation, e.g. Primary Health Organisation, Non-Government Organisation, Aged and Residential Care provider. Primary nurses include any nurse employed under this definition.

PDRP Coordinators: Coordinators are designated Senior Nurses who manage the PDRP

Standards of Competence: NCNZ standards that describe the competence required of nurses registered in each scope of practice.