



Communiqué

The 35th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the National Board) was held on 25 October 2012 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) National Office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board at its meeting and other points of interest. The Board publishes this communiqué on its website and emails it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in the work of the Board.

Registration renewal

The registration renewal process for the optometry profession is underway. Those optometrists who have an email registered with AHPRA should have received their renewal notice from AHPRA.

If you have not received or acted upon the email notices you will receive a hard copy registration renewal notice in coming weeks.

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.

Audit

As well as pharmacists and chiropractors, optometrists are taking part in an audit to coincide with the registration renewal process this year. Practitioners will be randomly selected across these three professions when they apply to renew their registration for the 2012-13 period. This will apply to both paper and online renewal applications.

Optometrists will be audited for compliance against their board's registration standards: criminal history check, professional indemnity insurance, recency of practice and continuing professional development. Optometrists will need to provide evidence to support the declarations for these registration standards that they make at their registration renewal.

AHPRA will notify those individuals randomly selected for the audit and provide them with clear instructions on what they need to provide. Further information will also be made available on the AHPRA website, including optometry-specific guidance.

Those selected for audit should review this information including the Optometry specific FAQs at the 'Audit' section under the 'Registration' tab on the AHPRA website.

Meeting of the Optometry Regulatory Reference Group

As per last month's communiqué, the Board recently convened a meeting of its Optometry Regulatory Reference Group.

The membership of the committee includes:

- members of the Optometry Board of Australia as determined by the Board with at least one community member, and

- up to two representatives from:
 - each of the Australian and New Zealand schools of optometry
 - Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ)
 - Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board of New Zealand
 - Australian College of Optometry
 - Optometrists Association Australia, and
 - New Zealand Association of Optometrists.

The terms of reference for this committee are now published on the Board's website under the 'About' tab.

Graduate applications

Graduates from the approved programs of study conducted by the University of New South Wales and the University of Melbourne are able to apply for general registration and endorsement for scheduled medicines.

To ensure that the application for general registration and endorsement for scheduled medicines are considered at the same time, graduates should complete and send an [Application for endorsement of registration for scheduled medicines – AESM-05](#) form.

This applies to both online and paper applications.

No fee for application for endorsement will apply for applications made at the same time as an application for general registration.

Further information on graduate applications is available at www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx.

Consultations

Consultation on the review of assignment of accreditation functions

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), requires the National Boards to review the arrangements for the exercise of accreditation functions for their professions.

The Board has released a public consultation paper to seek feedback on the existing accreditation arrangements as part of this review. This paper is now published on the Board's website under the 'News' tab.

Please provide feedback by email to accreditationreview@ahpra.gov.au by close of business on Friday 2 November 2012.

Review of standards, guidelines and codes

The Optometry Board of Australia and the other National Boards that have been in the National Scheme since 2010 have begun preparations for reviewing the registration standards, guidelines and codes that were developed before the scheme commenced.

Optometrists, members of the public and other stakeholders will be able to provide feedback during the public consultation phases of the reviews. Where registration standards, guidelines and codes are common to all, or most, of the National Boards, the consultation phase will be coordinated across National Boards to make providing feedback easier.

Consultation is expected to occur over several stages, starting in 2013. The consultations are being staged to give stakeholders a better opportunity to provide feedback. Information about the reviews will be included in forthcoming communiqués and on the website as they commence.

Work on the reviews will include public consultation on a proposed social media policy. Until then, the Board's Code of conduct for optometrists and Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services provide guidance about appropriate use of social media and online behaviour.

Nominee for membership of Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand

The Board recently undertook an expression of interest process for its nominee member of the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ).

After consideration of a number of high quality applicants, the Board appointed Mr Geoff Leunig as its member. Mr Leunig attended the OCANZ AGM on 19 October 2012 as the Board's nominee.

The Board would like to publically thank Mr Mitchell Anjou for being its inaugural nominee member. Mr Anjou is now a director of the OCANZ Board.

Quarterly data published

The Board has released its quarterly registration data.

The data includes information about types of registration held, principal place of practice, endorsements, registrant age and gender.

The data is published under the 'About' tab of the Board's website.

Annual Report

AHPRA and the National Boards submitted the 2012 Annual Report to Ministers by 30 September as required by the National Law. The report, expected to be publicly released on 1 November, details the work of the National Boards and AHPRA in implementing the second year of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The release will be supported by the publication of a special edition of AHPRA Report.

The 2012 Annual Report and AHPRA Report will both be published online.

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

26 October 2012