

## Intern pharmacist and preceptor guide

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### Introduction

Pharmacy graduates are required to complete a period of supervised practice (internship) during their provisional registration to be eligible to apply for general registration. It is a period in which the knowledge gained during academic studies is applied to pharmacy practice under the supervision of a pharmacist. During this time, the intern pharmacist (intern) should develop a mature and responsible attitude towards the practice of pharmacy in relation to the general public and professional colleagues.

The roles and responsibilities of the Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board), the preceptor and the intern are linked closely.

It is implicit that the Board should, at all times, give consideration to public safety in its administration of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), including in relation to the supervised practice of interns.

This guide is to assist interns, pharmacists in the role of preceptor, and other supervising pharmacists, during the supervised practice period.

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## Roles and responsibilities of intern pharmacists and preceptors

Interns and preceptors must be informed of all legal and Board requirements for both provisional and subsequent general registration. This includes the requirement for the intern to hold provisional registration with the Board, and have the supervised practice (preceptor and premises) approved by the Board **prior** to the commencement of supervised practice hours (refer to section [Supervised practice](#) in this guide).

### Intern pharmacists

Interns should undertake supervised practice with a positive attitude and a commitment to learn from the practice environment and the practical experience of the preceptor and other professional colleagues. This interaction should provide mutual professional benefits to all parties.

Interns should be prepared to assume specific areas of responsibility within the workplace. As they become experienced and confident in these areas, they should always bear in mind that the final legal responsibility lies with the supervising pharmacist. At the completion of the approved supervised practice period, the intern should demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Board, a level of professional competence in pharmacy practice that meets the requirements to apply for general registration in order to practise unsupervised and with the associated legal responsibility of a pharmacist.

### Professional conduct

The intern must always act in accordance with all relevant legislation and the Board's *Code of Conduct for pharmacists* which is available on the Board's website at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Codes, Guidelines and Policies*. This code should be used to support the intern (and all pharmacists) in the challenging task of providing good healthcare and fulfilling their professional roles as well as providing a framework to help guide professional judgement.

### Preceptors

#### Approved preceptor

An **approved preceptor** is a pharmacist who has been approved by the Board to supervise the training of a provisionally registered intern, or other person undertaking approved supervised practice in accordance with the requirements specified in the Board's *Registration standard: Recency of practice*, for a defined period at specified pharmacy premises.

The approved preceptor is responsible for the overall supervision of the intern. On a day-to-day basis, the approved preceptor may personally supervise the intern at the approved site, or may delegate the supervision to another suitably-qualified pharmacist at the site.

A preceptor should be present at the approved training site on a regular basis. Pharmacists who do not regularly practise at the site are advised not to apply for approval as a preceptor. This role is considered best undertaken by pharmacists who can meet the preceptor requirements outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* and deliver the on-site training program in accordance with this guide.

As part of their continuing professional development obligations under the Board's *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*, pharmacists seeking approval to conduct supervised practice are advised to undertake a preceptor training program as part of their preparation for the role. Further information on training options is available from the Intern Training Program (ITP) providers (available at [www.pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.au)) and continuing professional development (CPD) providers.

As outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*, to be approved as preceptor a pharmacist must:

- hold general registration
- have held general registration and practised as a pharmacist in Australia for a minimum of 12 months in the area of practice where the supervised practice is to be conducted (e.g. hospital or community pharmacy practice), unless the pharmacist has been registered for a shorter period and is approved by the Board to act as preceptor

- be practising in pharmacy premises (i.e. community pharmacy or hospital pharmacy department), or in other premises suitable for conducting supervised practice as determined by the Board on a case-by-case basis (e.g. a pharmaceutical company or pharmacy teaching institution)
- not have conditions placed on his or her general registration that would impact on their ability to conduct the supervised practice of the intern, and
- have suitable relevant training or experience to act in this role.

To apply for approval of a preceptor and premises, an application for approval of supervised practice must be made by final year pharmacy students and pharmacy graduates. The application must be lodged and approved by the Board **before any approved supervised practice can take place**. Further information on the application process is available in the section [Supervised practice](#) in this guide.

### Role of the preceptor

The preceptor plays a vital role in the development of the intern. Now that the intern has gained the academic knowledge through university studies, the preceptor has the responsibility to guide them through the experiential education program that is essential for them to become a competent pharmacist.

The preceptor assumes the role of teacher during the practical training period. Most preceptors have trained as practitioners, not as teachers, and having to teach in the uncontrolled environment of the clinical practice setting adds complexity to the task. As part of a preceptor's continuing professional development, preceptor training can help preceptors to feel more prepared and confident in this role (also refer to the section [Approved preceptor](#) in this guide).

Unlike a classroom situation where the learning environment can be manipulated to structure the learning process, the clinical practice is without artificial controls and can be very challenging for the intern. In this unfamiliar environment, the intern looks to the preceptor to provide guidance. It is important to set clear boundaries at the beginning of the training and revisit these as the intern gains experience and confidence and develops the necessary skills. Time and effort invested in orientation and practical education results in a faster integration and greater contribution by the intern to their workplace.

The supervised practice period is intended to be one of professional and personal maturation, leading to a level of competence that will allow independent professional practice after gaining general registration. *It is important to assess and provide feedback on the knowledge, skills and performance of the intern throughout the training period so that experiences can be built upon and any difficulties identified and remediated in a timely manner.*

The importance of interns receiving similar basic experiences during their training has been recognised. For this reason, the *National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia 2010* underpin the intern training program (refer to the section [Intern Training Program](#) in this guide for further information on intern training programs).

Modern medicine is advancing so rapidly that continuing professional development is essential to maintain knowledge for competent practice. It is therefore important that the preceptor is a good role model of how to maintain a program of professional development. Leading the intern by practical example, thus becoming guide and mentor, is an obligation of the preceptor.

Training future pharmacists is a responsibility of the entire profession in order to maintain a standard of quality health care. The preceptor, as teacher/instructor of the intern during the supervised practice period, has considerable responsibilities to the profession, the Board and the public. The challenge of teaching in a clinical setting should be a rewarding and stimulating experience for the preceptor and the intern alike.

The following list emphasises the responsibilities inherent in accepting the role of preceptor.

The preceptor should:

- serve as a role model, instilling professional values and attitudes
- serve as a learning resource for the intern; interns should also be taking responsibility in driving their learning
- interview the intern to assess his or her knowledge and experience at the beginning of the training period, and discuss strengths and weaknesses with the intern (refer to the section [Guidelines for conducting formative assessment](#) in this guide)
- provide an orientation into the workplace for the intern

- develop a training plan with the intern (refer to the section [Training plan](#) in this guide)
- meet on a regular basis to discuss issues, review progress, discuss learning topics in the training plan
- attempt to expose the intern to a full range of professional services
- stimulate and challenge the intern to think and learn for themselves and to justify evidence-based decisions, and
- provide positive and developmental feedback during the learning process.

### **The learning process**

The preceptor has a particular responsibility for initiating and maintaining a suitable learning environment, providing appropriate activities and opportunities to learn and making relevant resources available.

Teaching with competence and effectiveness in the experiential learning environment involves a complex interaction between skilled practice, disciplinary knowledge, understanding of teaching and learning processes, appropriate attitudes and values and critical self-reflection. As teaching takes place in unpredictable, fluid, non-routine and novel situations, it is seen to involve a constant process of problem solving and decision making.

It is important to realise that what is taught is not necessarily the same as what the intern learns. The "teaching" process is an interaction between the teacher (preceptor), the learner (intern), the subject and the context.

The intern brings his or her own attributes, motivation and experience to the supervised practice period which may not "match" with the preceptor's values, approach to learning, and experience of learning or teaching. As the preceptor is in a position of power relative to the intern pharmacist, it is the preceptor's responsibility to adapt his or her teaching style to one most suited to the learning style of the intern.

There are many published resources providing information on learning styles. The following links may assist:

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/learning-skills/learning-skills-online/learning-learning-styles>

<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsls>

<http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/styles.htm>

[https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/Learning\\_Styles\\_Handout.pdf](https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/Learning_Styles_Handout.pdf)

<http://pharmacy.utah.edu/pharmacotherapy/adjunct/pdf/LearningStylesPresentationZA.pdf>

### **Benefits of being a preceptor**

The benefits of being a preceptor include:

- supporting the profession – the future of pharmacy
- diversifying skills
- strengthening pharmacy practice
- maintaining knowledge, and
- the potential for future recruitment of a newly qualified pharmacist.

### **Intern training program (ITP)**

For the purpose of meeting the requirements of section 52(1)(b)(i) of the National Law (Eligibility for general registration), as stated in the *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*, the Board requires interns to successfully complete an accredited intern training program (ITP) during their supervised practice period.

The ITP is competency-based training where the intern builds on academic knowledge with practical experience gained at the supervised practice site to progress from student to competent pharmacist. ITPs are based on the knowledge, skills and attributes of pharmacists as described by the *National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia 2010*. Interns are required to provide valid and reliable evidence of entry-level competence in each of the eight domains of the framework. The standards applicable to entry-level pharmacists are highlighted in Section 2.3 *The Competency Standards* of the framework through the use of shading.

The programs are structured to gather this evidence by a number of methods which may include:

- a portfolio
- preceptor assessments
- online multiple-choice questions
- training days
- tutorials
- discussion papers, and
- continuing professional development record/s.

The intern should:

- adopt a positive approach to this period of learning
- aim to become a competent pharmacist by the end of the ITP
- be aware that knowledge not complemented by practical experience can be a liability
- be aware that, aside from daily activities of the work situation, time should be set aside to consider and study assignments outside working hours
- attempt to acquire knowledge and skills actively by observation, reading, listening and questioning others
- comply with the profession's standards and guidelines, as set down by professional associations and the Board
- recognise that success at the end of the training period is determined largely by the amount of effort invested, and
- consciously develop high personal standards of professionalism.

On satisfactory completion of the components of an approved ITP, the intern will be issued with a certificate of completion, or evidence will be provided directly from the ITP provider to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), who supports the Board. Evidence of completion is required as part of an application for general registration.

It is the responsibility of the intern to enrol in an ITP that best suits his or her needs. An approved supervised practice position must be secured before enrolling in an ITP. A list of accredited intern training program providers is available at [www.pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.au).

### **Assessment of extemporaneously prepared (compounded) medicines**

The Board requires that interns are assessed on their ability to prepare extemporaneous products (compound) in the supervised practice site as part of the ITP. This will be assessed by the preceptor (or his/her designate) and the required paperwork is then provided to the ITP coordinator so that this component of the ITP can be met. The required paperwork includes:

- an instruction letter for preceptors outlining the assessment process
- an extemporaneous dispensing procedures document to guide interns and preceptors
- a standard report form for each product assessed, and
- a statutory declaration to be completed by the preceptor on completion of the assessment are available on the Board's website [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under Registration and *Internships*.

### **Supervised practice**

#### **Steps required before supervised practice can commence**

Interns are required to hold provisional registration and have their supervised practice arrangements approved by the Board **before** commencing and counting their hours of supervised practice and enrolling in an ITP.

The required steps include:

1. lodgement of a complete application for:
  - a. provisional registration **and**
  - b. approval of supervised practice, **and**



2. granting of provisional registration by the Board, **and**
3. approval of the supervised practice arrangements by the Board.

Graduates of an Australian approved program of study can apply for provisional registration online via the AHPRA website at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) under *Registration and Graduate Applications*. A separate *Application for approval of supervised practice* (AASP-60) should also be submitted, to have the preceptor and premises approved by the Board, as well as an *English language skills requirements form* (TELG-00) to provide evidence that the applicant meets the Board's *Registration standard: English language skills* (refer to section [Registration standards](#) in this guide).

Alternatively, graduates of an Australian approved program of study can submit a hard-copy *Application for provisional registration and supervised practice for students completing an approved program of study in Australia* (ASPR-60). This application is available at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration and Forms*, and includes the application for approval of supervised practice and requires applicants to provide evidence that they meet the Board's *Registration standard: English language skills*.

Graduates from New Zealand or other overseas countries should submit a hard-copy *Application for provisional registration and supervised practice* (APRO-60). This application is also available at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration and Forms*, and includes the application for approval of supervised practice and requires applicants to provide evidence that they meet the Board's *Registration standard: English language skills*.

Before undertaking any supervised practice, an intern must check the public register of practitioners at [www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners.aspx), to confirm that they hold provisional registration, and that their supervised practice details have been recorded in the notations field on the register.

The section [Registration requirements](#) in this guide, provides further information on the registration process.

Although AHPRA will endeavour to process applications for provisional registration and approval of supervised practice in a timely manner, registration and approval is dependent on graduate course results, start dates for supervised practice and submission of complete applications. **Applications that do not have all of the requisite information and documentation may be delayed unnecessarily.** Preceptors and/or employers should be mindful of this when planning rosters around the time that the intern is expected to commence their supervised practice.

### Supervised practice hours

For the purpose of section 52(1)(b)(i) of the National Law, to apply for initial general registration as a pharmacist, an intern holding provisional registration is required to undertake a period of 1824 hours of approved supervised practice as outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*.

Details of the Board's requirements for supervised practice, including the minimum and maximum number of hours in a period of four consecutive calendar weeks that can count towards supervised practice hours, are also outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*. This standard is available at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration Standards*. Further information is also available in the Board's FAQ for pharmacy interns and preceptors, available at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Codes, Guidelines and Policies* and *FAQ and Fact Sheets*.

This standard requires supervised practice to be undertaken under the direct supervision of a pharmacist holding general registration. As such, hours not worked (for example, due to illness, holiday leave or a public holiday), and hours worked at premises that are not part of the approved preceptor's supervised practice program (for example, part-time work at an additional pharmacy on evenings or weekends, unless those arrangements independently meet the minimum requirements of the standard and have been approved by the Board), cannot count towards the supervised practice hours.

Attendance at the training days of accredited ITPs can count towards the supervised practice hours.

The Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* applies to individuals who hold provisional or limited registration. Hours undertaken **before** an individual is granted provisional or limited



registration (e.g. when an individual holds student registration) **cannot be counted**. Therefore, clinical placement hours completed during an approved pharmacy program cannot be counted.

### Supervision ratios

The Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* states that an intern may only undertake supervised practice in premises where the total number of interns does not exceed the total number of supervising pharmacists at any time. A supervising pharmacist may be the approved preceptor, or another pharmacist who has been delegated the responsibility for supervision of an intern by the approved preceptor.

This requirement is to ensure that a supervising pharmacist is not routinely required to supervise multiple interns, which could impact their ability to meet their legal and professional responsibilities, the quality of service delivered to the public and the learning outcomes for interns.

Often the Board approves a pharmacist as a preceptor to more than one intern. This often occurs in pharmacy premises such as hospital pharmacy departments and large community pharmacies. However, the support of a sufficient number of other pharmacists in the day-to-day supervision of all interns at the training site is important to ensure that the above risks are mitigated.

From time to time, the work schedule of a supervising pharmacist may involve the direct supervision of more than one intern in a particular aspect of practice, for example a hospital pharmacist supervising more than one pharmacy intern on a particular ward rotation. Under such circumstances, the preceptor and supervising pharmacist should ensure that the supervision arrangements do not compromise patient safety or the quality of learning outcomes of interns.

Ensuring the total number of interns undertaking supervised practice at the premises does not exceed the total number of supervising pharmacists at any one time is likely to facilitate achieving the required outcomes.

### Exceptional circumstances

According to the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*, in exceptional circumstances the Board may approve other supervision ratios where there is evidence that the required learning outcomes can be achieved and public safety is not compromised.

#### *Application for alternative supervision ratios*

A preceptor who is considering an alternative supervision ratio should:

1. undertake a risk assessment before deciding whether to make a request to the Board for approval of the proposed arrangements, and
2. include in the application for approval of supervised practice, details of:
  - c. how the legal and professional responsibilities of all supervising pharmacists including adequate supervision of all staff (interns and non-pharmacist staff at the premises) will be met
  - d. the measures that will be in place to ensure that safety of the public is not compromised through the proposed arrangements
  - e. the measures that will be in place to ensure that the required learning outcomes will be achieved for each intern at the premises, including details of the work schedule and training plan of each intern that ensure that sufficient practice exposure to the different areas of pharmacy practice can be achieved through the proposed arrangements, and
  - f. details of how the proposed preceptor is prepared for their role.

The above information will be considered by the Board or its delegate on a case-by-case basis, and the intern and preceptor subsequently advised of the outcome with reasons supporting the Board's decision. Applicants should allow sufficient time to enable review and consideration.

## Recording supervised practice hours

Interns are required to keep a record of supervised practice hours undertaken which must be signed weekly by the approved preceptor. On completion of the approved period of supervised practice the preceptor must sign the statutory declaration. The *Statutory Declaration form: Weekly record of supervised practice hours* (SPWR-60) is available on the Board's website at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration and Forms*.

A total of 1824 hours of supervised practice must be undertaken by graduates of Australian or New Zealand pharmacy courses approved by the Board. In the case of graduates of pharmacy courses conducted by an overseas provider, the period of supervised practice will also be 1824 hours, unless otherwise advised in writing by the Board. All hours must be undertaken in accordance with the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* and this guide.

## Training plan

After orientation into the workplace, each intern should organise a time to develop a training plan with the preceptor which addresses contemporary pharmacy practice and indicates the competencies to be addressed each month.

A training plan is a map of the list of topics to be covered by the preceptor (or other pharmacist, as arranged by the preceptor) with the intern throughout the year. This should be planned and run in conjunction with the ITP to avoid overlaps and maximise learning outcomes. The plan should be kept on-site and used to track progress of topics covered and referred to regularly. There is flexibility in the order in which topics can be covered, as long as topics are marked off as they are completed. Topics may also be covered from day-to-day experiences (such as primary health care requests from patients, dispensing and counselling new medications); however, this should be supplemented with further research and discussion if this is to be incorporated as part of the training plan.

Examples of community and hospital pharmacy training plans are available on the Board's website at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration and Internships* and can be used as a guide when developing an individualised training program relevant to a location of practice.

## Meetings

As a general guideline, meetings should run weekly and for one hour, uninterrupted. The meeting is not the only basis of learning for an intern. It is not possible to cover every topic relevant to pharmacy in these sessions. Therefore, the intern is also expected to incorporate learning from day-to-day experiences.

In preparation for these meetings, interns are encouraged to undertake pre-reading on the scheduled topics in the training plan and to demonstrate knowledge gained on these topics to the preceptor. Role-plays, quizzes and drawing from pharmacy practice scenarios are examples of useful learning tools for the intern.

If the preceptor conducting the weekly meetings is on annual leave, topics are to be set in advance for the intern to research during the preceptor's absence, or another pharmacist can be elected by the preceptor to assist with meetings.

## Providing practice exposure

If interns are to learn and retain the knowledge, concepts and skills acquired at university, they must have the opportunity to apply these and exhibit the required attitudes and behaviours. The preceptor should attempt to provide a full range of professional services. Where this is not possible, other avenues for learning for the intern will need to be identified.

Performing a task successfully is only the first step; interns should also be able to transfer what they have learned from one specific task to other similar tasks or situations. Therefore, **preceptors need to arrange a variety of tasks in which interns can gain competence by practising their learning and applying it in different ways.**

It is highly recommended that interns use a journal to note new things, things learned, or things to follow up such as questions to research. This can then be used as a revision tool or points for discussion with the preceptor.

Interns are encouraged to have an inquisitive nature and to research information rather than expecting to be told the answer. Self-reflection on work experiences is essential to developing and refining skills.

### Guide for preceptors in providing practice experience for interns

The following principles guide preceptors in creating an environment where interns become competent by applying their learning to a variety of situations.

- Specific activities assigned to the intern pharmacist should require demonstration of learned skills and decision-making.
- Interns should have active roles as they cannot learn professional skills by observation only.
- Interns should be given an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills as soon as possible after new material has been presented and to repeat the task soon afterwards.
- Learning tasks should be sufficiently difficult to be challenging, but not discouraging.
- At the conclusion of a learning task, help the intern pharmacist understand the experience by discussing it with them and providing constructive feedback on ways to improve their performance
- Interns should use a journal to note new things, things learned, or things to follow up such as questions to research, and use this as a revision tool or points for discussion with the preceptor.
- Encourage interns to have an inquisitive nature and to research things rather than expecting to be told the answer.
- Encourage interns to review how they perform tasks or experiences to develop and refine skills.

### Examinations

The Board's *Registration standard: Examinations for eligibility for general registration* outlines that interns are required to successfully complete a registration examination conducted by or on behalf of the Board.

Currently the registration examination includes two examinations: a written and an oral examination.

#### Written examination

The written examination is conducted by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) on behalf of the Board. As of 1 January 2018, interns may attempt this examination after having completed a minimum of **40 per cent** of their supervised practice hours, however interns who sit this examination after having completed a greater percentage of hours may be better prepared for this examination.

This examination is used as an assessment of the ability to apply to practice situations, knowledge gained in the undergraduate course and during supervised practice. It covers five domains of the *National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia 2010*, being:

- Domain 1 - Professional and ethical practice
- Domain 4 - Review and supply prescribed medicines
- Domain 5 - Prepare pharmaceutical products\
- Domain 6 - Deliver primary and preventive health care
- Domain 7 - Promote and contribute to optimal use of medicines

The written examination is a computer-based assessment comprising 125 multiple-choice questions. The examination is a three hour restricted, open-book examination. A list of allowable texts is available at [www.pearsonvue.com/apc/](http://www.pearsonvue.com/apc/).

The written examination candidate guide contains information on the application process, examination calendar, format, rules, appeals process and sample questions and is available at [www.pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.au) and at [www.pearsonvue.com/apc/](http://www.pearsonvue.com/apc/).

The required pass mark for the written examination is 65 per cent. Candidates must also achieve a minimum of 50 per cent in each of the domains 4, 6 and 7, and a minimum of 63 per cent in each of the domains 1 and 5. A pass in the written examination is valid for 18 months. If a candidate fails to achieve the pass mark, he or she may re-sit the written examination at one of the subsequent scheduled sessions. Interns must pass the written examination successfully before attempting the oral examination.

Interns can apply to sit the written examination using an online direct application with Pearson Vue [www.pearsonvue.com/apc/](http://www.pearsonvue.com/apc/). A confirmation email including an enrolment letter will be sent directly to the candidate upon registration.

## Oral examination

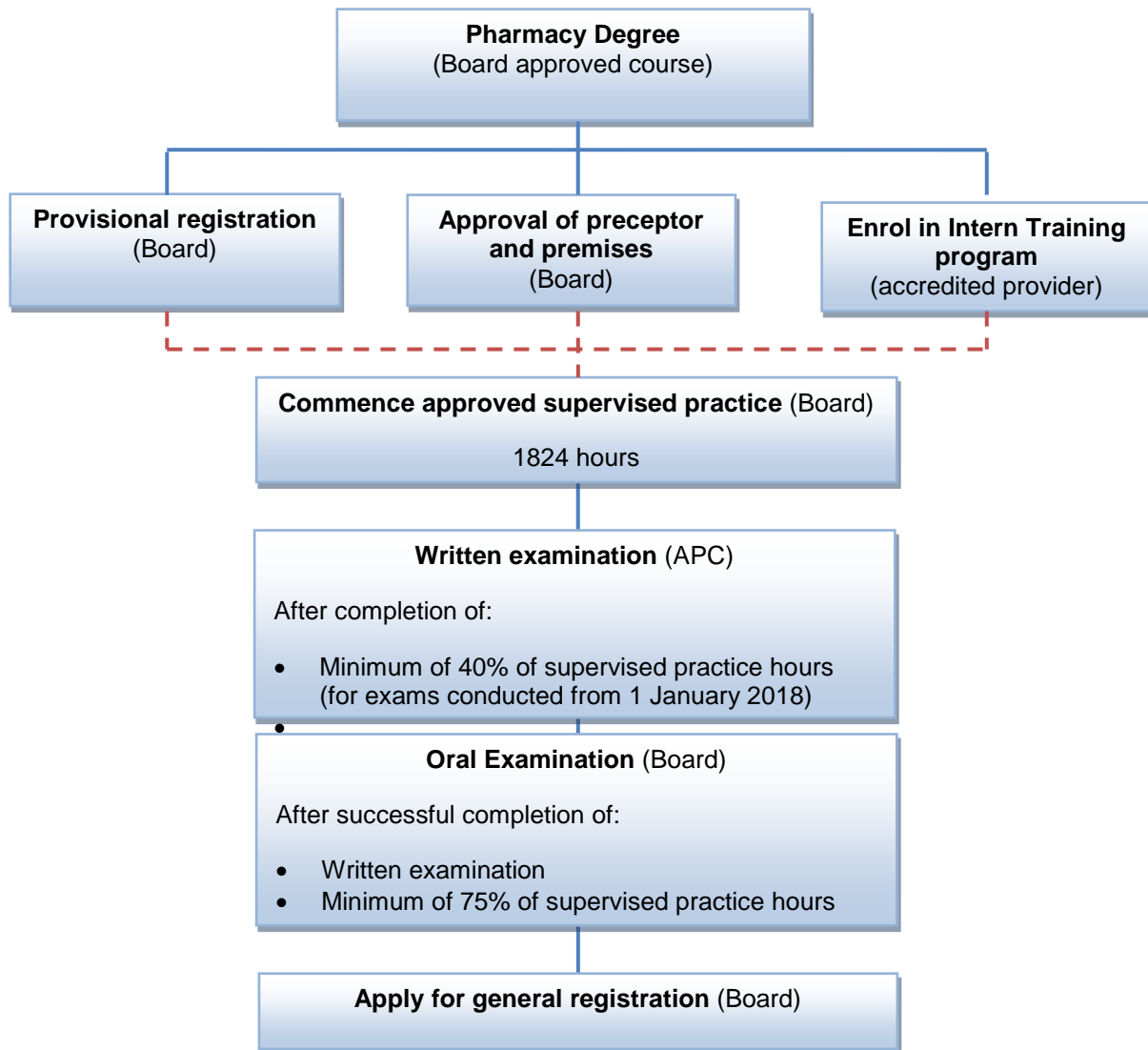
The oral examination is conducted by AHPRA on behalf of the Board. Information on this examination is included in the *Pharmacy oral examination (practice) candidate guide* published on the Board's website [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration and Internships*.

Oral examinations are held in each jurisdiction according to the *Schedule of Oral Examinations*, which can also be viewed at the Board's website [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration and Internships > Schedule of Oral Examinations*. An *Application to be a candidate for an oral examination for pharmacy interns* must be lodged by the published closing date for that examination period. This form is available on the Board's website [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration and Forms*.

Interns undertake the oral examination in the jurisdiction where they have undertaken their supervised practice.

## Registration requirements

The following diagram outlines the pathway to general registration for pharmacy interns.



## Registration standards

Before applying for general registration, interns are required to meet the Board's registration standards including those on:

- continuing professional development
- criminal history
- examinations for eligibility for general registration
- English language skills (to be met on application for provisional registration)
- professional indemnity insurance arrangements, and
- supervised practice arrangements.

These are available on the Board's website at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration Standards*.

## Continuing professional development

Interns holding provisional registration must undertake continuing professional development (CPD) as described in the Board's *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*.

CPD is the means by which members of the profession continue to maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives.

During a 12 month internship period and whilst undertaking an intern training program, interns are required to complete a minimum of 40 CPD credits. Interns should review the Board's CPD standard (at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration Standards*), CPD guidelines (at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Codes, Guidelines and Policies*) and *FAQ on continuing professional development for pharmacists and pharmacy interns* (at [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Codes, Guidelines and Policies* and *FAQ and Fact Sheets*). The FAQ provide guidance to interns on which activities from the ITP can be included as CPD.

Failure to meet the Board's CPD requirements may constitute behaviour for which health, conduct or performance action may be taken.

### Professional indemnity insurance requirements

Interns with provisional registration are required to maintain the approved level of individual professional indemnity insurance (PII) cover while practising and in accordance with the terms and conditions set under the Board's registration standard.

Interns may take out their own insurance cover or may be covered by insurance cover provided through employment arrangements. In the latter case, interns must confirm with their employer that they are covered by the employer's insurance policy. However, this will not cover practice that is outside of the workplace and/or the employment arrangements.

### Criminal history check

In deciding whether a health practitioner's criminal history is relevant to the practice of his or her profession, the Board will consider the 10 factors set out in the Board's registration standard on criminal history.

### English language requirements

Applicants for provisional registration are required to meet the Board's *Registration standard: English language skills*, to demonstrate that their English language skills are sufficient to enable them to practise safely.

There are four pathways that can be used to demonstrate English language competence, which are outlined in the Board's registration standard.

If an applicant for provisional registration completed all of their education in Australia, the most appropriate pathway would be the combined secondary and tertiary education pathway. This pathway requires that at least two years of secondary education, as well as the qualification relied upon for registration, were taught and assessed in English in a recognised country (such as Australia).

For further information on the different pathways and their evidence requirements, refer to the evidence guide and FAQ on the English language skills page on the AHPRA website at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) under *Registration, Registration Standards* and *English language skills*.

### Applying for general registration

Applications for general registration under the National Law are to be submitted to the Board. The *Application for general registration as a pharmacist* (AGEN-60) is available on the Board's website [www.pharmacyboard.gov.au](http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au) under *Registration* and *Forms*.

**NOTE:** Although AHPRA, which supports the Board, endeavours to process applications as soon as possible, applications for general registration can take 14 days or longer to process. Applications that do not have all of the requisite information and documentation may be delayed unnecessarily. Preceptors and/or employers should be mindful of this when planning rosters around the time the intern applies for general registration. Interns should not apply for general registration until they have met the necessary requirements.

## Formal assessment and feedback

The preceptor and intern should regularly hold formative (or ongoing) assessment and feedback sessions throughout the intern year, which may help to modify teaching and learning activities so that better learning outcomes can be achieved by the intern. These should provide an opportunity to discuss the performance of the intern, provide constructive feedback on strengths and opportunities for improvement, and to review the intern's training plan and training needs. Formative assessment and feedback sessions may be a requirement set by the intern's ITP.

Formative assessment and feedback sessions as part of the intern training year should be regarded as a separate process from staff appraisal activities which pharmacies may have in place for their staff.

The objectives of the intern year should be confirmed early in the supervised practice year with the intern. The main goal with each review is that the intern is making gains or improvements as the year progresses. Early in the intern year the preceptor and intern should discuss and agree on the approach that will be used in undertaking Formative assessment and feedback.

It is important that formative assessment and feedback sessions are completed at the times scheduled by the ITP, discussed with the intern and forwarded immediately to the ITP coordinator. This process is a valuable opportunity for the preceptor and intern to review progress of training together and for the ITP coordinator to become aware of any problems and identify where assistance may be required. Feedback should be objective and constructive and obtained from both the preceptor and the intern.

Undertaking formative assessment and feedback for an intern with whom one works closely can be difficult. Preceptors need to be aware of the pitfalls of appraising someone they work closely with:

- **generosity** pitfall is being too kind-hearted and rating too highly
- the **halo** effect occurs when one dominant characteristic affects the rating of other characteristics, and
- **ambiguity of terms** refers to the fact that words such as "average" or "fair" mean different things to different people. Always strive to refer to specific behaviour in providing feedback rather than abstractions. Seek to clarify with additional comments or examples where possible.

For the majority of interns, summative assessment and constructive feedback result in very positive recognition and encouragement of their progress and they are usually aware of and willing to improve any deficiencies. Less than optimal ratings are of assistance to the preceptor, the intern and the ITP coordinator in helping to identify problems and methods to address these.

### Guidelines for conducting formative assessment

For formative assessment and feedback sessions to work effectively, preceptors should prepare both themselves and the intern for an interview. Both should understand the purpose of the interview.

The intern should be asked to think about the exercise and to prepare any comments or questions thought necessary.

In preparing for an interview, preceptors need to:

- arrange a reasonable time where there is adequate privacy and when interruption is unlikely
- review the ITP requirements for the appropriate time of year
- prepare several questions and/or discussion points in advance, that address previous experiences and performance
- be constructive in providing feedback on performance by praising strengths and noting deficiencies in non-emotive terms and assisting the intern to identify any problems and how they could improve their performance
- in providing negative feedback, focus on specific behaviour rather than generalities
- be aware of the activities the intern has been undertaking and obtain reports from any other pharmacists involved in their training and supervision



- prepare in advance any information the preceptor feels should be given at that stage in the intern year, and
- encourage the intern to do most of the talking - the preceptor should avoid dominating the interview.

Preceptors may find situations in which the intern becomes emotional or argumentative and difficult to handle during an interview. It is important to allow the intern full opportunity to express views and provide their own feedback on the training experience, to encourage them to recognise their positive accomplishments and to welcome constructive and reasonable suggestions.

Providing formative assessment and feedback may also be difficult when there is no reaction at all from the intern, or when the intern agrees too readily with the preceptor. Preceptors should try to draw out the opinions of the intern.

### **Motivating the intern pharmacist**

Flexibility on the preceptor's part is of paramount importance. It is likely that interns in a professional program such as pharmacy are motivated to learn. At university they are motivated to learn the knowledge and in practical training, they become motivated to learn specific tasks.

Sources of motivation include:

- interest
- curiosity
- desire to achieve, and
- personal development.

A desire to emulate the preceptor shows the importance of role modelling as a means of motivating the intern. Conditions for motivation may include:

- attention
- stimulation
- relevance
- confidence, and
- satisfaction.

Varying the tasks, limiting the time spent on any task and changing the pace of completing an assigned task will help to maintain *attention* and provide *stimulation*.

Preceptors should regularly help the intern see how new ideas or tasks *relate* to their future responsibilities and help these new ideas or tasks take on personal significance.

*Confidence* will result as interns complete specific assignments successfully. Developing confidence may be accomplished by giving specific assignments and providing constructive feedback.

To help achieve *satisfaction*, the preceptor must describe expectations at the beginning of a task so that the intern knows when a task has been completed successfully. Reinforcement of a job well done confirms the self-satisfaction.

At every opportunity, preceptors should provide encouragement to build initiative and developmental feedback to increase self-esteem.

### **Performance issues**

Problems arising from the performance of an intern or preceptor must be addressed in a timely manner. If a review and explicit discussion of goals and expectations between the preceptor and intern does not result in improvement in performance, the preceptor and/or intern may request the advice of the ITP coordinator.

In the event that intervention by the ITP coordinator is unsuccessful, the concerns should be directed to the pharmacy professional officer (or other relevant officer) in the state or territory AHPRA office. If deemed appropriate, AHPRA may refer the case to the Board for consideration.

## General enquiries and more information

The following is a general guide to the first point of contact for particular enquiries:

- ITP providers – ITP course outlines, training date information, ITP requirements, intern training issues
- AHPRA – registration enquiries, the oral examination, intern training issues which are unable to be resolved with the ITP provider
- The Pharmacy Board of Australia – matters requiring referral from AHPRA
- APC – the written examination

Matters which are **not** regulated by AHPRA and/or the Board:

- pay disputes
- industrial relations
- legal matters

## Abbreviations and definitions

### Abbreviations

AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
APC	Australian Pharmacy Council
Board	Pharmacy Board of Australia
CPD	Continuing professional development
ITP	Intern training program

### Definitions

National Law	The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.
Accredited intern training program	A program of work integrated learning conducted by intern training providers and accredited by the accreditation authority and approved by the Board.
Approved pharmacy program	A program of study approved by the Board under section 49 of the National Law.
Approved preceptor	A pharmacist responsible for the overall supervision of a pharmacist undertaking supervised practice as part of the process leading to general registration, or during supervised practice undertaken in accordance with the requirements specified in the Board's recency of practice standard.
Internship	The period during which a pharmacist undertakes a period of supervised practice under the supervision of a preceptor, in order to meet the requirements for initial general registration in Australia.
Pharmacy intern	A person registered with the Board who has completed the educational requirements determined by the Board to enable them to undertake a period of supervised practice required for initial general registration in Australia pursuant to clause 52(1)(b)(i) of the National Law.
Supervising pharmacist	For the purpose of this guide, is a pharmacist holding general registration who is responsible for the 'day to day' direct

supervision of a pharmacist in the provision of pharmacy services during supervised practice that has been approved by the Board. The supervising pharmacist may be the approved preceptor, or another pharmacist who has been delegated this responsibility by the approved preceptor.

#### Supervised practice

Practising under the direct supervision of a pharmacist who holds general registration (the preceptor or another supervising pharmacist), while pharmacy services are provided in pharmacy premises or in other premises and circumstances determined by the Board. Supervised practice includes internship.