



Royal College of Nursing

# Revalidation for Flight Nurses in the UK

*RCN guidance*



**The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is here to support members and the wider nursing profession. In December 2015 the RCN Critical Care and In-Flight Nursing Forum held a Revalidation Summit with nursing leaders from the aviation industry and the RCN Professional Lead for Education, Gill Coverdale, to explore the impact of revalidation and the potential challenges for the flight nurse community.**

## What is revalidation?

Revalidation is a process that the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requires all nurses and midwives to undertake every three years, in order to renew their registration. It replaces the existing Prep standards as the way in which nurses and midwives demonstrate to the NMC that they continue to practise safely and effectively, and can remain on the register. The first registrants to revalidate were those who were due to renew from April 2016 and registrants must declare that they have met a number of requirements over the three-year period.

## What are the revalidation requirements?

The most up to date requirements for revalidation can be found at the following link:

<http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/what-you-need-to-do/>

## What constitutes practice hours?

### The requirement

**You must have practised for a minimum number of hours over the three year period since your registration was last renewed or you joined the register.**

- If you have practised for fewer than the required number of hours in the three year period since your registration was last renewed or you joined the register, then you must successfully complete an appropriate return to practice programme approved by the NMC before the date of your application for renewal of registration.

The NMC states that the practice hours that count towards this requirement are those in which you rely on your skills, knowledge and experience as a registered nurse or midwife. For those nurses working in the flight nurse field this may include providing direct care to patients in flight and working in a hospital as clinical practice, but can also include case management, medical assistance, and teaching, managerial or governance roles.

For most NMC registrants their practice log will be recording the time they have spent working. The NMC doesn't require a log of thousands of individual hours, but you will need to evidence that you are achieving the minimum requirement of 450 hours. In terms of conducting a medical repatriation, careful consideration must be given to what will constitute practice hours versus preparation and travel time. General guidance is that the hours to be claimed would be "trip based" from the start to the end of the repatriation i.e. the same as you claim pay for. Any additional time spent researching or reflecting on the repatriation should be considered as reflective practice i.e. researching a condition or logistics.

Registration	Minimum Total Practice Hours Required
Nurse	450 practice hours required
Midwife	450 practice hours required
Nurse and SCPHN (Nurse/SCPHN)	450 practice hours required
Midwife and SCPHN (Midwife/SCPHN)	450 practice hours required
Nurse and midwife (including Nurse/SCPHN and Midwife/SCPHN)	900 practice hours required (to include 450 hours for nursing, 450 hours for midwifery)

For flight nurses who work in the office, in the hospital and in inflight roles, best practice would be to ensure you keep a log of your hours in a range of working environments. This demonstrates the true scope of your role and that you have kept up to date with your practice. Consider obtaining records from flight operating software, from the medical assistance centre or from the nurse agency or bank for clinical hours.

The NMC has a recommended practice hours log:

<http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/what-you-need-to-do/practice-hours>

## Continuous professional development considerations

### The requirement

**You must have undertaken 35 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) relevant to your scope of practice as a nurse or midwife in the three-year period since your registration was last renewed, or when you joined the register.**

Of those 35 hours of CPD, at least 20 must have included participatory learning. You must maintain accurate records of CPD you have undertaken. These records must contain:

- the CPD method
- a description of the topic and how it related to your practice
- the dates on which the activity was undertaken
- the number of hours (including the number of participatory hours)
- the identification of the part of the Code most relevant to the activity
- evidence that you undertook the CPD activity.

The NMC doesn't prescribe any particular type of CPD; it is up to you to decide what activity is most useful for your development as a professional. Consider the full scope of your role in the flight industry and ensure your CPD is appropriate and relevant to your full scope of practice. For example, if you work in a hospital environment, ensure you have some clinically focused learning to reflect on, in addition to aviation related learning for the inflight environment.

To meet the participatory learning requirement, you simply have to undertake activities that involve interaction with one or more other professionals. This can include attending a conference, taking part in a workshop or attending a relevant training course. It can also be online learning in a twitter discussion or webinar where you have the opportunity for debate and discussion with others.

In terms of evidence, save and upload your certificate of attendance, agenda or meeting notes in your portfolio, and consider using this as opportunity to reflect alongside this.

The RCN Critical Care and Flight Nurse Forum run two annual workshops per year which enable you to claim five-six hours of CPD for each course. Find out more at:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/forums/critical-care-and-in-flight-nursing-forum>

You could also consider joining other RCN forums that run workshops and events that may relate to your practice within the aviation industry such as:

#### **RCN Defence Nurse forum**

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/forums/defence-nursing-forum>

#### **RCN Emergency care association forum**

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/forums/emergency-care-association>

#### **RCN Public health forum – Travel medicine**

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/public-health/specialist-areas/travel-health>

## Recording your CPD

The NMC have produced a template for you to use to record your CPD  
<http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/what-you-need-to-do/continuing-professional-development/>

## Practice-related feedback

### The requirement

**You must have obtained five pieces of practice-related feedback in the three-year period since your registration was last renewed or you joined the register.**

It is likely that you already receive a range of feedback, and the five pieces of feedback you collect can come from a variety of sources and in a variety of forms. It can be written or verbal, formal or informal. It may come from patients and service users, colleagues and management. It can also include feedback from team performance reports or your annual appraisal.

We recommend that you keep a note of the content of any feedback you receive, including how you used it to improve your practice. Be careful not to record any information which may identify another person.

For flight nurses in particular, find out if your employer already has feedback systems in place. For example, are they actively seeking feedback from clients? Is this feedback/complaint always forwarded on to the individual escort? Do you receive feedback or a debriefing on each of your deployments? Is there an opportunity to gather practice-related feedback from the patient? Have you been involved in a complaint or a repatriation or case which has not gone well? Have you received a compliment from a patient or employer regarding your management of a case – written or verbal?

It is vital to be proactive in obtaining this sort of feedback and establishing a solid working relationship with your employer, especially as a freelance worker.

As a manager or employer, consider implementing a formal debriefing process to promote best practice and to ensure that this reflective process can generate feedback to improve your service and to facilitate feedback opportunities with employees/workers.

## Written reflective accounts

### The requirement

You must have prepared five written reflective accounts in the three-year period since your registration was last renewed or you joined the register. Each reflective account must be recorded on the approved form and must refer to the following and how they relate to *The Code*:

- an instance of your CPD, and/or
- a piece of practice-related feedback you have received, and/or
- an event or experience in your own professional practice.

The NMC wants to encourage nurses and midwives to reflect on their practice, so they can identify any improvements or changes to their practice as a result of what they have learnt.

Each of your five reflections can be about an instance of CPD, feedback, or an event or experience from your work as a nurse or midwife – you can even write a reflection about a combination of these. It is important to think about *The Code* when you write your reflections, and consider the role of *The Code* in your practice and professional development.

If the scope of your role is varied, try to reflect this variety in your reflective accounts and demonstrate improvement in your competence and skill.

There is a gap in the industry for showcasing excellence in flight nursing. The RCN Critical Care and In-Flight Nursing Forum actively encourages its members to consider writing for publication. Consider writing up one of your experiences as a flight nurse for publication in industry magazines or RCN publications to demonstrate best practice and excellence. You could do this as an individual or as part of a team.

### Recording written reflective accounts

The NMC have a template for recording written reflective accounts:  
<http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/what-you-need-to-do/written-reflective-accounts/>

## Reflective discussion

### The requirement

**You must have had a reflective discussion with another NMC registrant, covering your five written reflective accounts on your CPD and/or practice-related feedback and/or an event or experience in your practice and how this relates to *The Code*.**

You must ensure that the NMC registrant with whom you had your reflective discussion signs the approved form recording their name, NMC Pin and email, as well as the date you had the discussion.

Give careful consideration as to who you have your reflective discussion with as this is an excellent opportunity to really challenge both yourself and your practice.

There is a helpful guidance sheet for conducting a reflective discussion and choosing a reflective discussion partner at the following link: <http://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/revalidation/reflective-discussion-guidance.pdf>

Flight nurses should be encouraged to build a strong professional network. The nature of freelance work means you may need to give careful consideration regarding who is going to support you for your reflective discussion. Remember that they must be an NMC registrant themselves. Besides that, ideally choose someone who has a solid understanding of the nature of your work, and who is able to push and constructively challenge you in the discussion to provide benefit to both parties. Consider reaching out to colleagues in the same industry via social media such as Facebook, Twitter.

The RCN Critical Care and In-Flight Nursing Forum has a Facebook site you can join: Critical Care and In-Flight Nursing Forum

The RCN is also on Twitter: [@theRCN](https://twitter.com/theRCN)

**Employees:** If you hope to have a reflective discussion with one of your employers as a freelance flight nurse, contact them well in advance to understand what sort of commitment, if any, they can offer you. Consider in advance the potential time impact for conducting the reflection. Some nurses may want to discuss in great detail so time can be

difficult to quantify. Try to make the process as smooth and easy as possible for your reflective discussion partner by preparing in advance, submitting paperwork or your portfolio beforehand at an agreed time, ensuring there is cover for you while you are away from work. Many freelance flight nurses may not see their employers face-to-face so give consideration as to how this will work. You may need to be creative with the way you conduct your revalidation – consider using Skype if a face-to-face meeting is not possible due to the nature of your work.

**Employers:** Many employers may build the reflective discussion into their regular business appraisals, but some may require it to occur separately (where the business appraiser is not NMC registered for instance). Consider, agree and communicate your expectations well in advance to all employees and include guidance on how this will be managed for freelance flight nurses. Consider how much accountability you have for the registrant as a business – do you ask the nurse to provide evidence that the reflection has occurred or leave it to the registrant to take onus for it? If registered with the Care Quality Commission, the business is required to have a plan for employees and ensure that they are fit to practice, on the register and planning to revalidate.

### Recording reflective discussions

The NMC have a template for recording the reflective discussion, use of which is mandatory: <http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/what-you-need-to-do/reflective-discussion/>

## Health and character

### The requirement

You must provide a health and character declaration. You must declare if you have been convicted of any criminal offence or issued with a formal caution.

You will be asked to declare if you have been subject to any adverse determination that your fitness to practise is impaired by a professional or regulatory body (including those responsible for regulating or licensing a health and social care profession).

With regards to physical health for freelance nurses the onus to declare lies with the escort. This should be factored into the employment contract whereby the nurse takes accountability and is contractually obliged to declare any change in their health.

For regular employees, this should be managed by Human Resource procedures and contracts of employment.

## Professional Indemnity arrangement

### The requirement

**You must declare that you have, or will have when practising, appropriate cover under an indemnity arrangement.**

As a registered nurse or midwife, you are legally required to have a professional indemnity arrangement in place in order to practise. Most employers provide the appropriate cover for their employees, but it is worth checking with your employer to confirm this and you should ask to see a hard copy for the full details.

If you are self-employed or freelance, you will need to have arranged your own professional indemnity cover.

The RCN offers Indemnity insurance for flight nursing but please note that the scheme's territorial cover does not extend to any claim made in either the United States of America (USA) or Canada, irrespective of where the alleged negligence occurred. The laws on international jurisdiction and applicable law when incidents occur in-flight are highly complex.

For more information please refer to the following link and the Indemnity scheme document: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/membership/legal-help/indemnity>

## Confirmation

### The process

**The NMC will ask you for confirmation so they can verify the declarations you have made in your application.**

This will be a declaration in which you have demonstrated to an appropriate confirmer that you have complied with the revalidation requirements. The NMC provides a form for you to use to obtain this confirmation.

They will ask you to provide the name, NMC Pin or other professional identification number (where relevant), email, professional address and postcode of the confirmer. It is not mandatory for the confirmer to be NMC registered.

More information, including a useful tool to help you identify who can be your confirmer, is located at the following link:

<http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/what-you-need-to-do/confirmation/>

There is no network of approved NMC confirmers so it's critical to give careful consideration well in advance of who can look at the evidence and confirm you have met the requirements for revalidation. You are required to have this part of the process conducted face-to-face discussion or video teleconference so this must be booked in. Ideally this should be with your line manager, but if this is not possible a suitable person must be agreed well ahead of time.

### Additional considerations for employers

Organisations are encouraged to assess the nurses' understanding of revalidation and their commitment to development during the interview phase. Consider asking for evidence of how the flight nurse is working towards revalidation, ask to see a copy of their portfolio at the interview and set clear expectations of what is required of them throughout the contract of their employment.

Organisations are encouraged to continue to monitor this throughout the duration of their employment on an annual basis. Review of an employee's progress toward revalidation would form a logical part of annual performance reviews.

Any quality-driven organisation will see this as an opportunity to support their nurses and midwives. If freelance flight nurses have difficulty revalidating there is the potential they could leave this specialised sector, resulting in the loss of valuable skillsets.

The RCN encourages organisations to review and communicate their expectations and commitment to nurses who work for and within their organisations as soon as possible.

## Portfolios

Guidance on maintaining and developing a portfolio can be found here:

<http://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/revalidation/e-portfolios-and-revalidation-guidance-sheet.pdf>

RCNi has developed a fully portable and NMC compliant portfolio for nurses and midwives. This can be a pay per subscription, but is free if you are a subscriber to any RCNi publications. Organisations may also like to consider making this available to all their NMC registered employees through institutional subscription which has the added benefit of an administrator dashboard, providing managers with a simple snapshot of their nurses' usage of the portfolio: <http://rcni.com/content/your-guide-rcni-portfolio>  
<https://rcni.com/content/organisational-access-rcni-portfolio>

## How can you prepare for revalidation?

- **Get to know the NMC Code**  
Familiarise yourself with the NMC Code and practise using it to reflect on your development, learning and work.
  - **Sign up to NMC Online**  
Set up your online account on the NMC website and check your renewal date. The NMC will notify you at least 60 days before your application for revalidation is due. You will then have 60 days to log into NMC Online and complete the revalidation application form.
  - **Use resources on NMC website**  
Keep an eye on the NMC website for up-to-date information and resources.
  - **Start thinking about revalidation now**  
How do you stay up to date? Are you discussing practice and development with colleagues? Are you getting enough of the right CPD? Who would be your 'confirmer'? Who will you be having a reflective discussion with?
  - **Speak to colleagues**  
Identify gaps in your development and areas for improvement, and discuss development issues with your manager.
  - **Stay organised**  
Ensure you have a clear record of courses, learning and development; keep a note of feedback and how it has informed your practice, as well as your reflections on the Code, practice and learning.
- ### Top tips to prepare for revalidation
- Make sure you are familiar with the NMC *Code of Conduct*, which was launched in March 2015, as this is key to revalidation.
  - Explore how you might use meetings, appraisals and one-to-ones to facilitate reflection on practice, provide feedback and identify developmental needs.
  - Identify the range of different learning opportunities that are available to you. This can be through both formal activities, such as a taught course or informal opportunities, such as reading about issues relevant to practice or engaging in a relevant social media discussion.
  - Start collecting your evidence and store it in a safe and secure place (paper based or digitally). This evidence will be needed when you hold your reflective discussion with another NMC registrant and for the discussion with your confirmer.
  - Reflect on your practice so that you can continue to build skills around reflective practice that will stand you in good stead for the revalidation process.

- Gather feedback from activities with your client group. Remember feedback may not always be positive – less positive feedback can often trigger us to reflect and adjust our practice appropriately.
- Begin to explore and identify who will be able to take on the role of confirmer.
- Listen to Howard Catton, former Head of RCN Policy and International, sharing his top tips to prepare for NMC revalidation: <https://audioboom.com/boos/3688693-preparing-for-revalidation-howard-s-top-tips>
- **Advice/support**  
RCN Direct will provide members with help and support in understanding NMC revalidation and how to navigate the process.  
You can call RCND Direct for revalidation advice on: **0345 772 6100** (local rate) 7 days a week from 8.30am-8.30pm.  
Or email RCN Direct at [web.enquiries@rcn.org.uk](mailto:web.enquiries@rcn.org.uk)  
Or visit [www.rcn.org.uk/contactus](http://www.rcn.org.uk/contactus)

## Resources to review

- **RCN web page on NMC revalidation**  
This gives information on what revalidation is, what the RCN has done to influence and shape it and how the RCN will support members. It also offers links to other resources. [www.rcn.org.uk/revalidation](http://www.rcn.org.uk/revalidation)
- **RCN online NMC revalidation resource**  
This has been developed by the RCN Nursing Department to give clear and concise information on NMC revalidation, what it is and how to prepare. It has information on all the requirements for registrants on NMC revalidation, in addition to separate sections for employers and confirmers. <https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/revalidation>
- **NMC website**  
The NMC website has information, guidance and resources for NMC revalidation as well as regular updates on progress. [www.nmc.org.uk/standards/revalidation](http://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/revalidation)
- **RCNi video**  
This illustrated video from RCNi gives a simple explanation of what NMC revalidation is. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxFhLEr8Q7w>
- **RCN Direct online advice factsheet**  
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/nursing-and-midwifery-council>
- **CPD**  
The RCN offers a range of online CPD resources to members: [www.rcn.org.uk/development/practice/cpd\\_online\\_learning](http://www.rcn.org.uk/development/practice/cpd_online_learning)





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The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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Written on behalf of the RCN by:

Kerryn Reynolds, Anna Crossley, Gill Coverdale,  
David Quayle and Stuart Cox

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