



Communiqué

Medical Board of Australia meeting: 25 July 2012

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 2012/13

The Board has now launched its 2012 registration renewal campaign. All medical practitioners who have previously provided an email address will have been reminded by email to renew their registration. A series of emailed reminders are planned for practitioners who have not renewed. Paper reminders will also be posted.

The quickest and easiest way to renew registration is online. 96% of medical practitioners used the secure renewal service last year.

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 until a new application for registration is approved. Renewals received within the month of their registration expiry date will incur an additional late fee, which reflects the cost of managing late renewals.

National Specialist IMG Committee

The Board noted that the National Specialist IMG (international medical graduates) Committee had met on 20 June 2012. A communiqué of the meeting is published on the Board's website at www.medicalboard.gov.au under 'news'.

The National Specialist IMG Committee mapped out the process of IMG assessment in the specialist pathway and noted that there are opportunities for the Australian Medical Council (AMC), Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the specialist medical colleges to work together to streamline and simplify the processes and make them more efficient. The Board noted that the Committee agreed to establish a working party to review the specialist pathway, taking into consideration the recommendations of the House of Representative report into assessment and registration processes for IMGs. The working party will make recommendations to the Committee. If substantial changes are recommended, there will be stakeholder consultation seeking comments and advice.

Review of registration standards, guidelines and codes

One of the Board's functions under the National Law is to develop or approve standards, codes and guidelines for the medical profession. The Board must consult widely about any standards, codes or guidelines that it develops.

Registration standards are developed by the Board and must be approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council).

The Board develops and approves codes and guidelines.

The Board developed a range of registration standards before the start of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme in 2010, which were approved by the Ministerial Council. Consistent with their responsibilities under the National Law, all National Boards developed registration standards for:

1. The requirements for **professional indemnity insurance**
2. Matters to be considered in deciding whether an individual's **criminal history** is relevant to the practice of medicine
3. Requirements for **continuing professional development**
4. Requirements about the **English language skills** necessary for an applicant for registration to be suitable for registration
5. Requirements in relation to the nature, extent, period and **recency** of any previous practice by applicants for registration.

Additionally, the Medical Board developed and had approved registration standards for:

1. Limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice
2. Limited registration for area of need
3. Limited registration for teaching or research
4. Limited registration in the public interest.

All these registration standards took effect on 1 July 2010 and are due for review at least every three years.

The Board is also due to review:

1. Good Medical Practice – a code of conduct for doctors in Australia
2. Guidelines for mandatory notifications
3. Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services

Over the next few months, all National Boards will be starting a process to review their registration standards and the codes and guidelines that are due for review. The reviews will draw on the best available evidence and address issues that have been identified with the registration standards and the codes and guidelines in the first three years after implementation. A plan is being developed to try and minimise the impact on stakeholders of multiple consultation processes, particularly for stakeholders common across professions.

Accreditation matters

The AMC has been appointed as the accreditation authority for medicine.

An important objective of the National Law is to facilitate the provision of high-quality education and training of health practitioners. The accreditation function is the primary way of achieving this objective.

The National Law defines the respective roles of the Board and its appointed accreditation authority, in the accreditation of medical schools and medical specialist colleges.

Review of accreditation standards for medical schools and their program of study

The AMC is responsible for developing accreditation standards for the approval of the Board. Accreditation standards are used to assess whether a program of study, and the education provider of the program, provides graduates of the program the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise the profession.

The AMC is currently reviewing the approved accreditation standards for medical schools and their program of study and is seeking stakeholder comment on the proposed revised standards. This review **does not**:

- propose changes to the overall purpose of accreditation, which is the recognition of medical programs that produce graduates who are competent to practise safely and effectively under

supervision as interns in Australia and New Zealand, and who have an appropriate foundation for lifelong learning and for further training in any branch of medicine, or

- propose changes to the current division of the Accreditation Standards into eight major subgroups.

The review **does**:

- propose to better integrate the statement of expectations of graduates with the standards, and
- add additional sub-standards and changes of wording to improve clarity and consistency.

The consultation is open until 17 August 2012. More information is published on the AMC website at www.amc.org.au. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback to the AMC.

Progress on the internship project

At the request of the Board, the AMC has undertaken work to complement and support the proposed registration standard for granting general registration to Australian and New Zealand medical graduates on completion of the intern year. The proposed registration standard has been submitted to the Ministerial Council for approval.

The AMC has developed draft documents for consultation on:

- a. Draft national standards for intern training
- b. Draft guidelines for intern rotations
- c. Draft quality framework for intern training accreditation
- d. Draft template for postgraduate medical councils to report against the domains contained in the quality framework for intern training accreditation

The AMC will be consulting on these documents shortly. They will be available on the AMC website at www.amc.org.au. Stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to the consultation process.

Medical school accreditation – extension of accreditation for the University of Western Sydney

The 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.

The Board approved the five year undergraduate medical course (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) at the University of Western Sydney as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration until 31 December 2017.

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Chair, Medical Board of Australia

1 August 2012