

IQNM RN OSCE – Candidate Handbook

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Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
National Boards
GPO Box 9958 Melbourne VIC 3001 [Ahpra.gov.au](https://www.ahpra.gov.au) 1300 419 495

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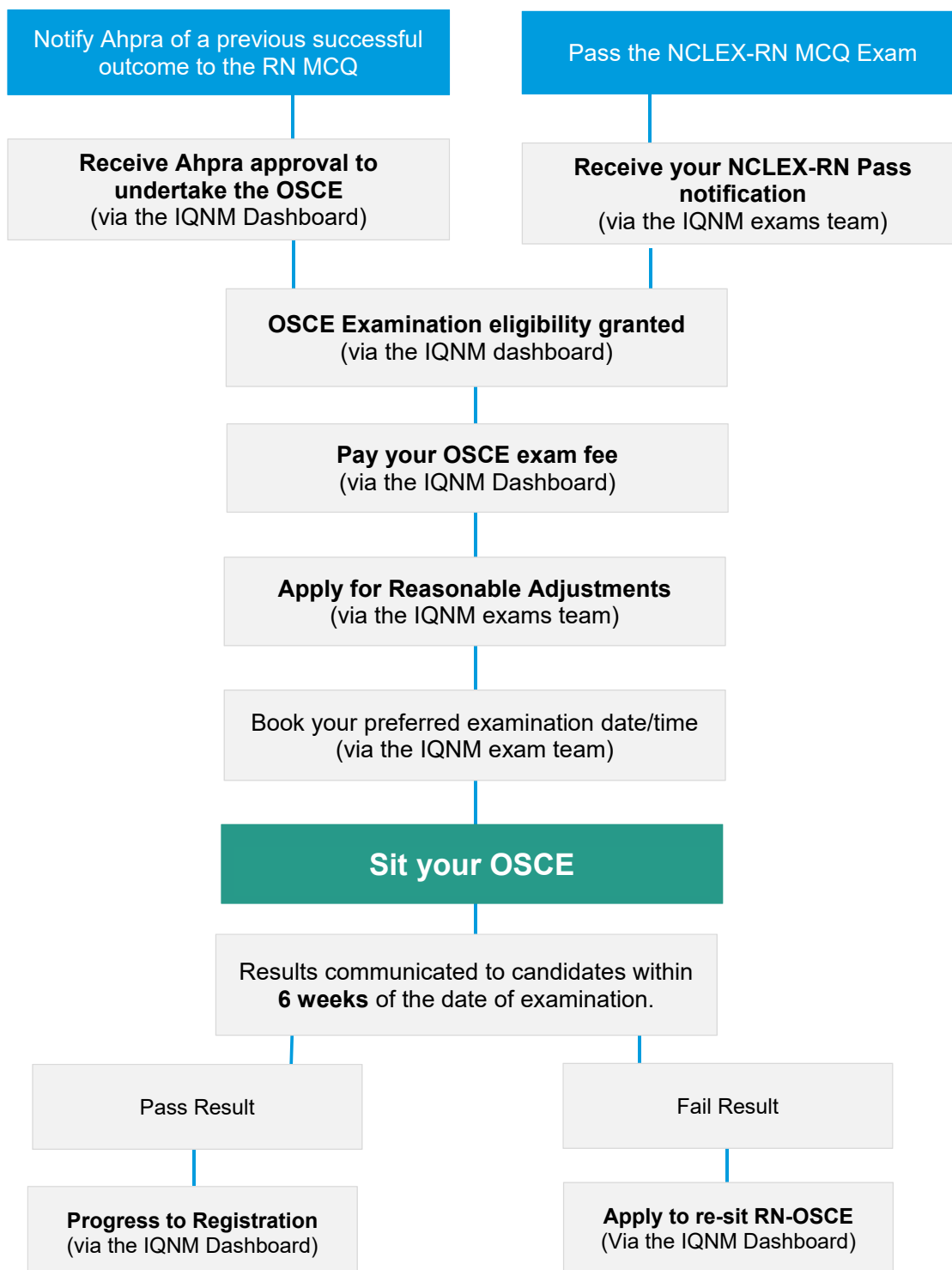
Contents

The Candidate Journey	4
Introduction.....	6
Overview of the RN OSCE.....	6
What is the RN OSCE Exam?	6
What does the OSCE assess?	6
What skills will I be assessed on?.....	7
Practical Skills	7
Communication Skills	7
What does the Examiner assess in relation to communication?	7
Does the RN OSCE involve working with real patients?	7
Before the examination	8
Registering for the RN OSCE	8
OSCE Registration Fee	8
Examination cycles and Maximum Candidate Numbers	8
Candidate Booking Selection email	8
Reasonable adjustments	8
Confirmation of your exam booking	9
Changing your scheduled examination	9
Missing an Exam Appointment	9
Refunds	9
Exam cycles at maximum capacity	9
Examination Day Preparation	10
Preparatory courses and suggested reading materials	10
What do I wear to the Examination?	10
What should I bring to the Examination?	10
Photographic ID	10
Equipment	11
Personal Belongings	11
Family, friends and children.....	11

On Examination day	12
Where is the exam held?	12
Exam Day Registration	12
Candidate Terms of Agreement	12
Video and Audio Consent form.....	12
Presentation of Phones, Tablets, Smart watches and electronic devices.....	12
Candidate ID Card.....	12
The RN OSCE Format.....	13
Examination Station Set up	13
Patients types.....	13
Station Examiners	13
Station Equipment and set-up	13
Candidate Exam Day Experience	16
Candidate Waiting Area	16
On the examination circuit.....	16
After the exam has finished	17
Candidate behaviour during the OSCE.....	18
Candidate assistance during the OSCE	18
Marking the OSCE.....	18
Tips for completing the OSCE	19
Before the OSCE.....	19
On the day of the Exam:	19
After the exam.....	20
How do I report an Incident, that prevented me from attending or complete my scheduled OSCE?	20
When will I get my results?	20
Can I get my results immediately?.....	20
What happens if I pass?	20
What happens if I fail?	20

The Candidate Journey

RN OSCE



Introduction

Following successful completion of the NCLEX RN MCQ Examination, candidates will be advised of their result via email from the IQNM exam team.

The Registered Nurse Objective Structured Clinical Examination (RN OSCE) is the practical examination for internationally qualified registered nurses seeking registration in Australia as a registered nurse.

This guideline has been prepared to assist eligible candidates who are required to complete the RN OSCE.

Overview of the RN OSCE

The RN OSCE exam consists of 10 stations (or clinical scenarios) that have been developed to test candidates against the NMBA Registered Nurse Standards for Practice. The OSCE is set at the entry to practice level that is expected of a Registered Nurse in Australia.

What is the RN OSCE Exam?

This is a **regulatory** OSCE rather than an educational OSCE and is conducted in a way that is consistent for all candidates. This means that:

- You will not receive any coaching, prompting, further explanation of the task required or feedback from the examiners during or after the OSCE
- The OSCE is run strictly to time i.e. only two (2) minutes of reading time, and eight (8) minutes of performance time allowed for each station
- When the allocated time for the station is up, you **MUST** move to the next station even if you may not have completed everything required for that station
- You are not allowed to speak to another candidate during the OSCE

You will be required to sign a Terms of agreement before the OSCE commences. This will be done on the day of the OSCE. This agreement states that you are not to discuss anything about the OSCE outside of the OSCE setting. There is more information in relation to this included in this handbook.

What does the OSCE assess?

Each RN OSCE station assesses your ability to perform a specific clinical skill, it will also take into consideration your ability to manage the care of a patient in a holistic manner. It is therefore important that the care you provide within each station takes into consideration the individual situation for that patient, and that the care provided is tailored to their individual needs.

Examples of some considerations about patient care include, but are not limited to

- a patient's ability to understand simple instructions,
- their physical capacity,
- the support that they have available to them,
- any vision or hearing impairments.

The RN OSCE examiner will assess your ability to formulate an accurate plan of care for the patient, based on your assessment findings or any information deemed relevant to the patient. Patient safety, and the care they receive, is paramount at all stages within the OSCE stations.

What skills will I be assessed on?

Practical Skills

Each candidate will be tested on a series of practical skills, these may include but are not limited to:

- Physiological observations
- Vital signs
- Calculating drug dosages
- Subcutaneous/ Intramuscular injection
- Aseptic Non-Touch Technique (ANTT)
- In hospital resuscitation (without defibrillation)
- Safe disposal of sharps
- Medication administration
- Wound care
- Hand hygiene
- Therapeutic patient communication/consent
- Infection control practices
- Patient identification
- Intravenous therapy administration/management
- Risk management in the clinical environment

Communication Skills

As communication is central to nursing practice, candidates will also be assessed on their communication skills during the OSCE. The OSCE aims to assess how you interact with the patient and your approach to the patient when providing care. This will include your ability to provide explanations to the patient about their care in an appropriate manner, as well as your ability to include the patient or family in their care where appropriate.

What does the Examiner assess in relation to communication?

The RN OSCE Examiner will assess the full range of communication skills (verbal, non-verbal and written) by observing the interaction between you and a simulated patient (this may be an actor or a manikin) and also by assessing your nursing documentation in each station.

The RN OSCE Examiner may also look at your approach to the patient throughout the examination, and will assess your communication skills such as:

- Clearly explaining care, diagnosis, investigations and/or treatments
- Involving the patient in decision-making
- Communicating with relatives and other health care professionals
- Seeking and obtaining informed consent
- Active listening
- Dealing appropriately with an anxious person or anxious relatives
- Providing clear instructions on discharge
- Demonstrating compassion and care during communication
- Clear documentation

You should speak to the patient as you would any person you are meeting for the first time.

Does the RN OSCE involve working with real patients?

At the RN OSCE, the patients involved in each case will be acting as patients (simulated patients) in many of the stations.

In some stations you may be required to interact with a manikin. Where a manikin is used as the patient, it is essential that you demonstrate a level of empathy and interaction, to the same level you would a real patient.

Before the examination

Registering for the RN OSCE

Candidates who have been confirmed as passing the NCLEX-RN MCQ Examination, will be invited via their dashboard to submit a payment for the OSCE examination.

Once payment has been confirmed as received by Ahpra, the IQNM exams team will contact the candidate to book them into the next available RN OSCE session.

OSCE Registration Fee

The OSCE registration fee for each examination sitting is **\$4000 AUD**.

This fee must be paid to Ahpra via the instructions on your IQNM dashboard before you can book your OSCE Examination date.

Examination cycles and Maximum Candidate Numbers

Examination cycles refers to the dates for each of the RN OSCE exams that will be coordinated. Each cycle will host up to 2 days of examinations including up to 4 exams sessions (2 sessions per day) and hosting a maximum of 40 candidates.

Candidate Booking Selection email

Once the IQNM exams team are notified that your payment has been received the next step is to select your preferred exam date. Within 5 days of being notified of your payment the IQNM exams team will send candidates a Booking selection email which will include the details of the next 1 or 2 exam dates that are available to book.

Candidates may respond to this email within their own timeframe however, places for each cycle are limited and these spots are expected to fill up fast. Places will be given on a first come, first served basis, if you are delayed in replying to the booking selection email, you risk missing out on a place at the next RN OSCE.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are special arrangements for the administration of the exam to provide candidates with disabilities (physical or mental impairment) full access to the exam where possible. Adjustments will only be made in line with the inherent requirements for nursing practice in Australia and must not compromise the integrity of the exam. The expected level of competence is the same for all candidates and cannot change as part of a reasonable adjustment arrangement.

If candidates wish to request reasonable adjustments this request should be sent to the IQNM exam team in writing within two (2) weeks of paying the RN OSCE fee. Appropriate documentation supporting the request for adjustments must be provided by the candidate at the time of the request and include results of appropriate diagnostic testing, submitted by a qualified professional with expertise in the areas of the diagnosed disability.

For more information on reasonable adjustments, please contact the IQNM exams team via email:

IQNMexams@ahpra.gov.au

Confirmation of your exam booking

A candidate is only confirmed for a particular exam date when they have received their RN OSCE Candidate Confirmation communication from the IQNM exams team.

This communication will include information relating to venue location, date and time of examination, exam session allocated to the candidate and any details pertaining to the expectations of a candidate presenting to the examination.

It is imperative that candidates are familiar with the details of this communication before arriving at the examination centre in Adelaide on their confirmed examination day. A copy of the RN OSCE terms of agreement for candidates and RN OSCE Video and Audio consent form will be provided attached to this communication for your reference.

The IQNM exams team will email candidates a reminder email two (2) weeks prior to your scheduled examination date.

Changing your scheduled examination

If you need to change your examination date or time, you will need to contact the IQNM exams team at IQNMexams@ahpra.gov.au or on 1300 419 495 at least three (3) full business days (72 hours) before your scheduled exam date and time. Australian National and State holidays should also be considered when deciding whether to reschedule an examination as offices may be closed.

NOTE: Leaving a message on an answering machine does not constitute giving the required notice for rescheduling or cancelling your exam appointment. Examination appointments should only be considered rescheduled or cancelled when you have received a confirmation of this being completed by the IQNM exams team.

Missing an Exam Appointment

If you fail to arrive at your exam appointment or fail to reschedule/cancel without giving the appropriate notice, you will forfeit your exam fee and you will be required to pay another exam fee should you wish to sit the OCSE in the future. Failure to take the exam will be noted and will be communicated to the IQNM exams team by the designated Exam Invigilator

Refunds

There will be no refund of examination fee for any reason, including but not limited to:

- Failure to reschedule and/or cancel an exam appointment more than three full business days before the confirmed exam date
- Failure to appear for an exam appointment

Exam cycles at maximum capacity

If your chosen exam cycle is at maximum capacity when the IQNM exams team receive your response to the booking selection email, they will be unable to offer you a place for this cycle.

The IQNM exams team will contact you with the details of any alternative RN OSCE dates that are available at that time to book.

If future examination dates are yet to be confirmed with AHS, the IQNM exams team will contact you as soon as a new date becomes available.

Examination Day Preparation

Preparatory courses and suggested reading materials

The NMBA and Ahpra do not endorse any external OSCE preparation programs.

The following reading materials may be useful to candidates:

1. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. (2017). *National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards: Guide for Hospitals*. (2nd ed.). Sydney, NSW: Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.
2. Australian Medicines Handbook. (2018). Retrieved from <https://amhonline-amh-net-au.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/>
3. Forbes, H. & Watt, E. (Eds.). (2015) *Jarvis's physical examination & health assessment* (2nd ed.). Chatswood, NSW: Elsevier.
4. Hill, R., Hall, H., & Glew, P. (2017). *Fundamentals of Nursing and Midwifery: a person-centred approach to care* (3rd ed.). Sydney, NSW: Wolters Kluwer.
5. Tollefson, J. (2012). *Clinical psychomotor skills: Assessment skills for nurses*. (5th ed.). Victoria, Australia: Cengage learning.
6. Therapeutic Guidelines – eTG Complete. (2018). Retrieved from <https://tgldcdp-tg-org-au.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/etgAccess>.
7. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) [professional standards](#)
 - a. [Registered Nurse Standards for Practice](#)
 - b. [Code of Conduct](#)
 - c. [Code of Ethics](#).

What do I wear to the Examination?

We expect that you will attend the OSCE session in appropriate clothing that is suitable for clinical practice. This is to ensure we maintain a high level of infection control and prevention, in addition to providing a safe environment for you and the simulated patients you will be working with through the OSCE.

You should **NOT** wear:

- jeans;
- ripped or torn clothing;
- singlet tops or low cut tops;
- open toed or high heel shoes/ boots.

What should I bring to the Examination?

Photographic ID

You will be required to provide photographic ID on registration. Acceptable photographic ID includes:

- Australian or overseas passport
- Australian drivers' licence

The photographic ID should be in the same name that was provided in your IQNM portfolio submitted to Ahpra.

Equipment

You do not need to bring any equipment to use during the OSCE. All equipment required will be supplied, including pens and stethoscopes.

There will be water available during the OSCE.

If you require any medications or food (for medical reasons) during the examination process these should be given to the Ahpra Invigilator at registration and will be made available by the exam invigilators as needed during the OSCE.

Personal Belongings

You are encouraged to bring only essential belongings with you to the OSCE. You will not be able to take any belongings into the examination area with you. While you are in the OSCE, your belongings will be locked securely in the candidate waiting area.

No-one will be given access to this room whilst the OSCE is being undertaken.

All mobile phones and electronic devices **MUST** be switched off and placed in an opaque plastic satchel at registration before placing it back into your bag. This parcel will need to be presented to the Ahpra Invigilator prior to you leaving the exam centre.

Please note: Ahpra and AHS will take no responsibility for lost or stolen belongings.

Family, friends and children

If you have family members, friends or children accompanying you on the day, they must remain in the reception area. They will not be permitted past the registration point and are not able to accompany you to the candidate waiting area or into the OSCE examination area.

On Examination day

Where is the exam held?

Adelaide Health Simulation is located within the University of Adelaide. AHS have two (2) separate locations where the exams may be hosted, your confirmation email will provide you with specific details on where the exam is located and which building/address location you will need to present to.

Each exam centre location may have slightly different registration locations however, the processes will remain the same as detailed below:

Exam Day Registration

Upon gaining entry to the location you be guided by an Invigilator to the registration desk, here you will be required to provide your photographic ID and will be asked to sign in on the candidate register. You will also be asked to complete and submit a candidate terms of agreement and a candidate consent for video recording

Candidate Terms of Agreement

As a part of your registration process on the day you will be required to sign a Terms of Agreement document to ensure the content of the OSCE stations you participate in remain confidential. This agreement will be witnessed by an Ahpra Invigilator on the day of the OSCE. Completing this agreement will prohibit you from discussing any information about the OSCE with anyone else, in person, or on any form of social media.

Video and Audio Consent form

You will also be asked to complete a video and audio consent form. By using AHS facilities, the RN OSCE will involve the recording of video and audio that may be used for both educational and research purposes by the IQNM exams team. Some of these uses may include but are not limited to;

- quality assurance of cases, examiners, and candidates,
- examiner and simulated patient training,
- feedback in the development of clinical scenarios, and
- other OSCE related materials or activities.

Video and audio recordings will be retained under strict security and in compliance with the relevant legislation. Where a recording is to be used by the IQNM exams team for educational or research purposes, faces of candidates will be blurred. By signing the consent form, candidates are not authorised access to any recordings. Access to recordings can only be granted in accordance with Ahpra policies.

Presentation of Phones, Tablets, Smart watches and electronic devices.

You will need to present any phones, tablets, smartwatches or electronic items to the staff at registration which they will place inside an opaque plastic satchel and will seal the satchel in front of you. This satchel will either be returned to you for storage, should you have a handbag or backpack with you, or kept safe by the Ahpra Invigilator and will be released to you or accessed by yourself at the end of the examination only.

Candidate ID Card

At registration you will be handed your candidate ID card, this card works to initiate the exam process at each station, as you progress through the examination. The information on the card should be identical to the information included in your exam communications and the registration form you sign.

If there is any issue with the information provided on the card, please bring this up with the Ahpra Invigilator at registration.

After all the candidates for your exam session have been registered, or the close of registration time has passed; you will all be taken to the candidate waiting area. Here you will be taken through a short presentation on how the exam system works for candidates.

The RN OSCE Format

The OSCE consists of ten (10) stations, with each OSCE station running for ten (10) minutes – two (2) minutes reading time & eight (8) minutes performance time.

Examination Station Set up

Patients types

The OSCE will use a variety of patient types, including simulated patients (actors), manikins or smaller pieces of equipment used to simulate part of a patient. In stations which involve demonstrating a practical skill, you may find both a simulated patient and a piece of equipment. In other stations, a simulated patient will play the role of a patient. You should treat the simulated patient as you would a real patient.

Station Examiners

An examiner will be in each station, their role in most stations is a strictly observational one, which includes marking your performance. Unless explicitly stated in the candidate instructions, examiners will not provide prompts during the OSCE. However, in some OSCE stations the candidate instruction may ask you to present your findings to the examiner, in which case you should address the examiner to do this.

At times there may also be an observer present in the station. This observer will be an audit examiner, present for quality control and benchmarking as part of the evaluation process. They will not be directly marking your performance. The observer will be as unobtrusive as possible during the station and the examiner will ensure they do not disturb you.

Station Equipment and set-up

You will find each OSCE station set up to simulate a variety of clinical environments, including both acute inpatient settings, as well as community outpatient settings. All documentation and equipment you will be required to use, are those common to Australian healthcare facilities. It is expected that all tasks and relevant documentation are performed in an attempt to complete the entirety of the station.

Examples of charts you may be required to be familiar with are as follows:

National Medication Charts -

- [Rapid deterioration and response – Adult observation chart \(MR59A\)](#)
- Adult Observation Charts
 - [Acute](#)
 - [Long Stay](#)
 - [GP e-version](#)
- Paediatric Observation Chart
 - [Acute](#)
 - [Long Stay](#)
- Neurological observation chart
- Blood glucose record chart
- [Adult falls risk assessment chart](#)
- [Pressure care risk Assessment](#)
- [Mental health risk assessment chart](#)
- Intravenous order chart

Some stations will include the use of manikins, examples of how this would be set-up with the station is shown below:



Some stations may be set-up to reflect that of a hospital suite as shown below:



Candidate Exam Day Experience

Candidate Waiting Area

Prior to the start of the OSCE, you will be collected from the candidate waiting room by an Invigilator and escorted to the examination area. The Invigilator will be wearing a bright coloured tabard vest, and will oversee your OSCE, making sure you get from station to station and is available to help you if required during the OSCE.

When the Invigilator collects you from the candidate waiting area, they will call your name in alphabetical order via surname. This is the order you will stay in to progress through the exam circuit. You will be handed a clipboard with note paper attached and on the front of this will be the station number you will be starting at.

On the examination circuit

As you are led onto the circuit, the invigilator will call out the letters of each station as they pass. Please remain at the station as listed on your clipboard, as this is your starting station.



There will be an announcement when the examination is about to start, and you will hear a bell which will signal you to scan your ID card on the black box next to the screen. It's here that your reading material will be displayed for the station, an example of the screen is included below:



Once your two (2) minutes, reading time is finished you will hear a second bell, this signifies you are to enter the room and proceed with the station. There will also be a short announcement when you have one (1) minute of interaction time left for each station.

At the end of the eight (8) minutes of interaction time, there will be a bell and an announcement informing you that your time for this station has finished, and it is time to move on to the next station. Please do so immediately, ensuring to leave any notes made during the station inside the room before exiting.

Upon exit, you should progress directly to the next station and an announcement will be made when you are able to scan onto the next screen for your next set of instructions.

Candidates should note the following in relation to the end of a station:

- If you are unable to complete the station in the allocated time frame, you will not be able to have any more time. You should stop what you are doing and move to the next station.
- If you finish the station before the completion of the allocated time, you will be required to remain in the station room until the final announcement has been made to move. You may not talk with anyone who is in the room during this time.

After the exam has finished

After you have progressed through all 10 stations and the examination has finished you will be asked to do the following:

- Leave your clipboard and ID card on the chair of the station you just exited
- Follow the Invigilator as they lead you back to the candidate waiting area.
- Listen to the post examination candidate debrief (approx. 5 mins)
- Ready yourself to be escorted from the exam centre
- Follow the Invigilator as they escort you from the building.

As you exit the building you may then open your satchels and access your personal belongings. However, please note that confidentiality still applies, and no exam related information should be shared with any other person.

Candidate behaviour during the OSCE

It is expected that you will behave in a professional manner at all times while you are within the simulation centre and during the OSCE, adhering to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) professional standards, which define the practice and behaviour of nurses practicing in Australia. These standards include the [Registered nurse standards for practice](#) and [Professional standards - Code of conduct for nurses](#) and [Code of ethics for nurses](#).

It is recommended that you are familiar with these documents prior to attending the OSCE. Adherence to behaviour and conduct in line with the professional standards, will ensure the safety of you and the simulated patient during the OSCE.

Deviation in practice from the professional standards during the OSCE may result in the examiner and/or chief examiner asking you to discontinue what you are doing prior to completion of the OSCE. Behaviour that may lead to discontinuation of the OSCE includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- the simulated patient feeling unsafe as a result of your behaviour/actions, or
- the examiner deeming your behaviour to be unsafe, or not professional.

If you have been asked to discontinue the OSCE due to unprofessional behaviour, you will not be allowed to recommence the exam until further discussion with the OSCE chief examiner occurs and may result in you being removed from the exam altogether.

The simulated patient may also request that you do not perform a certain task if they are feeling unsafe in anyway. If this occurs, the station examiner will indicate if you are able to continue and complete the station. You will be required to adjust your practice to ensure the simulated patient is no longer feeling unsafe. If you do not adjust your practice, and the simulated patient continues to feel unsafe, you will be discontinued from the OSCE

Candidate assistance during the OSCE

If you require any help (such as feeling unwell or need to go to the bathroom) during the OSCE or are unable to continue the OSCE, you should remain at the door of the station, raise your hand and you will be assisted by an exam invigilator.

If you are in a station room and unable to continue attempting the station, you should inform the examiner and must remain in the station until changeover time. When the announcement for the end of the station occurs, you can exit the station, raise your hand and you will be assisted by an exam invigilator.

If you are able to continue the OSCE, you will enter at the station you are scheduled for at that time. This means you may miss a station/s and you will not be able to make up any stations missed.

Marking the OSCE

Each OSCE station is marked by a trained and qualified examiner, using evidence-based assessment criteria matched specifically to the scenario. Assessment criteria have been mapped to the Registered nurse standards for practice and referenced against those listed in the recommended readings section.

The examiner will be marking your performance during and at the conclusion of the station.

Tips for completing the OSCE

Before the OSCE

- Familiarise yourself with the location of the OSCE, including travel times and parking information;
- Familiarise yourself with the expectations for the day;
- Ensure you get a good sleep the night before the OSCE;
- Ensure you review each section of this information module so that you understand the requirements for the day, particularly in regard to what to bring and what to wear;
- Review the information provided about the format of the OSCE and how to conduct yourself during the OSCE;
- Resources:
 - Review the Registered nurse standards for practice;
 - Review the Professional standards - Code of conduct for nurses and Code of ethics for nurses;
 - Review the reference list and recommended readings;
 - Review the list of examples of potential skills to be examined and utilise appropriate references to review skills as deemed necessary.

On the day of the Exam:

- Ensure you adhere to the appropriate dress requirements;
- Ensure you bring photo identification with you;
- Ensure you arrive on time;
- Ensure you allow enough time for travelling should there be any unanticipated delays in traffic or other modes of transport and to park;
- Ensure you have eaten prior to arriving for your session;
- Ensure you have notified the Ahpra Invigilator of any special considerations you may require during the OSCE (e.g. access to medications or food whilst in the OSCE area);
- During the OSCE
 - Remember you will be assessed against that expected of an entry level registered nurse;
 - Ensure you utilise the two (2) minute reading time to thoroughly read the station instructions;
 - Be prepared for the use of manikins, simulated patients and part-task trainers in the examination process and ensure you treat them as you would real patients;
 - Be sure to listen carefully to all instructions provided and adhere to these;
 - Avoid focusing on the completing a task alone, rather consider the clinical scenario as a whole.

After the exam

How do I report an Incident, that prevented me from attending or complete my scheduled OSCE?

Special consideration may be considered where a candidate was unable to attend or complete their scheduled OSCE due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control. Only those candidates who can demonstrate that they have reasons beyond their control are eligible for special consideration.

- acute illness or injury (such as hospital admission, onset of serious illness)
- loss or bereavement (such as death of close family member)
- hardship or trauma (such as being a victim of crime, severe disruption to domestic life)
- unforeseen call-up for service (such as military service, court appearance, Jury service, emergency service)
- work commitments and circumstances beyond their control (a letter on company/organisation letterhead from an employer confirming this must be provided)
- religious convictions (a letter from a religious leader must accompany the application)
- natural disaster, bomb threat or similar such event necessitating the evacuation of the exam centre

Candidates must submit a request for special consideration in writing, prior to or within seven (7) calendar days following the scheduled OSCE. Relevant documentary evidence of the exceptional circumstances beyond their control must be included in the request

More information can be found in the Reasonable adjustments and special consideration for examinations policy on the [NMBA IQNM Examination webpage](#).

When will I get my results?

Results will be released within six (6) weeks of the examination date taking place. Candidates will receive an email communication which will include a formal notification of their result and the next steps they will need to undertake.

Please note: This communication will be sent to the email address given to Ahpra at the point of registering for the OSCE.

Can I get my results immediately?

Results are not able to be delivered to candidates immediately as they need to be calculated and ratified by the RN OSCE Examination Committee before being released to candidates.

What happens if I pass?

Candidates who pass the RN OSCE exam are able to progress with their IQNM journey and may now apply for to Ahpra for registration with the NMBA. In this instance your candidate IQNM dashboard will update to identify your next steps in relation to this process.

What happens if I fail?

Candidates who fail the RN-OSCE are able to retake the OSCE. If you choose to retake the OSCE you need to follow the steps as identified in the result communication, you receive to pay and register for another exam attempt.