



Consultation paper 5

Proposals for Registration Standards:

1. Specialist Registration
2. Acupuncture

Issued by the Medical Board of Australia under the authority of

Dr Joanna Flynn, Chair

12 July 2010

If you wish to provide comments on this paper, please lodge a written submission in electronic form, marked 'Consultation paper 5' at medboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au by close of business on 20 August 2010.

Please note that your submission will be placed on the Board's website unless you indicate otherwise.

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1 Background

From 1 July 2010 the Medical Board of Australia (the Board) has been responsible for the registration and regulation of medical practitioners under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law), as enacted by participating jurisdictions.

Registration Standards

Section 38 of the National Law empowers the Board to develop and recommend to the Ministerial Council registration standards about issues relevant to the eligibility of individuals for registration in the medical profession or the suitability of individuals to competently and safely practice the profession.

The Board has previously developed and consulted on a range of registration standards that have now been approved by the Ministerial Council. The approved standards can be accessed at www.medicalboard.gov.au.

The Board has now developed further registration standards regarding specialist registration and endorsement for acupuncture.

The National Law requires the Board to undertake wide-ranging consultation on proposed registration standards.

Interested parties are invited to make written submissions on this proposal, before the Board makes its submission to the Ministerial Council under section 12 of the National Law.

A link to the National Law is available at www.ahpra.gov.au.

Submissions on the content of this consultation paper will be accepted up until close of business on 20 August 2010.

Attachment A

Proposed registration standard - Specialist Registration

Summary

In order to be qualified for specialist registration, applicants must have a qualification:

1. that is approved by the Board from a specialist college that has been accredited by the Australian Medical Council (AMC), or
2. that has not been approved by the Board but that is relevant to the specialty and the applicant has successfully completed an assessment by a specialist college that has been accredited by the AMC, or
3. that under the National Law, or a corresponding prior Act, qualified the individual for specialist registration (however described) in the specialty, and he/she was previously registered under this National Law or the corresponding prior Act on the basis of holding that qualification for the specialty.

The above qualifications may not apply to all medical practitioners that transitioned to the specialist register on 1 July 2010.

Medical practitioners who have the necessary qualifications for general and specialist registration can have their name on both the Register of Medical Practitioners and the Specialist Register. International medical graduates who only have qualifications for specialist registration may only be on the specialist register and must restrict their scope of practice to the specialty in which they hold registration.

Medical practitioners with more than one qualification may have specialist registration in more than one specialty. They are expected to comply with the continuing professional development requirements of every specialty in which they hold specialist registration.

Medical practitioners may remove their name from the specialist register voluntarily, particularly if they are no longer practising in a specialty. When re-applying to have their name included on the specialist register, they will need to demonstrate compliance with the Board's Recency of Practice Registration Standard.

If the Board removes the name of a medical practitioner from the Register of Medical Practitioner, it will also remove the name of the practitioner from the Specialist Register.

Scope of application

This standard applies to all applicants for specialist registration under Division 2, Part 7 of the National Law and to all applicants for renewal of specialist registration under Part 7 Division 9 of the National Law.

Background

Section 13 of the National Law states that specialist recognition operates for the medical profession.

The Ministerial Council has approved a list of specialties for the profession and specialist titles for each

specialty on that list. The list of specialties and specialist titles can be found at www.medicalboard.gov.au.

The Board has approved qualifications for each specialty. The qualifications are all fellowships of specialist colleges that have been accredited by the Australian Medical Council. The approved qualifications can be found at www.medicalboard.gov.au.

The examination and assessment of individuals with specialist qualifications that are not approved by the Board will be conducted by AMC accredited specialist colleges.

Relationship between specialist registration and specialist colleges

Most medical practitioners with specialist registration will have a fellowship from an AMC accredited specialist college. However, the Board will accept for specialist registration confirmation that an applicant has been assessed by a specialist College and has passed the requirements for the approved qualifications, regardless of whether they have been awarded a “fellowship”.

It is not necessary for medical practitioners with specialist registration to retain their fellowship to continue to be on the specialist register. However, they are required to continue to comply with the Board’s registration standard for continuing professional development. In the case of medical practitioners on the specialist register, this requires that they meet the standards for CPD set by the relevant AMC accredited college.

There may be circumstances when a college revokes a practitioner’s fellowship. This may be for one of a range of reasons, including non-compliance with CPD or because they are not considered to be “suitable” to be a fellow or member of that college. These practitioners will remain on the specialist register until the Board or a Tribunal decides to remove their name, in accordance with the provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (National Law) as enacted by participating jurisdictions. The Board expects that specialist colleges will notify the Board if they become aware that a practitioner is not complying with CPD requirements or they have other information regarding the registrant’s suitability for specialist registration.

Period of registration

The period of specialist registration when it is initially granted will be up to 30 September of that renewal period. Thereafter, it will be 12 months, with an expiry date of 30 September of each renewal period.

Requirements

For initial registration - Applicant is on the Register of Medical Practitioners

If the medical practitioner is currently registered, they are not required to produce documentation previously presented to the Board such as proof of identity, medical degrees and evidence that they have met the Board’s English language registration standard.

These applicants are required to complete an application form and submit an original or certified copy of:

1. fellowship or
2. letter from the relevant specialist college that confirms that they have been assessed as eligible for fellowship. If the applicant has been assessed as substantially comparable but needs to complete further examinations and/or further period of supervised practice, they are not eligible for specialist registration until the College confirms that all requirements have been met.

Applicants must provide any other information the Board requires under section 80 in order to determine whether the applicant is a suitable person to hold specialist registration.

For initial registration- Applicant is not on the Register of Medical Practitioners

If the applicant is eligible for general registration

They are required to:

1. submit all documentation and meet all the necessary requirements for general registration
2. complete an application form for specialist registration and submit an original or certified copy of:
 - a. fellowship or
 - b. a letter from the relevant specialist college that confirms that they have been assessed and are eligible for fellowship. If the applicant has been assessed as substantially comparable but needs to complete further examinations and/or further period of supervised practice, they are not eligible for specialist registration until the College confirms that all requirements have been met.

Applicants must provide any other information the Board requires under section 80 in order to determine whether the applicant is a suitable person to hold specialist registration.

While these applicants do not have to be on the Register of Medical Practitioners in order to be eligible for specialist registration, their scope of practice is restricted to the specialty area if they do not have general registration.

If the applicant is not eligible for general registration

Requirements are:

1. Presentation in person to a Board office or authorised delegate with proof of identity (100 points of identity) —
a list of permitted documents is available on the Board's website at the following address:
www.medicalboard.gov.au.
Applicants are required to provide certified documentation identifying changes of name when the name of the applicant is different to the name on the primary degree in medicine and surgery and/or the name used with previous registration authorities.
2. Evidence of having been awarded a primary degree in medicine and surgery, after completing an approved course of study at a medical school listed in the current International Medical Education Directory (IMED) (online only) of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research, or other publications approved by the Australian Medical Council. An approved course of study means that the applicant must be able to demonstrate that they have completed a medical curriculum of at least four academic years, leading to an entitlement to registration in the country issuing the degree to practise clinical medicine.
3. Evidence of application for primary source verification of medical qualifications from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates International Credentials Service (EICS). The Board may take action under Part 8 of the National Law if the practitioner's medical qualifications are not verified. The New South Wales Medical Council may take action under the relevant law in that jurisdiction.
4. Evidence of successful completion of a period of internship or comparable, in accordance with guidelines issued from time to time by the Board.

5. Evidence of English language skills that meets the Board's English language registration standard.
6. Evidence of work practice history that meets the Board's recency of practice registration standard. This must include a resume that describes the applicant's full practice history and any specific clinical training undertaken. Any gaps and/or overlaps in practice history from the date of qualification to the present must be included and explained.
7. Details of registration history including certificates of good standing/registration status from each registration authority with which the applicant has been registered in the previous ten years (supplied where possible directly to the Board from the relevant registration authority).
8. Satisfactory completion of a criminal history check undertaken by the Board that meets the Board's criminal history registration standard.
9. Confirmation that the applicant will comply with the Board's professional indemnity insurance registration standard.
10. Any other information the Board requires under section 80 in order to determine whether the applicant is a suitable person to hold limited registration.

Requirements for renewal of registration

Renewal of specialist registration will be subject to the practitioner meeting the following requirements:

- (a) completion of an annual renewal form in accordance with section 107 of the National Law including an annual statement in accordance with section 109
- (b) demonstrated compliance with any conditions on registration
- (c) any additional investigation, information, examination or assessment required by the Board in accordance with section 80 of the National Law.

Review

This standard will commence as soon as it has been approved by the Ministerial Council. The Board will review this standard at least every three years.

Attachment B

Proposed registration standard – endorsement for acupuncture

Summary

Medical practitioners who practise acupuncture in Victoria, claim to be qualified to practise as an acupuncturist or use the title ‘acupuncturist’ must be registered by the Chinese Medicine Board of Victoria or have their medical registration endorsed for acupuncture by the Medical Board of Australia from 1 July 2010.

The Board will endorse the registration of a medical practitioner whose qualifications in acupuncture have been approved by the Joint Consultative Committee for Medical Acupuncture.

Scope of application

This standard applies to registered medical practitioners who apply for endorsement for acupuncture under section 97 of the National Law or who apply for renewal of endorsement under Part 7 Division 9 of the National Law to practise acupuncture or to use the title ‘acupuncturist’.

Only registered medical practitioners who intend to practise acupuncture or use the title ‘acupuncturist’ in the state of Victoria are required to apply for endorsement until 1 July 2012. After 1 July 2012, all registered medical practitioner who intend to practise acupuncture or use the title ‘acupuncturist’ will be required to apply for endorsement for acupuncture.

Requirements

Applicants for endorsement must have medical registration and are required to complete an application form.

Vocational registrants

Vocational registrants are required to complete an application form and submit an original or a certified copy of documentation from the Joint Consultative Committee on Medical Acupuncture that confirms that they have been accredited for acupuncture. Requirements for accreditation are:

1. Vocational registration
2. Completion of an AMAC accredited medical acupuncture course and

3. Pass of the Australian Medical Acupuncture College Part 1 written and clinical examination.

AMAC accredited medical acupuncture courses are:

1. Graduate Certificate in Medical Acupuncture from Monash University and
2. The AMAC – Qld and AMAC – NSW combined course

Applicants must also confirm that they are enrolled in a recognised Continuing Professional Development Program (either the RACGP QA&CPD Program or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) PD Program) for the maintenance of on-going Medical Acupuncture requirements each triennium and will meet on-going Continuing Professional Development requirements in Medical Acupuncture each triennium.

Specialists who are not on the vocational register

Applicants who are not on the vocational register who cannot access the JCCMA and hold specialist qualifications with another AMC accredited college, must submit evidence from their specialist college that they have completed a course of study or training in acupuncture and provide details of that course of study. The Board will consider each application on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants must also confirm that they are undertaking CPD that meets the standards of their college and includes elements that are relevant to the practice of acupuncture.

All applicants

Applicants must provide any other information the Board requires under section 100 in order to determine whether the applicant is a suitable person to have their registration endorsed for acupuncture.

Definitions

The Joint Consultative Committee on Medical Acupuncture is a tripartite committee with representatives from the Australian Medical Acupuncture College (AMAC), The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)).

Review

This standard will commence as soon as it has been approved by the Ministerial Council. The Board will review this standard before 30 June 2012.