



Information

18 January 2017

International medical graduates awarded the degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from the United States of America

Introduction

The degree Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO USA) is a medical qualification that is recognised for the purposes of medical registration by many international registration authorities.

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) has agreed to accept the DO USA as a primary medical qualification for the purposes of medical registration provided that the DO USA was awarded by a medical school which has been accredited by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation of the American Osteopathic Association and recognised by both the Australian Medical Council and the World Directory of Medical Schools (online version).

Background

There are two pathways for primary medical training in the United States of America (USA):

1. the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO USA) and
2. the Doctor of Medicine (MD).

Both pathways are equally recognised in the USA with graduates from both pathways considered equally for positions as medical practitioners in the USA healthcare system.

The DO USA is also recognised for the purposes of medical registration in the United Kingdom, most Canadian jurisdictions and New Zealand.

Medical practitioners who hold the DO USA are not to be confused with other types of health practitioners who hold qualifications in osteopathy obtained outside of the United States of America. In the USA, the DO USA is a degree in Osteopathic Medicine. Individuals who hold a DO USA or MD are fully qualified 'physicians' who are licensed to prescribe medication and perform surgery in the USA¹.

Eligibility for limited registration or provisional registration

All international medical graduates (IMGs) must meet the requirements of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) and must comply with the Board's registration standards to be eligible for medical registration. IMGs who do not qualify for general or specialist registration may apply for limited registration or provisional registration. These requirements also apply to IMGs who have been awarded the degree of DO USA.

For more details on the Board's registration standards visit: www.medicalboard.gov.au.

¹ American Osteopathic Association website downloaded from <http://www.osteopathic.org/osteopathic-health/about-dos/what-is-a-do/Pages/default.aspx> on 14 May 2012.

Use of the title 'osteopath'

Medical practitioners who have been awarded the degree of DO USA and who are registered by the Medical Board of Australia may use the protected title of 'medical practitioner'. There are penalties under the National Law if they use the title 'osteopath' or use any title (for example, 'osteopathic physician') that could induce a belief that they are registered by the Osteopathy Board of Australia. Any individual who wishes to use the title 'osteopath' in Australia must be registered by the Osteopathy Board of Australia and meet that Board's registration standards.

For more information on the Osteopathy Board's requirements for registration visit www.osteopathyboard.gov.au.