



Communiqué

The 24th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 20 October 2011 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) national offices in Melbourne. This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board.

Consultation papers

The Board has two consultation papers currently published on its website under the 'News' tab.

A document on supervision guidelines for optometrists is open for comment until close of business on Friday 18 November 2011.

A document on the definition of practice is open for comment until close of business on Friday 2 December 2011.

The Board is currently considering the submissions received during its consultation on the registration standards to enable therapeutics qualifications as a requirement for initial applications for general registration. Submissions received are available on the Board's website, except when the author requested it not be published. The Board is required to recommend these registration standards to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for approval.

Registration renewal

Optometrists are now able to renew online. All optometrists holding general registration are required to renew their registration by 30 November 2011 – the annual registration renewal date under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Optometrists based in ACT and Western Australia who renewed their registration by 30 June 2011 for five months, must renew again by 30 November 2011.

AHPRA and the Board have commenced an intensive communication campaign to support the renewal process. Several email reminders have been sent to those optometrists and letters to individual practitioners who have not renewed from the email reminders and not provided their email address.

Optometrists should check their contact details and update them if necessary to receive regular reminders from the Board and AHPRA. Email accounts should be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

To update your contact details, go to www.ahpra.gov.au, click online services, use your unique contact number (User ID) and follow the prompts. Your User ID is not your registration number. If you do not have your User ID, complete an online enquiry form, selecting 'User ID' as the category of enquiry or by calling 1300 419 495.



Individual practitioners are responsible for renewing their registration on time. The job of the Board – with AHPRA – is to make this as simple and straightforward as possible.

Optometrists can check that their application to renew registration has been received via the Board's website at www.optometryboard.gov.au. Practitioners whose application to renew has been received can practise while their application is processed.

If a practitioner's name is listed on the National Register of Optometrists this is evidence for employers that a practitioner is registered, even if their registration expiry date had passed but their application for renewal is being processed.

Under the National Law, optometrists who do not renew registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the National Register of Optometrists. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise optometry in Australia until a new application is approved.

Neither the Board nor AHPRA have any discretion about this, so optometrists need to ensure they renew on time.

Graduate online applications

AHPRA is smoothing the path from study to the workforce for new graduates by providing an online early registration application service available at:

www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx

AHPRA is now calling for applications for health practitioner registration from students completing National Board-approved programs of study in Australia 4 to 6 weeks before they complete their course.

Conclusion

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.optometryboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au. For more detail or with questions about your registration please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair

3 November 2011