Pathways

www.nursing.health.wa.gov.au

Nursing and midwifery... can take you anywhere.

Delivering a Healthy WA
Introduction

Most nurses and midwives choose to work in a hospital delivering direct patient care, but did you know that nurses and midwives also have the ability to work in many different areas?

Some of these include occupational health and safety, policy development, education and training, as well as management, leadership, primary health and research.

The numerous pathways available lead to a wide variety of settings in which to work.

This booklet provides information on the nursing and midwifery professions – what it’s like to be a nurse or midwife, the different specialties and the educational pathways to get you there. Information about scholarships and who to contact for further details are also provided.

There is also information on the benefits of being a nurse or midwife, including: the opportunities to travel and work in regional Australia, interstate or overseas; flexible hours to suit your lifestyle; and the ability to change your work scene by choosing to specialise or trying a different practice setting.

So if you are trying to decide what the next step in your life will be, consider midwifery or nursing. It can take you anywhere.

If after reading this booklet you would like to discuss nursing or midwifery further, please don’t hesitate to contact us:

Nursing and Midwifery Office
Department of Health, Western Australia
Free call: 1800 11 22 72
Phone: (08) 9222 4075
nursingwa@health.wa.gov.au
www.nursing.health.wa.gov.au
Benefits

You can go places
The world will always need nurses. You can work in the metropolitan area or in one of our country health services. WA nurses and midwives are also highly regarded nationally and internationally. This means you can work almost anywhere in the world and continue to expand your career. Travel as much or as little as you want.

Work in a challenging environment
A typical nurse or midwife is up and about, caring for patients, consulting with colleagues or supporting patient’s visitors. You also get to do a lot of problem solving and thinking on your feet. Something different happens every day.

Choose your hours
Nurses and midwives work throughout the day and night, so you can choose shifts that work around your lifestyle – sport, shopping, kids, and so on. A variety of shifts are available, including weekday, weekend, morning, afternoon and night shift. Work is offered on a full-time, part-time or casual basis.

Change your work scene
Nurses and midwives can apply for positions within a hospital, or change to a non-hospital setting such as a school, commercial airline, cruise ship, child health centre, university, community health centre, aged care facility, mine site and many more.

Generous allowances
Most full-time nurses and midwives who do shift work have nine weeks paid leave per year. They also get extra pay for working afternoon, night, or weekend shifts.

Choose your adrenalin level
It’s up to you. Opt for the adrenalin of emergency, intensive care or labour ward, or choose to work in a general or specialised setting.
If you’re after something different you can work in a community health centre, school, university, government department or in areas such as education, research or policy development.
Change your specialty
Change it up a bit – you can move from specialty to specialty whenever you feel like a new challenge or become a specialist in one area. There are so many options - see page 37.

Make a difference
There’s no doubt about it, nursing and midwifery are careers with heart. These professions are a meaningful way to contribute to society. You’re there to help people get better. Your patients and their families will trust you and look to you for reassurance.

Look after your community
Many nurses and midwives will tell you how much their skills and knowledge are valued by their friends and family. What better way is there to ensure that your loved ones, your neighbours and your community are provided with the best health care possible?

Be in demand
There are many great nursing and midwifery jobs across Australia and overseas. WA Health is building several brand new hospitals meaning nurses and midwives will continue to be highly sought in the coming years.

As a nurse or midwife, you will always be in demand. Unlike many other jobs, nursing and midwifery can provide you with job security as the work is not generally affected by economic problems.

Being able to help people with mental illness while having the opportunity to work in my chosen field is a plus for me.

Angelo, Clinical Nurse Specialist
Enrolled nursing, registered nursing and midwifery

What's the difference?

Enrolled nurse
To become an enrolled nurse (EN) you’ll study for 12-18 months full-time through a state or private training provider for a Diploma of Enrolled Nursing.

On completion of the course, enrolled nurses can practice across a range of clinical settings.

Enrolled nurses work under the supervision of a registered nurse to provide care to patients from all kinds of backgrounds and age groups.

The opportunity for promotional positions is a little more limited for enrolled nurses than for registered nurses. Enrolled nurses can progress to become an Advanced Skill Enrolled Nurse, or decide to pursue further studies such as an Advanced Diploma.

Enrolled nurses can go on to university to become a registered nurse or midwife. They are usually given recognition of prior learning and have the length of their course reduced.

Registered nurse
To become a registered nurse (RN) you’ll study at university to obtain a Bachelor of Science (Nursing) or Bachelor of Nursing. The course takes three to three and a half years if studying full-time. The responsibilities of a registered nurse range from providing direct patient care to coordinating care delivery, promoting better health, managing staff, undertaking research or providing education.

Registered nurses have the most opportunities for employment in a huge variety of settings. There are many career advancement options, the capacity to specialise (see page 37), as well as scope to work in advanced practice roles.

Midwife
To become a midwife you’ll study at university to obtain a Bachelor of Midwifery, known in health as a “direct entry student” (three year full-time degree), or by becoming a registered nurse first, and then undertaking a postgraduate degree in midwifery (18 months full-time).

The responsibilities of a midwife generally involve direct clinical care, but like registered nurses, there are a number of other employment opportunities including work in research, management, education and policy development.

Midwives work in a variety of settings such as clinics, hospitals, birthing centres and in women’s homes. The role of the midwife may also involve other aspects of women’s health, including sexual or reproductive health, lactation (breastfeeding) consultancy and educating parents how to care for their child.

Midwifery is not just a profession for women, men make great midwives too.
Entry paths to nursing and midwifery

What Year 12 subjects should I consider to qualify for nursing or midwifery?

You will need to pass Year 12 English and Maths if you wish to study an enrolled nursing course.

It is recommended that you contact enrolled nursing course providers for further information about the prerequisites. Alternative pathways are also available to gain entry.

For entry into registered nursing and midwifery courses, the most appropriate subjects to study in Year 12 are Human Biology or any other science subject, plus Maths and English. These subjects will provide a sound knowledge base for undertaking nursing and midwifery studies, however, this can vary between universities so it is always advisable to research each university’s current prerequisites and requirements.

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) to enter a registered nursing or midwifery course varies from university-to-university and year-to-year. It is recommended that you contact each university to find out the cut-off score for each of their courses (a cut-off score is the minimum score needed to enter the particular university). Traditionally nursing and midwifery cut-off scores usually range between 55 to 85.
What if I don’t meet the necessary Year 12 requirements?

If you have not satisfied the necessary secondary education requirements, you may be eligible to undertake a Certificate III in Health Service Assistance and use this as a pathway into nursing or midwifery - see “Assistant in Nursing” section below.

There are also other bridging programs offered by the various education providers that will prepare you for entry to the course you want, so make contact with them to find out more.

A Certificate IV in Preparation for Entry into Enrolled Nursing will prepare you for entry to a Diploma of Enrolled Nursing course.

A Certificate IV in Health Science Foundations will prepare you for entry into a Bachelor of Science (Nursing or Midwifery) at university or a Diploma of Enrolled Nursing.

Some private training providers also provide courses to obtain a Diploma of Science (Health Studies) or Diploma of Health Science. Once completed, some universities may grant enrolment into the second year of a Bachelor of Science (Nursing).

Assistant in Nursing

As an Assistant in Nursing (AIN) you work as a member of the nursing team, assisting nurses to give general patient care. You will support patients with tasks like helping them with their hygiene, their meals and assisting them to move into and out of bed, and to mobilise around the ward. You will assist nurses to monitor a patient’s condition by measuring blood pressure, temperature and respiration rates.

To work as an AIN in a hospital you need to complete a Certificate III in Health Service Assistance (Acute Care) which is offered through the state training providers and several private organisations.

Working as an AIN can be a rewarding career in itself, but it is worth noting that the AIN qualification can be used as a pathway into a career in nursing or midwifery, plus this qualification will allow you to continue to work as an AIN while you study to become a nurse or midwife.

Assistant in Nursing (Acute Care) Traineeship

WA Health is also working with Central Institute of Technology to offer traineeships to become an Assistant in Nursing and to work in an acute hospital environment. The course combines classroom work and on-the-job training.

A 12 month employment contract is offered to successful applicants in one of our public hospitals, during which time you will undertake the six-month, full-time training program to receive a Certificate III in Health Service Assistance (Acute Care). Trainees are paid a wage and enjoy all the benefits of learning in a progressive and friendly environment.
Enrolled nurse to registered nurse conversion courses

Once you have completed an enrolled nursing course, you might later decide to progress your career into registered nursing.

Some people choose enrolled nursing as an alternative pathway to university if they were unable to gain direct entry, or, so that they can work and gain further experience before and while they study to become a registered nurse or midwife.

Generally the conversion program equates to two years full-time study but may vary. It is recommended that you contact the universities directly for information about their entry requirements.

I already have a tertiary qualification in another field, how do I become a registered nurse?

If you want to study registered nursing and have already completed another tertiary qualification, you may be eligible to complete a Graduate Pathway or Entry-to-Practice course.

On completion of either the Curtin University Master of Science (Nursing) Graduate Pathway or the University of Western Australia Master of Nursing Science (Entry-to-Practice) courses, graduates are able to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia as a registered nurse. Both courses are two years in duration when undertaken full-time.

For further information contact:

Curtin University
Phone: (08) 9266 2053
www.nursingandmidwifery.curtin.edu.au

University of Western Australia
Phone: (08) 6488 7372
www.meddent.uwa.edu.au/courses/postgraduate/master-nursing-science
Studying midwifery

Direct entry midwifery
Curtin University offers a three-year full-time Bachelor of Science (Midwifery). This course does not have the prerequisite of a nursing qualification. Graduates of this course are eligible for registration as a midwife and will allow you to work as a midwife only.

Edith Cowan University offers a four-year full-time dual degree. This qualification will make you eligible for registration as a registered nurse and as a registered midwife allowing you the flexibility to work in both professions.

Both programs are highly competitive. Please contact the university directly for further information.

Postgraduate midwifery
Postgraduate midwifery students are registered nurses, who already have a Bachelor of Science (Nursing) qualification or equivalent.

The length of the course varies depending on the mode of study, but the most common arrangements for postgraduate degrees in midwifery are 18 months full-time. Further information about course lengths can be obtained from the universities.

Postgraduate midwifery students are employed in a maternity setting during their clinical experience. There are many metropolitan and country hospitals in WA where midwifery students can work to gain the required amount of clinical experience to achieve competency and fulfill course requirements.
Course providers

Enrolled nursing course providers

Metropolitan

Central Institute of Technology, Mt Lawley
Web: www.central.wa.edu.au
Phone: 1300 300 822
Email: enquiry@central.wa.edu.au

Challenger Institute of Technology, Murdoch
Web: www.challenger.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9229 848461
Email: info@challenger.wa.edu.au

Institute of Health and Nursing
Web: www.ihna.edu.au
Phone: 1800 225 283
Email: enquiry@ihna.edu.au

Marr Mooditj Aboriginal Training Inc
Web: www.marrmooditj.com.au
Phone: (08) 9351 9344
Email: reception1@marrmooditj.com.au

Silver Chain
Web: www.silverchain.org.au/sa/training/
Phone: (08) 9242 0242
Email: info@silverchain.org.au

West Coast Institute of Training, Joondalup
Web: www.wcit.wa.edu.au
Phone: 1300 134 881
Email: Studentcentro@wcit.wa.edu.au

Note: You should contact the individual provider to find out if they offer part-time courses and to find out if you are eligible for any credits towards course entrance based on previous qualifications you have obtained or partially completed, or any work experience you have.
Enrolled nursing course providers

Regional

C Y O’Connor Institute, Narrogin
Web: www.cyoc.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9881 9000
Email: narrogin@cyoc.wa.edu.au

C Y O’Connor Institute, Northam
Web: www.cyoc.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9622 6777
Email: northam@cyoc.wa.edu.au

Durack Institute of Technology, Geraldton
Web: www.durack.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9956 2700
Email: clientsvc@centralwest.wa.edu.au

Great Southern Institute of Technology, Albany
Web: www.gstafe.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9892 8888
Email: info@gsinstitute.wa.edu.au

Goldfields Institute of Technology
Web: www.goldfields.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9088 6762
Email: contact.kal@vtec.wa.edu.au

Pilbara Institute, South Hedland
Web: www.pilbaratafe.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9158 9400
Email: feedback@pilbara.wa.edu.au

South West Institute of Technology, Bunbury
Web: www.swrc.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9780 7000
Email: Bunbury_Reception@swit.wa.edu.au

University of Notre Dame, Broome
Web: www.nd.edu.au/broome
Phone: (08) 9192 0600
Email: broome.enquiries@nd.edu.au
Pathways to a nursing or midwifery career in Western Australia

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<tr>
<td>pass English and Maths</td>
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<td>Registered Nurse</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Further education opportunities:
- Postgraduate Certificate
- Graduate Diploma
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree

Acronyms:
- RPL = Recognition of Prior Learning
- STAT = Special Tertiary Admission Test
- WACE = Western Australian Certificate of Education

Graduate Entry Masters in Nursing

Nurse Practitioner
Registered nursing course providers

Metropolitan

**Curtin University, Bentley**
Web: www.nursingandmidwifery.curtin.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9266 2053
Email: nursing@curtin.edu.au

**Edith Cowan University, Joondalup**
Web: www.ecu.edu.au/snm
Phone: 134 ECU (134 328)
Email: healthengineeringandscience@ecu.edu.au

**Murdoch University, Mandurah**
Web: www.nursing.murdoch.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9582 5501
Email: v.reicheld@murdoch.edu.au

**University of Notre Dame, Fremantle**
Web: www.nd.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9433 0555 or 1800 640 500
Email: fremantle.reception@nd.edu.au

**University of Western Australia** (Pre requisite: degree)
Web: www.meddent.uwa.edu.au/courses/postgraduate/master-nursing-science
Phone: (08) 6488 7372
Email: helene.metcalfe@uwa.edu.au

Regional

**Curtin University, Albany**
Web: www.nursingandmidwifery.curtin.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9266 2053
Email: nursing@curtin.edu.au

**Edith Cowan University, Bunbury**
Web: www.southwest.ecu.edu.au
Phone: 134 ECU (134 328)
Email: southwest@ecu.edu.au

**Geraldton Universities Centre**
Web: www.guc.edu.au/
Phone: (08) 9920 4400
Email: info@guc.edu.au

Note: You should contact the individual provider to find out if they offer part-time courses and to find out if you are eligible for any credits towards course entrance based on previous qualifications you have obtained or partially completed, or any work experience you have.

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I wanted to care for people and I love that part of nursing. Now I love being able to lead and care for the teams of nurses and midwives who care for others.

Catherine, Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer
Midwifery course providers

Undergraduate (direct-entry)

Curtin University, Bentley
Web: www.nursingandmidwifery.curtin.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9266 2053
Email: nursing@curtin.edu.au

Edith Cowan University, Joondalup
Web: www.ecu.edu.au/snm
Phone: 134 ECU (134 328)
Email: healthengineeringandscience@ecu.edu.au

Postgraduate

Curtin University, Bentley
Web: www.nursingandmidwifery.curtin.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9266 2053
Email: nursing@curtin.edu.au

Edith Cowan University, Joondalup
Web: www.ecu.edu.au/snm
Phone: 134 ECU (134 328)
Email: healthengineeringandscience@ecu.edu.au

Murdoch University, Mandurah
Web: www.nursing.murdoch.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9582 5501
Email: v.reicheld@murdoch.edu.au

University of Notre Dame, Fremantle
Web: www.nd.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9433 0555 or 1800 640 500
Email: fremantle.reception@nd.edu.au

Note: You should contact the individual provider to find out if they offer part-time courses and to find out if you are eligible for any credits towards course entrance based on previous qualifications you have obtained or partially completed, or any work experience you have.
Support for Aboriginal students

Aboriginal student services are available at most universities and other education facilities. They offer a range of services to encourage the participation of Aboriginal students.

You’ll find staff welcoming, supportive and friendly. They will offer advice on how to join a course and how to stay on track.

Some of the information and services offered include:

* Mentoring assistance and cultural support
* Financial support through scholarships
* Abstudy information
* Tutoring assistance and access to learning resources and study aids
* Information on bridging programs and ways to qualify or enable entry into courses
* General student advice, connection and engagement with other Aboriginal students
* Distance learning information
* Accommodation and childcare information and assistance.

We encourage you to become familiar with these free and confidential services and find out how they can assist you on your learning journey.
Aboriginal student services

**Metropolitan**

**Central Institute of Technology**
Koolark Centre for Aboriginal Students
Web: www.central.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9428 0340
Email: deadly@central.wa.edu.au

**Challenger Institute of Technology**
Kadadjiny Mia Centre for Aboriginal Learning
Web: www.challenger.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9599 8714 (Rockingham) or (08) 9239 8327 (Fremantle)
Email: atsi.studentsupport@challenger.wa.edu.au

**Curtin University**
Centre for Aboriginal Studies
Web: www.gunada.curtin.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9266 7091
Email: cas.enquiries@curtin.edu.au

**Edith Cowan University**
Indigenous Student Support Officer
Web: www.ecu.edu.au/snm
Phone: 134 328
Email: enquiries@ecu.edu.au

**Marr Mooditj Aboriginal Training Inc**
General Administration
Web: www.marmooditj.com.au
Phone: (08) 9351 9344
Email: reception1@marmooditj.com.au

**Murdoch University**
Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre
Web: kulbardi.murdoch.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9360 2128
Email: kulbardi@murdoch.edu.au

**University of Notre Dame, Fremantle**
General Administration
Web: www.nd.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9433 0223
Email: nursing@nd.edu.au

**West Coast Institute of Technology**
Aboriginal Support Officer
Web: www.wcit.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9233 1231
Email: Studentcentro@wcit.wa.edu.au

**Regional**

**C Y O’Connor, Narrogin**
Aboriginal Development Officer
Web: www.cyoc.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9881 9000
Email: narrogin@cyoc.wa.edu.au

**C Y O’Connor, Northam**
Aboriginal Development Officers and Program Assistants
Web: www.cyoc.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9622 6777
Email: northam@cyoc.wa.edu.au

**Durack Institute of Technology, Geraldton**
Indigenous Service Officers
Web: www.durack.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9956 2723
Email: ISSO.Geraldton@durack.edu.au

**Great Southern Institute of Technology, Albany**
Aboriginal Student Support Officer
Web: www.gstafe.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9892 8723 or 1800 675 781
Email: info@gsinstitute.wa.edu.au
Mature age entry

There are several ways for mature age students to enter nursing and midwifery. Entry into nursing and midwifery courses varies depending upon your work experience and education. You should contact the individual education providers to find out if you are eligible for any credits towards course entrance based on previous qualifications you have obtained or partially completed, or any work experience you have. This is what is sometimes called “recognition of prior learning” or “RPL”.

You may need to complete a University and State Training Providers Preparation Course; a bridging course through one of the education providers, or a Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) before applying for entry into any nursing or midwifery course within Western Australia.

For further information contact the individual education providers, or:

University and State Training Providers Preparation
www.tisc.edu.au/static/guide/stat.tisc#stat_prep

Tertiary Institutions Service Centre – STAT
www.tisc.edu.au/static/guide/stat.tisc

Aboriginal student services
Regional cont...

Goldfields Institute of Technology
The Place of Aboriginal Learning and Excellence
Web: www.goldfields.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9088 6971
Email: I.foreman@curtin.edu.au

Pilbara Institute, South Hedland
Indigenous Education Support Officer
Web: www.pilbaratafe.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9158 5605
Email: feedback@pilbara.wa.edu.au

South West Institute of Technology, Bunbury
Ngala Maya Centre
Web: www.swrc.wa.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9780 7216
Email: Bunbury_Reception@swit.wa.edu.au

University of Notre Dame, Broome
The Admission’s Officer
Web: www.nd.edu.au/broome
Phone: (08) 9192 0601
Email: Sally.clarke@nd.edu.au

I can go anywhere in my career.
I have a job that I am passionate about. Improving Aboriginal health in my region is my goal.

Rodney, Enrolled Nurse and Regional Aboriginal Health Coordinator
WA Health scholarships

The Nursing and Midwifery Office provides a range of scholarships and fellowships totaling around $2 million each year. We offer financial assistance to people who are:

* studying to become a nurse or midwife
* nurses and midwives studying a postgraduate qualification
* former nurses and midwives wanting to return to the workforce after a prolonged break.

Studying to become a nurse or midwife
Studying to become a nurse or midwife will lead to an exciting profession full of diverse experiences and opportunities. A scholarship can help you discover your career in nursing or midwifery and cover some of the study costs. Examples of courses we fund are:

* Studying to be an enrolled nurse, such as a Diploma of Enrolled Nursing.
* Studying to become a registered nurse and/or midwife, such as a Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Midwifery, or Bachelor of Nursing/Midwifery.
* Conversion degrees, such as enrolled nurses bridging to a registered nurse qualification; converting a diploma to a degree; or undertaking honours or a graduate entry masters program in nursing.

Applications are accepted prior to the completion of study provided the first semester (or part-time equivalent) is completed when the scholarship is granted.

Postgraduate studies
Postgraduate scholarships are available to nurses and midwives looking to broaden their expertise through education. Examples of courses we fund are:

* Postgraduate specialisation scholarships to assist enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives to complete specialisation to advance their knowledge and skills in their clinical or non-clinical field.
* Midwifery scholarships to assist registered nurses to become midwives through study of a postgraduate diploma or masters in midwifery. Midwives completing a Master of Midwifery can also apply.
* Nurse Practitioner scholarships to assist registered nurses to study a Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner).

Returning to nursing and midwifery
Scholarships are offered to enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives to study to re-gain their registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. Scholarships are paid on successful course completion.

How to apply
Applications are open from early November to March each year.
To apply online, or for full details about application dates and eligibility, visit: www.nursing.health.wa.gov.au
Universities and other professional organisations also offer scholarships. Visit the Nursing and Midwifery Office website for further information: www.nursing.health.wa.gov.au/scholarship/other.cfm
Specialising

As a nurse you can specialise in one or several areas during your career. To specialise, you will need to undertake postgraduate education and/or gain extensive nursing experience on the job. There are some specialties where only registered nurses are employed and may not be available to enrolled nurses. A number of specialty areas are listed below.

* Aboriginal health
* burns
* cardiology (heart)
* clinical nursing
* community
* coronary care
* diabetes education
* dialysis
* domiciliary nursing (nursing care in the home)
* education (hospital or university based)
* emergency
* family health
* gerontology/aged care
* infection control
* intensive care
* management
* medical nursing
* mental health
* neonatal intensive care (newborn babies)
* nurse practitioner
* occupational health
* oncology (relating to cancer)
* paediatric (children)
* peri-operative (operating theatres)
* plastic surgery
* policy/project management
* rehabilitation
* remote area nursing
* research
* rural nursing
* surgical nursing
* wound management.
Nurse practitioner

A nurse practitioner is an experienced and knowledgeable registered nurse who has completed a relevant masters degree. To work as a nurse practitioner you need to complete the masters degree, apply to be endorsed to function independently and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role, and practice in a Designated Nurse Practitioner Area as described in the WA Poisons Act 1964 - 23(2)(e) and WA Poisons Regulations 1965 -11A.

The nurse practitioner role includes assessment and management of clients using nursing knowledge and skills and may include, but is not limited to, the direct referral of patients to other health care professionals, prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic investigations.

I love that every day I get to contribute to the lives of others - supporting and encouraging them through challenges. I can’t imagine a more fulfilling job!

Brooke, Midwife
Mental health nursing

Mental health nursing is a specialised branch of nursing providing care for people with mental illness or mental health problems. This occurs in partnership with the patients, their families, their partners and the community.

Mental health nurses can be enrolled nurses or registered nurses, but to become a specialist in mental health, you are required to complete a postgraduate course in mental health.

As a mental health nurse you can specialise in caring for children and adolescents, adults, seniors, or those in the justice or prison systems.

You'll work closely with other professionals including psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers, counsellors, medical doctors and occupational therapists.

Mental health nurses work in a variety of settings including hospitals, clinics, community services and prisons.
Working conditions

Hours
The majority of nurses and midwives work in hospitals, which usually involves shift work. Employers, such as hospitals, offer flexible shift options (weekdays and/or weekends, day and/or night duty). Work can be offered on a full-time, part-time or casual basis. This provides you with plenty of options to achieve a reasonable balance between work and your personal life.

The hours worked will depend on your experience, the clinical or specialty area you work in, and which hospital or health service you are employed by. In some other settings nurses and midwives may work normal office hours.

Examples of typical shift times:
Early Shift (day shift)
7.00am–3.30pm
7.00am–2.30pm

Late Shift (afternoon shift)
1.00pm–9.30pm
2.00pm–9.30pm

Night Shift
9.00pm–7.30am
9.30pm–7.00am

Some employers offer variations such as 12 hour shifts
7am–7pm and 7pm–7am or “family friendly” hours such as
9am–2pm, 6pm–11pm or 5pm–1am.

Salary
As well as being personally and professionally fulfilling, nursing and midwifery can be financially rewarding too. Salaries for nurses and midwives are competitive with many other careers. To view current awards and agreements relevant to nurses and midwives, please visit www.health.wa.gov.au/awardsandagreements/#NE (Note: these are dependent on where you work and are only relevant to the WA public health system).

Shift work can also provide financial advantages. Various shifts attract loadings that greatly increase your pay. For example on a Sunday as a registered nurse, you will receive an additional 75 per cent on top of your base hourly pay rate.

Leave allowances
Nurses and midwives who work full-time and do shift work, receive five weeks annual leave per year. You also receive ten public holidays (which you can use at other times) and 12 accrued days off (if negotiated on employment). This means that most nurses and midwives have nine weeks paid leave per year.

Work while you study
Some people like to work in the health setting while they study. There are courses you can do that will qualify you to work as a carer, patient care assistant or Assistant in Nursing.

WA Health advertises jobs at www.jobs.health.wa.gov.au
Graduate programs

Newly qualified enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives are encouraged to undertake a fully paid graduate program at one of the many Western Australian public hospitals and health services, on completion of their undergraduate course.

Graduate programs assist the transition into the nursing and midwifery workforce in a supportive environment. You will gain exposure to a variety of clinical settings, while consolidating theoretical learning and critical clinical skills and judgment.

For more details visit www.gnc.health.wa.gov.au

Other useful information

The Nursing and Midwifery Office website has lots more information about careers in nursing and midwifery, visit: www.nursing.health.wa.gov.au

Meet real nurses and midwives

You can watch or read stories from nurses and midwives working in Western Australia at:

Work experience

The Get Real Experience and Try (GReaT) Nursing and Midwifery Work Experience Program has been developed to encourage high school students to experience nursing prior to studying it with a State Training Provider or at university.

Students are encouraged to discuss their interest in this program with their school career counsellor or their VET coordinator prior to submitting an application. Full details are available at www.nursing.health.wa.gov.au/career/workexp.cfm