

Communiqué

The 30th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the National Board) was held on 24 May 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.

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 standards

The Board has published two new registration standards approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council at its meeting on 27 April 2012:

- General registration, and
- Limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice.

The general registration standard applies to *initial* applicants only from 1 December 2014 – that is, local graduates and overseas-trained optometrists – and requires these applicants to hold qualifications in ocular therapeutics.

The standards are published under the *Registration standards* section of the Board's website.

The Board is in the process of writing to all optometrists currently registered to inform them of the changes.

A fact sheet on limited registration for postgraduate training or supervised practice is available alongside the registration standard.

Supervision guidelines

The Board has published *Supervision guidelines for optometrists* on its website under the Policies, Codes and Guidelines section of the Board's website.

These guidelines set out what the Board considers safe and effective supervision for a range of regulatory needs.

In coming weeks, the Board will develop sample completed supervision plans and reports alongside these guidelines to assist the profession understand the scope and application of the document.

One of the key supporting documents to go with the guidelines will be the development of an orientation manual for supervisors. The Board will develop this in the latter half of this year in conjunction with the profession.

Advertising guidelines

Over recent months there has been an increased focus on the Board's guidelines for the advertising of regulated health services. This has arisen from the advertisement of optometry products and services which test these current guidelines.

Where necessary, AHPRA on behalf of the Board will raise certain advertisements with the party advertising the service and either request a change or removal of the advertisement concerned.

Practitioners and members of the public concerned about advertising of optometric health services are able to make a notification directly to AHPRA.

Information on how to make a notification is available at www.ahpra.gov.au/notifications-and-outcomes/make-a-notification.

Consultation on amendments to the Board's Continuing professional development registration standard and guidelines

This consultation process has now closed. The Board thanks those of you who made a submission.

The Board will now finalise the registration standard and recommend it to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for approval, with any amendments deemed appropriate arising from the submissions received in the consultation process.

Ministers will not consider this document until the end of the year. The Board will publish the amended CPD guidelines in the event that the Ministers approve the registration standard.

Until such time that the amended documents are published, the current versions of the registration standard and guideline apply. The Board will keep optometrists and CPD providers up to date on any changes including the implementation of changes arising from them and impacts for the registration renewal in November.

Updates from the Board

The Board has recently released the 3rd edition of its e-newsletter. If you did not receive a copy it is available under the News section of the Board's website.

To ensure that future editions of the newsletter reach you, please check your contact details and update them if necessary. 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.

English Language Skills Registration Standards

The National Boards have committed to reviewing their registration standards at least every three years. By mid 2013, the National Scheme will be three years old, which will trigger a review of the standards that have been in place since the start of the scheme.

In preparation, National Boards and AHPRA have commissioned research on English language skills testing, including the scope of exemptions from testing requirements. This research will inform the review of English Language Skills Registration Standards in 2013. The research evidence and other information from the review will be shared with the four professions joining the Scheme on 1 July 2012 so that they can consider any implications for their registration standards.

The existing standard was based on the approach of state and territory registration boards before July 2010, and informed by the consultation process that supported its development. The National Boards will consult on any changes to the English language skills registration standard in 2013.

Registration applications now open for four more professions

Registration applications are now open for practitioners in the four professions joining the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) in July. From 1 July 2012, the following professions must be registered with their National Board to practise anywhere in Australia:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner
- Chinese medicine practitioner¹
- Medical radiation practitioner, and
- Occupational therapist.

Registration application forms for practitioners in these professions who intend to practise after 1 July are published on each National Board website through www.ahpra.gov.au.

The National Board encourages optometrists to help spread this important message and to refer anyone with questions to the website.

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 AHRPA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair

5 June 2012

¹ Including Chinese medicine practitioners, acupuncturists, Chinese herbal medicine practitioners, oriental medicine practitioners and Chinese herbal dispensers.