



Communiqué

3 June 2011

The Pharmacy Board of Australia met on 27 May 2011 in Darwin.

Darwin visit

The Board conducted its first meeting outside Melbourne during a two day visit to Darwin. The visit provided an opportunity for Board members to visit a community health centre to gain first-hand knowledge of the provision of pharmacy services to indigenous communities. The Board also took the opportunity to meet with local pharmacists to discuss issues affecting professional practice. The Board proposes to conduct at least one visit annually in other jurisdictions to meet with pharmacists to discuss issues of importance.

Registrations

The Board approved initiatives to streamline the application process for people applying for general registration for the first time. These initiatives will be included in the general registration application form, which will be available on the Board's website shortly. These initiatives supplement the online provisional registration application process for students who are soon to complete a pharmacy course. For more details please refer to www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx.

The Board considered processing times for the approval of supervised practice applications for some interns, after a number of interns raised concerns about the impact of delays at the start of the national scheme on interns' future general registration. The Board will consider further the individual cases where the application processing time took longer than the times published by AHPRA, when no adverse declarations had been made to legitimately extend the process. The Board has asked AHPRA to identify and contact these interns in writing with their revised start date for supervised practice hours, which count towards requirements for general registration. In most cases interns will not be required to provide additional information, and if AHPRA needs more information interns will be contacted directly to help the process roll out swiftly.

Consultation: Guidelines on practice-specific issues –Guideline 1 (List of References)

On Friday 27 May 2011, the consultation period closed for submissions on changes to the list of references in Guideline 1 of the Board's 'Guidelines on practice specific issues'. The Board wishes to thank all those who lodged a submission. The Board's Policies, Codes and Guidelines Committee will review the submissions and make recommendations to the Board on a revised guideline based on feedback received through the consultation process. All submissions, unless otherwise requested, will be made available on the Board's website in coming weeks.

English language policy

The Board approved an updated English language policy to outline circumstances in which the Board may grant exemptions to its English language skills registration standard. The policy is attached to the standard and is available on the Board's website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx.

The Board may grant exemptions to applicants who have undertaken and successfully completed the last two years of secondary education (i.e. applicants were taught and assessed in English) in one of the countries listed in the standard.

For applicants who are required to provide their English language test results, but these results are expired, the Board may grant exemptions to having to re-sit the test in cases where applicants have proof that they have:

- continuously participated in a Board approved program of study since the test was undertaken, and
- used English as the primary language of practice in a country where English is the native or first language, and within a 12 month period, each and every year until applying for general registration, whilst:
 - completing a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised practice, or
 - employed in an equivalent capacity (excludes being employed as a dispensary assistant, pharmacy technician or pharmacy sales assistant).

If these circumstances do not apply, a new English language test must be successfully completed and a current valid test result presented at registration.

Audit of compliance with Registration Standards

The Board noted that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has commenced a project to implement an audit of compliance with the mandatory Registration Standards across all 10 National Boards. A communication strategy to key stakeholders will be a central part of the audit of compliance project. Further information will be published in the months ahead.

Health Workforce Australia's draft National Health Workforce Innovation and Reform Strategic Framework for Action

The Board considered and provided feedback to the Health Workforce Australia's draft National Health Workforce Innovation and Reform Strategic Framework for Action (the draft Framework). The Board encourages all of its key stakeholders to consider the draft Framework and engage with its development.

Website and receiving important information by email

Further information about the Board can be found on the Board's website at: www.pharmacyboard.gov.au and pharmacists are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on Policy and Guidelines affecting pharmacy in Australia.

The Board continues to encourage all pharmacists to provide AHPRA with a current email contact address by updating their contact details through online services. This will enable

AHPRA to contact pharmacists with important registration information and reminders, and allow the National Board to contact pharmacists with important updates for the profession.

Stephen Marty
Chair
3 June 2011