

Communiqué

The 63rd meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 28 May 2015 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) national office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues and decisions from this meeting as well as other points of interest. We publish it on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

Revised English language skills registration standard taking effect from 1 July

The Board along with all other National Boards except Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners have [published](#) the contents of revised English language skills registration standards. The revised registration standards come into effect on 1 July 2015.

The National Boards have also published supporting materials to help practitioners understand the new requirements. The revised standards introduce additional pathways for applicants to demonstrate evidence of their English language skills.

Revised criminal history registration standard will take effect from 1 July

A revised criminal history registration standard will come into effect for all registrants from 1 July 2015.

National Boards published the contents of the revised shared criminal history registration standard for all registered health practitioners, which is common to all National Boards and takes effect from 1 July 2015.

Whenever possible, National Boards seek to work together to develop common or similar standards across professions.

The revised criminal history registration standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council and makes very minor amendments to the old standard. The changes are expected to have minimal impact on practitioners as no changes have been made to the factors National Boards will take into account when considering an applicant's or registrant's criminal history.

When an individual first applies for registration, the National Board requires the applicant to declare their criminal history in all countries, including Australia. All registered health practitioners must inform their National Board if they are charged with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more, or convicted or found guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment in Australia and/or overseas.

When practitioners renew their registration they must disclose any changes to their criminal history.

More information about how criminal history checks are conducted are available on the [criminal history checks](#) page on the AHPRA website, including which checks are required from countries other than Australia for some applicants and registrants.

Quarterly registration data released

The Board has released its quarterly registration data. You can find the latest report and other statistics [here](#).

Royal commission into institutional responses to child sex abuse

The Board and AHPRA have been following the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sex abuse and its implications for the regulation of health practitioners. The issues raised in the Royal Commission are serious and disturbing.

The Board and AHPRA are committed to learning from the evidence before the Royal Commission and its findings and taking action to make sure our regulatory system is responsive to anyone who has been sexually abused by a registered health practitioner, who comes forward.

If you have a concern about a health practitioner call:

- AHPRA 1300 419 495
- NSW 1800 043 159, or
- Queensland 133 646 (133 OHO).

Further information

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of you as an optometrist on our website at www.optometryboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more detail or questions about your registration or renewal please send an online enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

17 June 2015