



Medical Board of Australia

GUIDELINES:
SHORT-TERM TRAINING IN A MEDICAL
SPECIALTY FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL
GRADUATES WHO ARE NOT QUALIFIED FOR
GENERAL OR SPECIALIST REGISTRATION

1 July 2016

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1. Background

Short-term training in a medical specialty for international medical graduates (IMGs) who are not qualified for general or specialist registration (short-term training in medical specialty pathway) is a pathway that allows internationally qualified specialists or international specialists-in-training to undertake short-term training in Australia without having to complete the Australian Medical Council (AMC) examination or to have a full comparability assessment by the relevant specialist medical college.

The short-term training in a medical specialty pathway is for individuals with specialist qualifications or for specialists-in-training who are close to completing specialist training in another country¹ and who want to undertake short-term training in a particular medical specialty area in Australia. In this context, 'short-term' is usually considered to be up to 24 months.

The short-term training in a medical specialty pathway also promotes opportunities for exchange fellowships.

IMGs eligible for the short-term training in a medical specialty pathway can apply for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice. Medical practitioners with this type of registration must comply with the supervision and training requirements on registration approved by the Medical Board of Australia (the Board).

The short-term training in a medical specialty pathway does not lead to general or specialist registration. Medical practitioners who intend to practise in Australia for more than two years need to meet the requirements for the competent authority pathway, standard pathway (AMC certificate) or specialist pathway (either specialist recognition or area of need).

2. Purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to inform IMGs and specialist medical colleges about the requirements for registration for IMGs who are eligible for the short-

term training in a medical specialty pathway. They also describe the role of the specialist medical colleges accredited by the AMC that advise the Board about the suitability of the training position for the specific applicant for registration.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Board's registration standard for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice, which sets out the requirements for this type of registration and the specific requirements for the short-term training in a medical specialty pathway.

3. Eligibility for the short-term training in a medical specialty pathway

The short-term training in a medical specialty pathway is available to IMGs who are applying for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice, **and**

1. are recognised as qualified specialists in another country of training (outside Australia), **or**
2. are specialists-in-training in another country (outside Australia) and who:
 - c. are likely to be no more than two years away from completing their specialist training, and
 - d. have passed a basic specialist examination or have satisfactorily completed substantial training (generally three or more years, i.e. PGY 5).

4. The role of specialist medical colleges - assessing the suitability of the training position for the specific applicant

The specialist medical colleges have an important role in advising the Board whether:

¹ There is one exemption to the requirement to be no more than two years away from completing specialist training – see the section on exemptions.

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1. an individual appears to be a genuine specialist-in-training or internationally qualified specialist, on the basis of a paper-based assessment of documents
2. the position that the individual has applied for is a genuine training position that is appropriate for that individual's training requirements, taking into consideration their reported level of training and experience, and
3. there is adequate supervision and support for the individual's level of training and experience. This assessment will take into consideration the purpose and principles of supervision as set out in the Board's guidelines for the supervision of IMGs.

The specialist medical college assessment does not:

1. assess the competence of the individual applying for registration
 2. decide whether or not to register a medical practitioner. This is the responsibility of the Board, or
 3. assess the IMG's training and experience for comparability against the training and experience of an Australian trained specialist in the same field of practice.
- a. are a specialist-in-training:
 - i. confirming your trainee status with the college/body
 - ii. outlining the content, structure and length of the training program
 - iii. confirming that you are not likely to be more than two years from completing your specialist training
 - iv. confirming that you have passed a basic specialist examination or satisfactorily completed substantial training (generally three or more years, i.e. PGY 5), and
 - v. identifying the objectives of the training to be undertaken in Australia, or
 - b. are a specialist, confirming your specialist qualification in the country of training
6. written confirmation from you that, at this time, you have no intention of making further applications for registration at the end of the specified training period.

For a specialist medical college to undertake this assessment, you must apply to the AMC accredited specialist medical college on the application form approved by the Board. This form requires the following information:

1. a training plan providing details of the purpose, anticipated duration, location, content and structure of training and the anticipated date of any examinations or assessments
2. a position description for the proposed training position
3. details of how supervision will be provided and the names and contact details of proposed supervisor/s
4. a curriculum vitae
5. a statement from the overseas specialist college or body awarding the specialist qualification with whom you:

Due to the nature of each specialty, the relevant specialist medical college may specify what information is required in a position description, training plan or in other documentation described above. You should refer to the relevant specialist medical college website for detailed information.

The specialist medical colleges advise the Board on the outcome of their assessment by completing the applicable section in the application form submitted by you to the college. The completed form is provided directly to the Board by the specialist medical college and a copy is also provided to you (or your authorised nominee).

See Attachment A for an overview of the process for applying for registration.

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5. Renewal of limited registration postgraduate training or supervised practice

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), limited registration may be renewed up to three times. After this, you must make a new application for limited registration and meet any registration standards that are current at the time.

Although practitioners in this pathway should not need to make more than one application for renewal of registration (as short-term training is usually for up to 24 months), you should be aware that renewal of limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice is subject to meeting a number of requirements, including providing evidence that you are satisfactorily progressing towards general or specialist registration.

Medical practitioners are usually exempt from this requirement if they will not apply for more than three renewals of registration.

As training in this pathway is for a defined period, after which you have undertaken that you will no longer be seeking medical registration in Australia, practitioners in this pathway are not required to demonstrate satisfactory progress towards general or specialist registration.

However, if circumstances arise that require you to apply for registration beyond 24 months, you:

1. must provide a letter from the relevant AMC accredited specialist medical college confirming support for the longer period of training and providing an assessment of your suitability for the training position in accordance with these guidelines, and
2. may be required to demonstrate progress towards general or specialist registration, which will require you to apply for the competent authority pathway, the standard pathway or the specialist pathway (specialist recognition).

The Board will consider each application on a case-by-case basis.

6. Application for a change in circumstances

Limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice is granted for a specified purpose. The Board imposes requirements on registration as defined in its approved registration standard. The Board's registration standard for limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice requires medical practitioners to apply to the Board when they propose to change the circumstances under which they were granted limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice.

A change in circumstances includes a proposal to:

1. change the designated training position. This may include changing locations, adding additional work sites, changing your scope of practice (including moving to a role with increased clinical responsibilities e.g. PGY3 to registrar level) or applying for a new position with a new employer. **[Note:** practitioners who are no longer employed in their designated training position are unable to comply with the requirements on registration and therefore cannot practise medicine.]
2. change the approved training plan, or
3. extend training beyond the specified period of training that you had confirmed with the Board at your initial application for registration.

An application for a change in circumstances must be made on an application form approved by the Board and include a letter from the specialist medical college confirming support for your change in circumstances and providing an assessment of your suitability for the training position based on the proposed changes.

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7. Exemption from the eligibility criteria for the short-term training in a medical specialty pathway

Background

Most of the AMC accredited specialist medical colleges provide training for medical practitioners in Australia and New Zealand. The colleges may accept for specialist training IMGs who are not qualified for general registration in Australia but who have registration in a general scope in New Zealand. From time to time, the New Zealand trainees are required to do a rotation in Australia.

This exemption allows this cohort of practitioners to be granted limited registration, if they are more than two years away from completing their specialist training.

Requirements

If you are a specialist-in-training and you are more than two years away from completing specialist training, you may be exempt from the eligibility criteria for this pathway, if you:

1. are not qualified for general registration in Australia, and
2. hold registration in a general scope with the Medical Council of New Zealand, and
3. are an accredited trainee with an AMC accredited specialist medical college in New Zealand.

You are required to provide a letter from the relevant AMC accredited specialist medical college confirming your accredited trainee status and providing an assessment of your suitability for the training position in accordance with these guidelines.

8. Definitions

Genuine specialist-in-training means an applicant who:

1. has commenced a specialist training program in another country (outside Australia) that is delivered

by a recognised/accredited body for specialist training. The overseas training program includes formal assessment processes and mechanisms for measuring learning outcomes, AND

2. is not likely to be more than two years away from completing their specialist training, and has passed a basic specialist examination or has satisfactorily completed substantial training (generally three or more years, i.e PGY 5), OR
3. holds registration in a general scope with the Medical Council of New Zealand but is not qualified for general registration in Australia and is an accredited trainee with an AMC accredited specialist medical college in New Zealand.

Internationally qualified specialist means an applicant is recognised as a qualified specialist by a recognised/accredited overseas authority responsible for awarding specialist qualifications and/or the qualified specialist is recognised by the registering authority as a specialist in another country (outside of Australia). The applicant is also seeking to up-skill their specialist qualifications in a particular specialist area and is not seeking specialist recognition in Australia.

Genuine training position means that the Australian training position that the applicant has applied for is a training position accredited by an AMC accredited specialist medical college or is a formal structured training position that consists of formal assessment processes and mechanisms for measuring learning outcomes. The training position is not primarily a service position.

Review

Date of issue: 1 July 2016

The Board will review these guidelines from time to time, as required.

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Attachment A

Short-term training in a medical specialty pathway

Pathway flow chart

