



Communiqué

The twenty second meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) was held on 26 August 2011 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) Tasmania office in Hobart. This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board.

Consultation on therapeutics qualifications as a requirement for general registration

The Board has released this consultation document on its website. Comments are welcome up until close of business on Monday 3 October 2011.

Registration renewal

Optometrists across Australia are being urged to update their contact details held by the Optometry Board of Australia to ensure they don't miss reminders to renew their registration.

About 4440 optometrists are due to renew their registration by 30 November – 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, have valid registration for five months and must renew again.

Optometrists should check their contact details and update them if necessary to receive regular reminders from the Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (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.

AHPRA and the Board are implementing an intensive communication campaign to support the renewal process, including sending several reminder emails and letters to individual practitioners and a newsletter from the Board. Optometrists should watch for these reminders as confirmation that they can now renew online.

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.

CPD

The Board considered a range of matters at the meeting in relation to the CPD registration standard and guidelines.

Roll over of points

The Board agreed to the following amendment to its CPD policy.

The Board recognises that prior to the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme there was provision for optometrists to roll over the annual CPD points across a two year period in meeting the CPD requirements of membership of the Optometry Association of Australia. The Board also recognises that many optometrists relied upon this provision as it provided them with increased flexibility in meeting the requirements and developing an appropriate personal CPD plan. Protection of the public has been at the forefront in developing the requirements of the Board's CPD registration standard. The Board wants to encourage a commitment to life-long learning within the profession and believes that the flexibility of accumulating the requirements over a two year period will encourage this without compromising the protection of the public.

Optometrists renewing their registration in November will need to make a declaration that they have met the CPD requirements for the previous registration renewal period (since 1 December 2010) or that they have a plan in place to complete the two years' requirements by the end of the next registration period (30 November 2012). This means optometrists must accumulate 80 points over no more than two registration periods starting from 1 December 2010.

Definition of CPD activities for endorsement for scheduled medicines

The Board has published an amended definition on what can be counted towards CPD points related to scheduled medicines endorsement to link it directly with the stages of Therapeutic Medication Management.



It should be remembered that CPD activities, particularly related to patient assessment and differential diagnosis, will count as points related to endorsement and may meet the CPD needs of endorsed and non-endorsed optometrists.

FAQs

The Board has reformatted and revised the content of the CPD FAQs published on the Board's website.

The Optometry Board of Australia has developed these FAQs to guide optometrists through the Board's registration standard for continuing professional development.

There are 5 key sections in the document:

- **Information available** – lists the Board's CPD document
- **Requirements** – focuses on the requirements including for CPR and those who hold a scheduled medicines endorsement as well as questions on exemption applications
- **Accredited and non-accredited CPD Activities** – differentiates between accredited and non-accredited activities, information for optometrists wanting to complete CPD overseas, and those undertaking postgraduate study.
- **Record keeping** – focuses the record keeping requirements listed under the standards
- **Providers** – outlines information of interest to providers of CPD activities

Each section has an introductory statement that outlines the key issues for this section and relevant points in the Board's CPD registration standard, guidelines and policy.

Return to Practice

The Board has developed and published an information sheet for optometrists who have had an absence from practice. This information sheet supports the Board's registration standard for recency of practice and provides information to optometrists on how to comply with the standard if they have had an absence from practice.

It provides a framework and information about the typical elements of a plan for professional development and re-entry to practice if the optometrist has had an absence from practice of greater than 3 years.

It is available at the FAQ and Fact Sheet section of the Board's website.



Conclusion

A lot of information about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners is published on the Board website at www.optometryboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au. For more detail, or for questions about your registration please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHRPA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron
Chair
30 August 2011