

## Postgraduate Qualifications in Emergency Nursing

### Purpose

An Emergency Nurse Specialist is defined as a registered nurse who has professional preparation and significant experience in the emergency practice setting and who is able to demonstrate the ongoing achievement of the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia (CENA) practice standards.<sup>1</sup> CENA recognises that the educational preparation of specialist emergency nurses is vital for the provision of safe, high quality, evidence based care to the community. This position statement defines the minimum expected requirements for postgraduate emergency nursing courses.

### Background

Emergency nursing requires complex decision making, advanced interpersonal communication and teamwork skills, all of which are dependent on high levels of knowledge and professional behaviours.<sup>2</sup> Tertiary education provides greater depth of knowledge and enhanced skills, which improves safety and quality of patient care and empower nurses to provide better outcomes for patients.<sup>3-8</sup> CENA believes that a consistent standard is required in order to achieve the intended professional and clinical outcomes of a postgraduate qualification in emergency nursing.

### Position

1. CENA strongly advocates the pursuit of postgraduate qualifications in emergency nursing.
2. A postgraduate qualification in emergency nursing should be recognised at Australian Qualification Framework<sup>9</sup> level 8 (Graduate Certificate / Graduate Diploma) as the minimum standard for emergency nurse specialists.
3. Hospital based education programs for which credit is granted at Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma level should also have evidence of meeting Australian Qualification Framework<sup>9</sup> level 8 standards in terms of content and complexity of assessment tasks.
4. The curricula of postgraduate emergency nursing qualifications must provide appropriate theoretical and clinical experience, including a clinical assessment component, to prepare nurses to meet the domains of the *Practice Standards for Emergency Nursing Specialist*.<sup>1</sup>
5. Education providers are encouraged to provide flexible modes of program delivery that enable nurses greater access to postgraduate education in emergency nursing.
6. Nurses pursuing postgraduate qualifications in emergency nursing should have access to clinical and academic support and guidance from appropriately qualified staff. These staff will have completed academic qualifications equal to, or higher than, the qualification being pursued.
7. CENA supports continued collaboration between education providers, health care organisations and consumers to improve the quality of postgraduate specialist education for emergency nurses.
8. CENA supports initiatives by healthcare organisations to provide financial or career incentives for emergency nurses to undertake postgraduate qualifications in emergency nursing.

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### References

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