

NURSING+
MIDWIFERY

Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist: Application Guide

July 2022



Western Health

Purpose

Staff this document applies to Registered Nurses and/or Midwives who qualify for, or are working towards classification as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or Clinical Midwife Specialist (CMS), and aims to:

- Provide an equitable and transparent process for the appointment of a CNS/CMS
- Ensure that all nurses/midwives understand the requirements of achieving and maintaining a classification of CNS/CMS

Role expectations

The CNS/CMS is a clinical expert in their area of specialisation and accepts responsibility for professional activities that support service delivery and the professional development of self and others. The CNS/CMS serves as a role model and demonstrates leadership in their specialty on their ward/area.

Formal Requirements

A Registered Nurse (RN) or Registered Midwife (RM) appointed to CNS/CMS:

- **must meet one** of the **practice** requirements, **and**
- must demonstrate **at least one criterion from each** of the **eligibility** categories.

The criteria for eligibility should be relevant to their current area or ward and focuses on a specialty or subject matter.

Practice Requirements

An RN/RM (employed either full or part-time) appointed to CNS/CMS must have:

- Attained specific post graduate qualifications (e.g. Graduate Diploma in area of specialty)
 - At least 12 months experience in the clinical area of their specific post graduate qualification
 - Responsibility for clinical nursing/midwifery duties
- OR**
- Completed a minimum of four years post registration experience within the specific area of expertise and clinical setting

Eligibility

The criteria for eligibility (as set out in Appendix 4 of the *Nurses and Midwives (Victorian Public Sector) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2020-2024*) fall into three distinct categories:

1. clinical skill,
2. professional behaviour and
3. professional development.

The applicant must demonstrate **at least one criterion from each** of the eligibility categories below. Each eligibility criteria relates to subject matter that is relevant to their current area of specialty.

1. Clinical Skill

- Higher level of skill demonstrated in clinical decision making – in particular in problem identification and solution, and analysis and interpretation of clinical data
- Maintenance and improvement of clinical standards

2. Professional Behaviour

- Positive Role Model
- Act as a mentor or preceptor to less experienced nurses/midwives, including graduate nurses/midwives
- Support of, and contribution to, quality improvement and research projects within the area of practice and ward/unit/department
- Acting as a resource person to others in relation to clinical practice

3. Professional Development

- Membership of relevant professional body, and ability to demonstrate and document;
 - Learning from a journal article, or attendance at a conference or seminar, or reflection on seminar or conference papers

OR

- Participation in effective learning activities relevant to their learning needs
- OR
- Membership of a sub-grouping of the professional association relevant to their area of practice
- Contribute to the education of other professionals, for example, being willing to provide at least one in-service education program each year
- Undertaking own planned professional development and competence through various forms of continuing education, for example, conferences, study days, formal study, reading

4. Criteria

- A candidate must be permanently rostered to a specific ward/area for the hours that they wish to be considered for a CNS/CMS classification, this includes part-time employees. This does not preclude working hours in another location at another classification.
- Post-graduate qualifications include courses considered to be relevant to the area of expertise, practice and application for which the CNS/CMS applicant is being sought. Such qualifications must be the level of a hospital certificate, graduate certificate or graduate diploma (or equivalent) relevant to the area of expertise in which the applicant works.
- Nurses/midwives applying for CNS/CMS classification must meet the criteria to a level deemed satisfactory within Western Health.
- Prior to applying for a CNS/CMS role it is important the applicant consider the following:
 - A nurse or midwife practicing in a specialised field, does not automatically meet the classification of CNS/CMS.
 - A nurse/midwife who is able to perform some tasks better than other nurses/midwives or all tasks competently does not automatically meet the classification of CNS/CMS.
 - Leave without pay does not count towards qualifying length of experience
 - Length of service at Western Health does not determine eligibility for CNS/CMS
 - Applicants must be familiar with the CNS/CMS [position description](#)
- Nurses/Midwives who held a CNS/CMS classification at another health service who commence employment at Western Health (within the same specialty area) can apply to commence in a CNS/CMS classification. The CNS/CMS must demonstrate how they met the CNS/CMS criteria prior to commencement on the CNS/CMS Self Appraisal Form. Alternatively, RN/RMs can apply in the next available round and if successful, the classification can be back-dated to their commencement date.
- Previous Western Health employees returning after no more than 12 months absence from the relevant specialty may be re-employed at the CNS/CMS classification – appointment will be in accordance with Western Health Recruitment Policy Guidelines.
- Associate Nurse or Midwife Unit Manager (ANUM/AMUM) or UM's wishing to transfer to a CNS/CMS position will be considered according to the same eligibility criteria.

Application Process

- Invitations to apply for CNS/CMS positions will be advertised on Western Health internal jobs adverts in April and October each year. Mental Health advertise for CNS positions for a total of four times per year in accordance with the respective enterprise agreement.
- The applicant submits full Curriculum Vitae, application form, and a completed self-appraisal form to the Unit Manager.
- The Unit Manager organises a suitable time to interview the applicant. An interview is recommended for the professional development of the applicant. The process should be finalised within 1 month of the Unit Manager receiving the application.
- Interviews will be conducted by the Unit Manager, with another panellists consisting of either an Associate Unit Manager or Clinical Educator and other. The interview will consist of questions relevant to the position description, area of specialty and domains of practice,
- Following the interview the Unit Manager completes the Comment section of the applicant's self-appraisal, including whether they believe that the staff member meets the criteria.
- The applicant is notified in writing of the outcome of their interview within 7 days.
- If the applicant is successful an employment variation is completed by the Unit Manager and forwarded to People & Culture utilising the approved Western Health process for variations. CNS/CMS classification will occur from the next pay period on or after the date of notification to the staff member.
- As per all nursing and midwifery positions, the performance of a CNS/CMS will be reviewed annually or as required using the Western Health performance development structure.
- If the applicant is unsuccessful the Unit Manager arranges to meet with the applicant to provide feedback and set objectives to assist future applications. The applicant may appeal as outlined in the 'Appeal Process'.
- For the complete CNS/CMS application process refer to the Flow Chart.

Application Checklist

The following documents are required for Western Health CNS/CMS applications:

- Application Form including completed CNS/CMS self-assessment (*Appendix 1*)
- Curriculum vitae including practice requirements
- Evidence to support self-assessment including certified copies of qualifications
- Copy of most recent performance development plan (PDP) including plan to meet criteria over the next year

Appeal Process

Any appeal of the decision must be made by the applicant in writing within two weeks of the decision being made. This should be addressed to the Director of Nursing & Midwifery of their Division. The Appeals Committee will be convened to arbitrate on the unsuccessful CNS/CMS application within four weeks. The Appeals Committee consists of:

- One Director of Nursing and Midwifery
- One Unit Manager
- One CNS/CMS or other nominee as appropriate.

All representatives on the Appeals Committee will not have been involved in the original decision.

Ongoing requirements

The CNS/CMS and the Unit Manager will meet on an ongoing basis to provide feedback. The performance of the CNS/CMS will be formally appraised at the annual performance and development review.

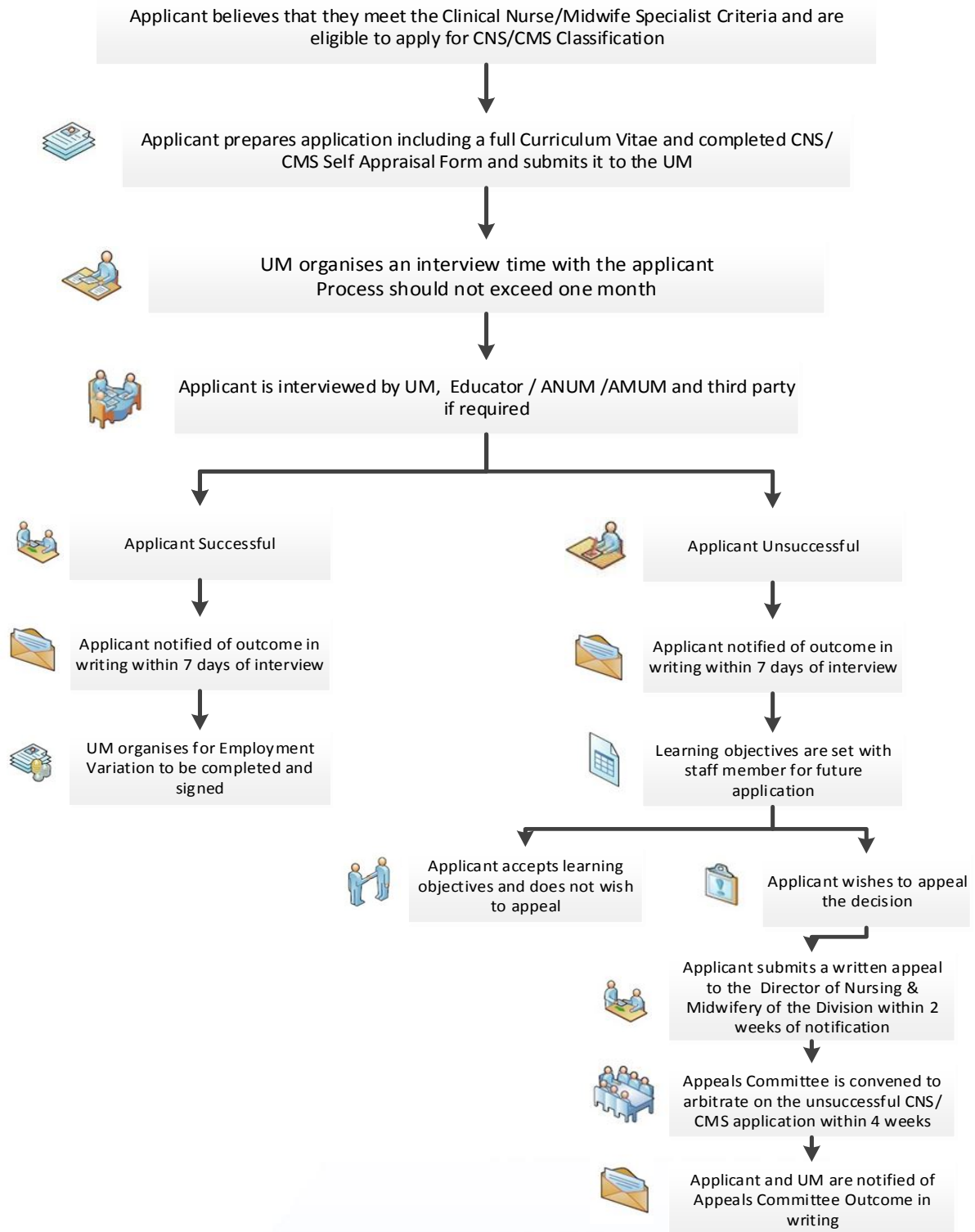
Annual Review Process

All CNS/CMSs are required to undergo an annual review process to maintain their CNS/CMS classification. The review process is recommended to occur at the time of the staff member's annual Performance Development Plan (PDP).

Western Health reserves the right to revoke the CNS/CMS classification if a staff member fails to continue to meet the criteria during the course of their employment.

CNS/CMS Application Process Flow Chart

Invitations to apply for CNS/CMS positions will be advertised on Western Health internal jobs adverts in April and October each year. Mental Health advertise for CNS positions for a total of four times per year.



Appendix 1: Application Form and Self-Assessment

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST / CLINICAL MIDWIFE SPECIALIST APPLICATION FORM



This application form has been designed to assist nursing / midwifery staff in the process of application for Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or Clinical Midwife Specialist (CMS) classification. The application process is designed to articulate with the selection criteria as outlined by the Enterprise Agreement and should be read in conjunction with a copy of the Position Description for your specialty area. Application closing dates to be posted six monthly.

Process for CNS / CMS application:

- Applicants are encouraged to speak to their Unit Manager (UM) prior to their application.
- CNS / CMS Applications will take place twice a year. The application closing dates are April 30th and October 31st, each year.
- An invitation to applicants will be posted one month prior to closing dates.
- Written application, including completed application package is to be submitted to the UM.
- Interviews will be held promptly – the panel must include UM, Associate Unit Manager or educator and one other.
- If successful, applicants will be notified in writing within seven days regarding the outcome of application. A variation form will be completed and sent to People & Culture to ensure written notification and payroll adjustments are promptly implemented.
- If unsuccessful, applicants will be notified of the outcome within seven days and an explanation will be given to the applicant as to the reasons for decision.
- An appeal process is available to unsuccessful applicants. An appeal is to be lodged by the applicant directly to Director of Nursing & Midwifery (DONM) of the Division within two weeks of receiving the rejection letter. Appeals will be heard by the Appeal Committee chaired by the DONM.

Applicant Details

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

Mobile:

Email address:

Unit:

Campus:

Name of Unit Manager:

Current Position:

Classification:

Specific Field of Experience:

Applicant's Signature:

Date:

Classification Criteria

- The level of clinical practice reflects a higher level of skill than would be expected of other Grade 2 nurses / midwives, but less than an ANUM/AMUM. Applicants for CNS / CMS must also show a commitment to development of an area of specialty and their own professional development.
- Applicants must meet the clinical nurse specialist definition, be employed either full time or part time and demonstrate one criterion in each of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.
- CNS / CMS applicants must meet the award definition of a registered nurse / midwife with either a specific post graduate qualification and 12 month's experience working in the clinical area of her/his specified post graduate qualification, and is responsible for clinical nursing/midwifery duties
or
- Have a minimum of four years post registration experience, including three years' experience in the relevant specialist field .The applicant must be able to meet one of the criteria in each of the three sections listed.

Applicant to complete details of criteria met in each section below:

1. Clinical Skills

Please select (✓) the criteria you meet and provide evidence:

- Higher level of skill demonstrated in clinical decision making - in particular in problem identification and solution, and analysis and interpretation of clinical data;
- Maintenance and improvement of clinical standards.

Interview Panel Comment on Clinical Skill (post interview and observed normal work activity)

CRITERIA MET: yes / no

2. Professional Behaviour

Please select (✓) the criteria you meet and provide evidence:

- Positive role model;
- Act as a mentor or preceptor to less experienced nurses/midwives, including graduate nurses/midwives;
- Support of, and contribution to, quality improvement and research projects within the area of practice and ward/unit/department;
- Acting as a resource person to others in relation to clinical practice.

**Interview Panel Comment on Clinical Skill
(post interview and observed normal work activity)**

CRITERIA MET: yes / no

3. Professional Development

Please select (✓) the criteria you meet and provide evidence:

- Membership of relevant professional body, and ability to demonstrate and document:
 - learning from a journal article, or attendance at a conference or seminar, or reflection on seminar or conference papers; or
 - participation in effective learning activities relevant to their learning needs; or
 - membership of a sub-grouping of the professional association relevant to their area of practice;
- Contribution to the education of other professionals, for example, being willing to provide at least one in-service education program each year;
- Undertaking own planned professional development and competence through various forms of continuing education, for example, conferences, study days, formal study, reading.

Interview Panel Comment on Clinical Skill (post interview and observed normal work activity)

CRITERIA MET: yes / no

Employment History Related to CNS / CMS Application

Position Held in Specific Practice Area	Employer	Hours Worked per Fortnight	Period of Employment

Education Qualifications (please attach certified copies of relevant qualifications with Curriculum Vitae)

Course Name	Institution	Completion Date

Post Registration Experience

Experience in Relevant Specialised Field	From	To

Appendix 2: Interview Guidance

Applicants should be prepared for an interview that demonstrates their contribution to their area of specialty in the following 5 domains of practice:

1. Direct and Comprehensive Care- Patient history and assessment; delivery of care; monitor and evaluate care
2. Support of Systems- Planning for the future; safety and quality; recruitment and retention
3. Education- Patients and families; Self; Others
4. Research and Quality- Knowledge of research in area; participation and dissemination of research
5. Professional Leadership- Professional conduct; accountability

The Unit Manager may request a presentation is prepared prior to interview

Interviews will be conducted by the UM, ANUM/AMUM or educator and one other,

Appendix 3: Template Letter of Congratulations for Successful Applicants

Date/Month/Year

Addressee's details

Street Address

SUBURB/TOWN STATE Postcode

Dear Addressee

Re: Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist Application

Congratulations on your successful application for the Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist position on [insert ward/department].

The work you have done and skills you have shown demonstrate your readiness to become a specialist member of the team. This appointment is an active role, with certain expectations that you need to meet to maintain the title of Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist on an ongoing basis. These include that you:

- Have developed and continue to maintain a higher level of clinical knowledge, skills abilities and attributes
- Actively participate in and contribute to initiatives that have a unit and/or organisational impact
- Undertake ongoing professional development activities for self and and contributes to other's development
- Serve as a role model and demonstrate leadership in the specialty

A yearly performance development discussion will be undertaken with your Unit Manager to allow you to demonstrate how you have met these expectations, plan for future professional development and discuss your contribution to the ward/department through clinical practice, quality improvement, education, research and leadership.

Once again, congratulations on your success. We look forward to your ongoing contribution to [insert ward/department] and to Western Health.

Yours sincerely,

Unit Manager

[insert ward/department]

Western Health