



Communiqué

Medical Board of Australia meeting: 30 August 2013

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

Renewal of registration for 2013/14

The registration renewal campaign for medical practitioners is now well underway and email reminders have been sent to registrants who have provided an email address to the Board. During September, paper reminders will be posted to medical practitioners who have not renewed.

At the end of August, 49% of medical practitioners had renewed their registration online.

The registration renewal date for medical practitioners with general, specialist and non-practising registration is 30 September 2013. Renewal applications received during October will include a late payment fee.

Under the National Law, practitioners who do not renew their registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the register of medical practitioners. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise medicine in Australia. A fast track application can be made, but the practitioner cannot practise until the application is processed and the national register is updated.

Review of registration standards, guidelines and codes

The first 10 National Boards to enter the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) developed standards, guidelines and codes for its commencement on 1 July 2010. These standards, guidelines and codes were scheduled for review at least every three years.

All National Boards have registration standards which define the requirements that applicants for registration and registrants need to meet to be registered. Each National Board has standards outlining the requirements for:

- Criminal history
- English language skills
- Recency of practice
- Professional indemnity insurance (PII) and
- Continuing professional development (CPD).

The Boards have reviewed the criminal history and English language skills registration standards and have agreed that these will be largely common across all professions. The National Boards will be consulting on these standards soon.

Each National Board has also reviewed the registration standards for recency of practice, PII and CPD. The Boards are aligning these standards where possible across all professions but it is anticipated that there will be differences, reflecting different approaches across professions.

The Medical Board also has registration standards for limited registration for medical practitioners. The Board is also reviewing these standards.

When the Board consults on the limited registration standards, it will also consult on the draft guideline on the 'Specialist pathway – short term training'. This pathway allows internationally qualified specialists or specialist trainees who have nearly completed specialist training in another country to apply for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice to undertake short term training in Australia. The guideline and registration standard for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice are related.

The registration standards have been reformatted and are written in more straight-forward language. The Board has made changes where it received feedback that elements in the standards have not worked as intended.

The aim is to coordinate consultation for the registration standards across all National Boards as far as possible.

International criminal history checks

The National Law requires that all applicants for registration must have a criminal history check. Currently, applicants have an Australian criminal history check and must also sign a declaration disclosing their criminal history in all countries including Australia.

In 2012, the National Boards and AHPRA consulted on possible options to refine the mechanisms for international criminal history checks:

1. Applicant declaration only (the current approach)
2. Applicant provides criminal history clearance evidence with their application for registration
3. AHPRA obtains clearance/information from jurisdictions outside Australia when processing application
4. Applicant makes declaration and AHPRA undertakes random sample audit

Following the feedback received, a fifth option has now been proposed:

5. External provider conducts international criminal history checks.

In proposing this option, the National Boards seek to strike a balance between undertaking comprehensive checks where appropriate and not imposing unnecessary delays on applicants seeking registration in Australia. Existing general requirements for registration would continue to apply. Applicants will still be required to undergo a domestic criminal history check and make a declaration about their criminal history.

A further round of public consultation will commence shortly to seek feedback on option five.

Consultation on Good Medical Practice

The Board is currently undertaking public consultation on proposed changes to its code of conduct, *Good Medical Practice – A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia*. The draft revised code has been updated to ensure it reflects the current regulatory framework.

The consultation paper is available in the 'News' section of the Board's [website](#) under 'Current consultations'. This is an opportunity for practitioners and the community to provide feedback to the Board. The consultation closes on 27 September 2013.

Guidelines on cosmetic medical and surgical procedures

In 2012, the Board consulted on supplementary guidelines to *Good Medical Practice* on cosmetic medical and surgical procedures. Following feedback from that consultation, the Board decided not to proceed with the supplementary guidelines but rather, to develop specific guidance in relation to the professional standards expected when medical practitioners perform cosmetic medical and surgical procedures. The Board is now developing *Guidelines on cosmetic medical and surgical procedures* and will consult with stakeholders in the coming months.

Accredited programs of study

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) is responsible for accrediting individual programs of study after it is reasonably satisfied that:

- the program of study meets an accreditation standard or
- substantially meets an approved accreditation standard and the imposition of conditions on the approval will ensure the program meets the standard within a reasonable time frame.

The AMC can also refuse to accredit a program of study.

The AMC must give the Board a report after it decides to accredit a program of study (with or without conditions).

After being given an accreditation report, the Board may approve, or refuse to approve, the accredited program of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration. An approval may be granted subject to conditions.

Any changes to accredited programs of study must be approved by the Board.

University of New South Wales

The Board approved the medical programs of the University of New South Wales as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration in the medical profession. The accredited medical programs are the Bachelor of Medical Studies and Doctor of Medicine (six years), the Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery (four years), the Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery (six years) and the Doctor of Medicine (three years). Approval is until 30 June 2014.

Dr Joanna Flynn AM

Chair, Medical Board of Australia

5 September 2013