

## FAQs - Specialist Pathway

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### Summary

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been developed to assist international medical graduates (IMGs) seeking to apply for registration via the Specialist Pathway.

### What are the assessment pathways in the Specialist Pathway?

There are two assessment pathways for IMGs:

- **Specialist Pathway - specialist recognition** - for overseas-trained specialists who are seeking recognition in order to obtain registration to practise unsupervised or independently in Australia. They must have satisfied all the training and examination requirements to practise in their recognised field of specialty in their country of training.
- **Specialist Pathway - area of need** - for overseas-trained specialists who have been selected by an employer as suitable for consideration for appointment to a designated area of need specialist position in Australia.

The **Specialist Pathway – short-term training** is for IMGs who are specialists or specialists-in-training wishing to undertake a short period of specialist or advanced training in Australia. This pathway does not lead to specialist registration.

### Who is eligible to apply for the Specialist Pathway – specialist recognition or Specialist Pathway - area of need?

The **Specialist Pathway - specialist recognition** or the **Specialist Pathway - area of need** are for IMGs who are overseas-trained specialists.

IMGs who hold a primary medical degree from a medical school listed in the [International Medical Education Directory \(IMED\) of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research](#) and who have satisfied all the training and examination requirements to practise in the field of specialty in their country of training may apply for the Specialist Pathway.

### Which pathway should IMGs choose if they already have overseas specialist qualifications or have almost completed their specialist training overseas and want to come to Australia to undertake a short period of specialist training (less than two years) and do not plan on seeking specialist recognition in Australia?

IMGs can apply for the **Specialist Pathway – short-term training**. To be eligible they must have already completed their training or be no more than two years away from completing their specialist training overseas.

This pathway does not lead to specialist registration.

### **Can an IMG apply for assessment by a specialist medical college if they qualify for provisional/general registration via the Competent Authority Pathway?**

Yes. However, IMGs who qualify for provisional/general registration, via the Competent Authority Pathway, are not eligible to apply for limited registration under the National Law.

If the IMG applies for the Specialist pathway – specialist recognition and is assessed as substantially comparable or partially comparable and is required by the college to complete a period of oversight or supervised practice, the IMG must apply for provisional registration in order to complete the requirements.

An IMG who qualifies for provisional/general registration, via the Competent Authority Pathway, is not eligible to apply for 'Limited registration for area of need' under the National Law.

### **What do IMGs do if they are not eligible for the Specialist Pathway?**

They may be eligible for the Competent Authority Pathway or the Standard Pathway.

More information on the Competent Authority Pathway including how to apply, is available on the [Medical Board website](#).

More information on the Standard Pathway is available on the [Medical Board website](#). Information on how to apply for the Standard Pathway is available on the [AMC website](#).

### **How do IMGs apply for primary source verification of their qualifications through the Australian Medical Council?**

All applicants must apply to the [Australian Medical Council \(AMC\)](#) for primary source verification (PSV) of their qualifications.

From 1 October 2015 the AMC will verify medical qualifications through the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) Electronic Portfolio of International Credentials (EPIC), or for applications submitted before 30 September 2015, ECFMG International Credentials Services (EICS). Applications for PSV should be submitted to the AMC before applying to the college for assessment. Further information about PSV is available at the [AMC website](#).

### **How do IMGs apply for the Specialist Pathway – specialist recognition or area of need?**

IMGs apply directly to the relevant specialist medical college for assessment. Application forms are available on each college website. IMGs can apply for specialist recognition or area of need or both. IMGs who are applying for assessment via the area of need pathway must have secured an offer of employment in a designated area of need before applying to the college.

A list of the college websites is available on the [Medical Board website](#).

A flowchart outlining the application process for the Specialist Pathway can be viewed on the [Medical Board website](#).

### **Which colleges do the specialist assessments?**

IMGs can only be assessed by an Australian Medical Council (AMC) accredited specialist medical college. A list of the college websites is available on the [Medical Board website](#).

### **How will IMGs find out when their assessment has been completed?**

The college will contact the IMG directly to let them know the outcome of the assessment.

### **When can an IMG on the Specialist Pathway start working in Australia?**

IMGs cannot practise as a medical practitioner in Australia until they have been granted registration by the Medical Board of Australia (the Board).

The college will notify the IMG directly of the outcome of the assessment. If the IMG is assessed as partially comparable or substantially comparable they can apply for limited registration or, if they meet the

eligibility requirements of the competent authority pathway, provisional registration. An IMG who has been assessed as suitable for an area of need position can apply to the Board for limited registration

An IMG can commence in their proposed position once they have received confirmation that their registration has been granted and once their name appears on the [Register of Practitioners](#) on the AHPRA website.

### **How does an IMG apply for medical registration?**

To apply for registration an IMG must submit an application for registration to the Medical Board of Australia. The registration forms are available on the [Medical Board website](#).

### **What type of registration will IMGs apply for after they have been assessed by the college?**

An IMG who qualifies for provisional/general registration, via the Competent Authority Pathway, is not eligible to apply for limited registration under the National Law. They must apply for provisional registration to complete the requirements for specialist recognition/Fellowship.

An IMG who has been assessed as substantially comparable or partially comparable and is required to undertake a period of oversight or supervised practice will apply for 'Limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice' or 'Provisional registration'.

An IMG who has been assessed as suitable for an area of need position will apply for 'Limited registration for area of need'.

An IMG who has been assessed as suitable for a short-term training position will apply for 'Limited for postgraduate training or supervised practice'.

An IMG can only apply for specialist registration after they have been admitted as a Fellow of an AMC accredited specialist college, or after they have been advised by the college that they have passed all the requirements for the approved qualification and are eligible for recognition as a specialist.

More information about types of medical registration is available on the [Medical Board website](#).

### **When do Specialist Pathway applications close?**

There are no closing dates for the Specialist Pathway. IMGs may apply at any time.

### **How much does it cost to be assessed in the Specialist Pathway?**

The colleges each set their own fees for the specialist assessment. More information about fees is available on the college websites.

The Australian Medical Council will charge you a fee for primary source verification of your medical qualifications.

After an IMG has been assessed by the college they may apply to the Medical Board of Australia for registration. An application fee and a registration fee is payable. More information about registration fees is available on the [Medical Board website](#).

### **What is the Australian Medical Council's role in the Specialist Pathway?**

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) undertakes primary source verification of qualifications for all applicants. From 1 July 2014, the AMC will no longer accept applications for the Specialist Pathway, applicants must apply directly to the relevant specialist medical college. The AMC has no role in assessments or medical registration.

### **What is the college's role in the Specialist Pathway?**

The college receives applications for the specialist pathway and assesses the IMG. The college has no role in granting medical registration.

### **What is the Medical Board of Australia's role in the Specialist Pathway?**

The Medical Board of Australia (the Board) receives applications for registration. The Board receives the outcome of the college's assessment and decides whether to grant registration. The Board may place conditions on registration.

### **Can the Medical Board of Australia give IMGs advice on training and suitable assessment pathways?**

No. A [self check assessment](#) is available to help IMGs decide which pathways they may be eligible to apply for. More information about the Specialist Pathway is available on the [Medical Board website](#).

Each medical specialist college has information on its website and IMGs should contact the college directly if they have questions about their training. A list of the college websites is available on the [Medical Board website](#).

### **Where can IMGs find further information about the Specialist Pathway?**

More information is available on the [Medical Board's website](#) and at the [AMC website](#).

Refer to the relevant specialist college for more information about the assessment process. A list of the college websites is available on the [Medical Board website](#).