Introduction
This brochure responds to frequently asked questions from nurses considering application for Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) Nurse Practitioner™ endorsement. The two key documents which will guide the process of application are: The Nurse Practitioner™ responding to the health needs in New Zealand, and The Nurse Practitioner™ endorsement guidelines for nurses. These documents are available on www.nursingcouncil.org.nz or a hard copy can be purchased from the Nursing Council by either writing to P.O. Box 3644, Wellington or by phone on 04-8020247.

The Mentor System
NPAC-NZ through its constituent groups has established a mentoring programme which will assist applicants. If you are going to apply for endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner™ and would like to have a mentor, contact your professional organisation. The mentors are nurses who have either become Nurse Practitioners™, or they are nurses who have had education sessions with the Nursing Council and NPAC-NZ for the purpose of being a mentor. Your mentor will assist and guide you with the application process, including the development of your portfolio.

NPAC-NZ would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Health for the sponsorship of this Brochure.

The following are useful references and websites
The Nurse Practitioner™ Responding to Health Needs in New Zealand
The Nurse Practitioner™ Endorsement: Guidelines for Applicants
September 2002
Nursing Council
www.nursingcouncil.org.nz
College of Nurses Aotearoa
www.nurse.org.nz
New Zealand Nurse Organisation
www.nzno.org.nz
Ministry of Health
www.moh.govt.nz
Australia, New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses
www.nzcmhn.org.nz
National Council of Maori Nurses
www.hauora.maori.org.nz
Ministry of Health (2002) Nurse Practitioners™ in New Zealand
NPAC-NZ
The Nurse Practitioner™ Advisory Committee of New Zealand

Frequently Asked Questions
What should be in my portfolio?
The portfolio provides evidence for each of the competencies that must be achieved to become a Nurse Practitioner™. The portfolio provides you with the opportunity to describe your nursing practice, and how you contribute to the improvement of the outcomes for the patients and families in your care. While there is no set outline for the portfolio there are some essential components. These are:
- A statement outlining your specific area of practice.
- Documents which illustrate the development and depth of your practice, such as: case studies, exemplars, annotated cases, a diary of a typical working week.
- Examples of scholarly inquiry, such as: publications, research activities, development of new nursing knowledge, membership and involvement in professional organisations.
- Educational qualifications.
- Curriculum Map.
- Evidence of professional credentials.
- Referees.
- The nurse in you should leap out of the pages for the panel to meet. Your focus on nursing practice, your underlying philosophy, advanced assessment skills, utilisation of evidence and continuous quality improvement strategies should be evident to the assessment panel.

Don’t forget:
- before sending your portfolio for assessment, all supporting evidence must be verified.
- The verification must include a signature, a date, and the designation of the person verifying the document. Check that this has been done on all necessary documents before sending your portfolio for assessment, as having to go back and obtain verification will slow down the application process.

How should I set out my portfolio?
A professional presentation of your work is important. There is not a set format, but it is important that you portfolio is clear and easy for the panel to read. There must be an index, the sections are to be divided by tabbed inserts and the pages numbered. One suggestion for formatting your portfolio is to use each of the competencies as a section, providing evidence that meets each of these separately.

For example: Scholarly Inquiry
You may include in this section any research that you have been involved with, presentations, publications or any documents which demonstrate how you have contributed to the body of knowledge. Remember that the panel members need to find the evidence within your portfolio, so try to make it as easy as possible for them.

What is a specific area of practice statement?
Your area of practice is unique to you and must include the community and specialty that you practice within and the parameters of your practice. To put it simply it is what you do as a nurse, who you practice with and how you go about doing that. Make sure you include the context, client group(s) and how you work as a nurse and with other health providers.
Many nurses applying for endorsement for Nurse Practitioner™ find this the most difficult to write. While it may be difficult to get started, once you have started you will find, as others have, that this is an opportunity to really think about your nursing practice, and reflect on the care and skills that you provide.
A useful place to start is to read about scopes of practice in the literature. The Internet Journal of Advanced Nursing Practice URL at: http://www.ispub.com/journals/IJANP/Jan12N2/scope.htm. Published July 1997

When your portfolio is complete, return to the guidelines for applicants and check that you have included all the necessary documents.

What does the panel want to see in the journal?
The journal is an opportunity for you to demonstrate reflective nursing practice. The suggestion is that you write a typical week; three to five days. Again there are no set guidelines, the journal need not be appointment by appointment account of what you do as a nurse. The panel should be able to see you providing evidence based care at an advanced level and your reflections of the efficacy of that care. You may wish to provide a commentary about why you made decisions and the outcomes of your decisions.

How do I know if my Masters programme has been approved by the Nursing Council?
The programmes currently endorsed are on the NCNZ website www.nursingcouncil.org.nz. This web-site is frequently updated. If you are enrolling or are currently enrolled in a Masters programme, ask the education provider if it is a Council approved programme.

What is Educational Equivalence and how is it assessed?
The educational equivalence option reduces barriers for the many nurses who have not had access to a clinical Masters programme but have achieved advanced nursing knowledge and practice through other pathways. The applicant is required to demonstrate within their portfolio the integration of theory, research and nursing practice in achieving positive outcomes for patients within their specific area of practice. The level at which this utilisation of advanced nursing knowledge, critique and analysis is to be demonstrated is at Masters graduate level. There is a separate process to assess the education equivalence to a clinical Masters programme. Firstly, the education advisor assesses the portfolio and makes a recommendation. The Education Committee of the Nursing Council undertakes an assessment and makes a recommendation. It is important to note that the assessment of educational equivalence is not against Nurse Practitioner™ competencies (that is the role of the Nurse Practitioner assessment panel) but against the level of thinking, knowledge and reflection of a Masters graduate.

What makes up the assessment panel?
Assessment panels are tailored to each applicant’s specific area of practice. There are essential components of each panel which include:
- A professional nurse leader with national/international understanding of advanced nursing practice.
- A nurse with expertise in education, experienced in the assessment of advanced competencies.
- A nurse practicing at an advanced level with ability to critique practice.
- A peer from the same specific area of practice, this panel member may not be a nurse. Generally there are four panel members, but it is possible that the roles maybe combined. An example of this is that the advanced practice nurse may also be from the same specialty area of practice as the applicant. In time, Nurse Practitioners™ will be part of the assessment panels. Other panels members may be a representative from a particular cultural or consumer group. In addition to the panel members there will be up to two Nursing Council staff present at the panel assessment. The role of the Nursing Council staff is to ensure consistency between assessments and to provide administrative support.

Do I have the right to challenge members of the assessment panel?
Yes! You can confidentially challenge panel members if you believe that there maybe a conflict in relation to your application. They will be removed from the panel and replaced.

Do I need to have a clinical Masters to apply for endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner?
No! It is not necessary to have a clinical masters. If you have a masters which is not approved by the Nursing Council as a clinical masters, you need to demonstrate through your application, guidelines for applicants and check that you have included all the necessary documents.

What advice would you give me if I was to have a site visit?
- Referees.

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