



## Communiqué

### Meeting of the Medical Board of Australia: 16 September 2011

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

At the September meeting the Board considered a range of matters including a proposal to revise the Board's instrument of delegation, a process to streamline applications for general registration, and the accreditation of medical schools.

#### Delegations

The Board considered proposed changes to its ***Instrument of Delegation***. In effect, this 'instrument' is the mechanism through which the National Board delegates some of its powers to either AHPRA or State and Territory Boards or Committees. The 'instrument' sets out the decisions which can be made on behalf of the Board and by whom, consistent with the National Law and within the Board's national policy framework.

The National Board has delegated to State and Territory Boards all the necessary powers to deal with individual notification and registration matters. In general, operational and administrative functions are delegated to AHPRA. The National Board deals with matters of policy, registration standards and codes and guidelines.

After 12 months operation, the Board is considering whether improvements can be made to the 'instrument' to better assist delegates in their decision making and support more timely decisions about local issues.

The Board has sought feedback from all State and Territory Boards and will then consider the proposal further.

#### Registration matters

##### **Provisional registration to general registration**

Some of the new requirements of the National Scheme, for example the criminal history registration standard, have added complexity to the processing of registration applications.

To help smooth the path from internship to general registration, the Board has approved some amendments to the registration application processes and the requirements for general registration for current provisional registrants (interns).

Interns meet most of the requirements of the National Law to prove their identity and qualifications when they apply for provisional registration. The new streamlined registration application process, supported

by a revised application form, eliminates the requirement for them to duplicate documents or provide information previously provided to AHPRA under the National Law. Only when applicants have conditions on their registration or there has been a change to their status (for example, an impairment or new criminal history), will applicants be required to provide this information again.

AHPRA will implement the new streamlined process and application form shortly and will work with education providers and medical student associations to communicate this effectively to interns. The Board hopes this change will reduce the burden on provisional registrants applying for general registration and reduce the turn-around time for assessment of applications.

## Accreditation of Medical Schools

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

1. the program of study meets an accreditation standard or
2. 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.

### Medical school accreditation reports

The Board considered the AMC's accreditation reports on the following medical schools:

1. University of Adelaide
2. University of Tasmania
3. University of Wollongong
4. University of Melbourne

### Faculty of Health Sciences MBBS program, University of Adelaide

The Board approved the six year medical program (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) at the University of Adelaide as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration in the medical profession for a period of three years until 31 December 2014.

### School of Medicine, University of Tasmania

The Board approved the five year medical program (Bachelor Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery course) at the University of Tasmania as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration in the medical profession for a period of four years until 31 December 2016.

### Graduate School of Medicine, University of Wollongong

The Board approved the four year graduate entry medical program (Bachelor Medicine Bachelor of Surgery) at the University of Wollongong as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration in the medical profession for a period of four years until 31 December 2016.

## **Melbourne Medical School, University of Melbourne**

The Board noted a progress report from the AMC on the six year MBBS undergraduate entry and four and a half year graduate entry medical programs of the University of Melbourne, which are in 'teach-out' phase as a result of a major course change and the move to a graduate entry Doctor of Medicine.

The medical programs in teach-out phase were previously approved by the Board at a meeting in December 2010 until 31 December 2013 when the last cohort of students in these programs are expected to finish.

## **National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA)**

Representatives of NEHTA were invited to make a presentation to the Board on the progress of the national eSignatures project, which is part of the ongoing development of national eHealth solutions that aim to use technology to improve the exchange of information between health professionals and health services for the public.

NEHTA advised it has been working with clinicians, health care organisations, State and Territory health departments and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and Human Services to explore the most appropriate and secure mechanism to electronically sign electronic clinical documents.

This project aims to enable medical practitioners to prescribe and refer electronically using a secure electronic signature.

The Board welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback to the project team at NEHTA.

## **Dr Joanna Flynn AM Chair, Medical Board of Australia**

23 September 2011