Transcript

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Webinar: From pharmacy student to intern pharmacist

Joe Brizzi: Welcome to today's webinar on your journey from pharmacy student to intern pharmacist, hosted by the Pharmacy Board of Australia. I'm the Board's Executive Officer, Joe Brizzi. We will now start today's Pharmacy Board of Australia webinar on the journey from pharmacy student to intern pharmacist. Until their final year, pharmacy students will have had little or no direct contact with the Board given that universities are required to provide student details to the Board for student registration purposes. In your final year studying pharmacy, you will initiate what will be a career-long contact with the Board, commencing with provisional registration and continuing with annual renewal of general registration and meeting any Board requirements.

Today's presenter is Mr Brett Simmonds, the Board's Deputy Chair and Chair of the Board's Notifications Committee. Brett is a pharmacist and a practitioner member from Queensland on the Board. Brett will start by giving a rundown on what today's webinar will cover. Thank you, Brett.

Brett Simmonds: Thank you very much, Joe. Good evening everyone, great to have you on board tonight. We're going to be showing you the journey from finishing your program of study to provisional registration and internship and then moving onto general registration. Also, importantly, we're going to show you where you can access resources when you need them. So just to let you know that the slides from tonight's presentation will be up on the Board's website, so you will be able to go through them after the webinar at any stage in your own time.

Things changed for regulation in 2010 in Australia where for the first time, 14 health professions became regulated by nationally consistent legislation under what we call the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. What happened is that we now have 14 health professional Boards that manage those professions and you are now able to go from one state to the other and be nationally registered (unlike before 2010 when you actually had to register in each state), so it made great leaps forward. As Joe was telling you, you've had little to do with the Board up until now but from now on you will have a lot to do with us.

I thought it would be worthwhile to give you a little bit of a rundown on what the Pharmacy Board does. You'll be registering with the Board with provisional registration and then from general registration onwards after that. The Board actually develops and sets registration standards, codes and guidelines. The Board also deals with notifications, so that's complaints about pharmacists. It also sets supervised practice and examination requirements and approves the programs of study that students study in the schools of pharmacy throughout Australia.

So that's basically what we do just in a nutshell. There's a picture of all of us. There’s one practitioner member from each state and territory, so there's eight of us there as practitioner members and then we also have four community members on Board as well. So that represents a really diverse and broad range of practice in the profession. We have community pharmacists, hospital pharmacists, industry pharmacists and consultant pharmacists, so we have a wide variety of experience.

The primary focus for the Pharmacy Board of Australia is the protection of the public. That's our main role and that's why we're involved with both notifications about pharmacists and also about setting registration standards. Also involved in the National Registration Accreditation Scheme is what we call AHPRA, or the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Now AHPRA is there to add administrative support for the 14 national health Boards, but it’s also your point of contact as someone who's ringing up wanting to contact the Board. AHPRA will be a point of contact for you.

They help us manage registration and renewal, they help maintain the Register of Practitioners, they manage investigations into notifications, they deliver oral examinations and they have an office in each state and territory, so that makes them very accessible for you as a practitioner. Just to fill you in a little bit and let you know about how full the space is in regulation around the pharmacy profession. I wanted to just show you what other stakeholders and regulators there were in the profession. Now some of the regulators, of course, they have regulatory functions in regard the public's interest, but other stakeholders there you see listed are actually member organisations and they provide services for their members.

When we look at that, you can see some that you'll probably recognise from your time as a pharmacy student already, but certainly you're going to be coming across all of these groups during your professional life. There's the Board's logo in the middle, the Pharmacy Board of Australia, with AHPRA below it. So that just gives you an idea about what a complex environment you're entering, as a professional. We then came up with this diagram just to show you and give you some idea of where everyone's located and what their roles involve.

As you can see from the diagram we've got students, pharmacists and interns and pharmacy premises. The Board itself as you can see in the purple shaded area along with AHPRA looks after the students, pharmacists and interns, while other stakeholders there have different areas of focus and obligations. A lot of them obviously have roles that intersect in different areas as well, but as you can see it's quite a complex environment. So taking all of that into consideration the best point of contact if you're needing any information is to go to our Pharmacy Board of Australia's website. It should be your primary information source for your internship.

If you have a look at the middle square there on your screen you'll see going to graduate soon, and there you'll be able to get onto the online register and see also whether other health practitioners, other pharmacists are registered or not. So that's where you can access that information as well. So can I suggest also that you look at this from time to time, not just look at it the once, and it's worthwhile going back and checking on the Board's website because at the moment you'll find that everything is current up until now.

As you know in pharmacy, things change so if you want to see if anything has been updated before you go and look at any of the standards or any guidelines or the latest news, you'll be able to come to the Board's website and make sure that you're up to date with the latest information. So don't just have a look at things once and forget about it, always come back regularly, just to see if anything has been updated. As we look at the Board's website, up the top you’ll see that there's a bar and the third tab in, is registration. If we press on that registration bar you'll see that we get, it gives you an overview of the pathway forward for you as a student moving into provisional registration.

So you can see from the diagram there that you've got to complete your pharmacy degree, which you're all doing at present, and then the three things that you are required to do is apply for provisional registration, nominate a preceptor and the premises that you're going to be working at, and enrol in an intern training program. Moving further down that pathway you can see that from those three things you start your supervised practice, pass your written and oral exams and then apply for general registration.

Now something I just wanted to bring up is, as you can see in that box under pass a written examination, the minimum of 30 per cent of supervised practice hours needs to be completed before you can sit for that exam. That is current at the moment, as of 1 January 2018, but that will change and it will relate to most of you who are listening to this broadcast is that that changes to 40 per cent. So that's why it's really important that you go back and just check what is updated, regularly, just to see what changes there might be for you.

Also on our website, we've got an internship video which really gives you lots of information, so it's worthwhile going, not now during the webinar but after we've finished, and having a look at that and I think you'll find lots of information and sources of information for you there. So please visit that.

So let's have a look at provisional registration. The Board really encourages you to apply for provisional registration online. Now if you go to the Board website and click on registration and then internships as I showed you just before, it'll take you automatically to an AHPRA website link and there you'll be able to start your registration application.

We really encourage you to apply early. Now this is really important, at least four to six weeks before graduating. It can take actually longer than four to six weeks, I want you to really bear in mind that one of the things that we have to wait for to be able to provisionally register you is the results from all the universities and schools of pharmacy. So we have to wait for those results, they send them direct to us so we have to wait for them to come. Also, as you’re aware, most of you are finishing at the end of the year, which is around between November and January, and that of course is one of the busiest times for registration because that's when everyone is renewing their general registration as well.

So we not only have provisional students trying to get provisional registration but a lot of general registrants renewing their registration as well. Please, the other thing that I want to point out is that it is really important that when you do your application that you fill out all the points. Make sure that everything is filled out, make sure where you have to sign the form it's signed, because if anything is missing when you send in that application it has to go back to you to be completed, and that then takes a lot of extra time. So really concentrate on getting all of that done before you send it in.

That's the website that it takes you to, and as you can see where the red arrow is down the bottom, apply online, so that's where to start your application process. Before you apply for provisional registration it's worthwhile visiting the Pharmacy Board website again under registration and you'll find their registration standards. Now these standards are relevant to your application for provisional registration. So as you can see we've highlighted a few of the ones that we think are really relevant to you, with the red arrows, and I'm just going to go through each one quickly for you to give you an overview of what they all involve and things that you're required to do when you submit your application.

So the first one we're going to look at is the English language skills registration standard. That has recently changed in 2015 and you need to meet the English language skills registration standard when you apply for provisional registration. If you have a look at that, there are four pathways to meet the standard. So everyone needs to pick a pathway and then, because of that change, we've now increased the number of examination providers. So the next slide just goes into a little bit more detail for you there on the four English competency pathways.

Most of you will find will that you will meet number three, the primary language pathway, but I just wanted to bring to your attention to the asterisk down the bottom is that it relates to your courses and education being taught and assessed in English in a recognised country, and you can see the countries are listed there. So please bear that in mind when you're looking at your particular pathway.

You'll find that we've got a flowchart at the AHPRA website. It’s a lot easier to try and navigate and might make it a lot plainer and easier for you to establish which pathway you want to use to establish your English language skills. So I just wanted to make you aware that that was available.

Moving on from English language, to the criminal history registration standard. This is very important. You are required to declare your criminal history, if you have any that is, when you apply for your provisional registration. The Board does decide whether the criminal history is then relevant to your practice as a pharmacist.

We really base that on 10 factors which you'll find listed in the standard. But just to give you an example of some of those factors, we take into consideration the nature and the gravity of an offence. We'd probably look at how long ago it was committed and things like the likelihood of a future threat to patients. But if you want to go to the registration standards, you'll see the 10 factors listed there for you.

Another important registration standard is the professional indemnity insurance standard. Now that's something as a student you haven't had a lot to do with, but moving forward, it will become very important for you.

It's all about public's protection, so you need to make sure that there is appropriate professional indemnity insurance in place for you. A lot of the time it'll be covered by what we call a third party, so that is covered by your employer where you're working. But if that is the case you do need to confirm that with your employer or the place where you're working and you have to get confirmation from them that it does cover you for that. The other thing I wanted to point out though is that it will only cover you at your workplace. So if you're doing part time work at a different pharmacy for instance you'll need to make sure that they have coverage for you as well.

Another registration standard for you to meet is the supervised practice standard. This is, of course, of great importance to you. It's a requirement that you are required to complete 1,824 hours to be eligible to apply for general registration in supervised practice. Your preceptor and the site of work and the start date need to be approved by the Board before you start. So you can't count your hours to your supervised practice standard until your preceptor, the site where you're practicing and the start date have been approved.

Also please note that if you actually do change those arrangements through your supervised practice year, then you need to put in a new application. So things like the start date, if that changes, if the number of hours you need an extension, if your preceptor changes or your site where you're doing your supervised practice changes, then you really need to submit a new application. You'll actually have to wait for that to be approved before your hours will count again towards your supervised practice hours. Plus of course you also need to enrol in an accredited intern training program as well.

Just a side note about the approved preceptor, it has to be an approved preceptor or supervisor for you and the requirements that they need to meet. But we do have both a preceptor guide and an intern guide on our website for you to have a look at. So, importantly, before you start your internship you must apply for provisional registration and be granted provisional registration and have your receptor site and start date approved by the Board before you can start counting your hours.

Okay, so that's really important to note. It's one of the highlights basically of the webinar for us to get across that message to you, because a lot of people that we're finding are starting to count their hours but they haven't checked to see that they've actually been approved for both the site and for provisional registration. So it's really something to remember to check. How do you do that? You can check online on the Register of Practitioners. If you go there you'll be able to put in your details and, see on the next slide there, it shows you half way down … it talks about registration type and you can see whether you've been granted provisional registration or not.

Also, if you're looking at that as well, down further you'll see notations and registration requirements. That's where you'll be able to see that your supervisor has been approved, the start date has been approved and the site has been approved. So that's where you'll see that information, so please keep continually checking that, it's your responsibility to check that just to make sure all of that is there before you can start counting your supervised hours. So things you must do during your internship, you've got to meet the requirements of our supervised practice arrangements registration standard that I've just talked about.

So I did say that you had to do 1,824 hours. There are a couple of other requirements. One is that you need to have a minimum period of 152 hours at a particular site, to count. You also have a minimum of 80 hours to complete in four consecutive weeks to be able to count those supervised hours, and there's also a maximum. So there's a minimum and a maximum in four consecutive week period. The maximum being 180 hours that you can count towards your supervised practice, in four consecutive weeks. Also where you're practising, the number of interns does not exceed the total number of supervising pharmacists. So a number of things to keep in mind as you go through your year of supervised practice.

So during your internship and in relation to your supervised practice hours it is a requirement that you must fill out and get signed by your preceptor each week a weekly record of your supervised hours. Then, as well, during your internship year you've got to pass registration examinations, both written and oral examination to be eligible to then put forward an application for general registration.

So just expanding on that a little bit in terms of examinations for your general registration, there's two different exams in your internship year that must be passed before you can apply for general registration. One is a written examination and one is an oral examination and they're conducted on behalf of the Board. But each of these examinations has a set of eligibility criteria, so it's really important that you're aware of that, you can find this again on those registration standards that I showed you on our website. But just quickly, I’ll go through a little bit more information to give you an overall view.

The written examination, it’s administered for the Board by the Australian Pharmacy Council. It is a prerequisite for the oral exam, so you've got to pass the written exam before you can sit the oral exam. As of 1 January 2018 you've got to complete 40 per cent of your intern hours to be eligible to be able to sit that written exam. It's held six times a year so it's held a number of times and you can go onto the Pharmacy Council's website to find out all that information for you. Important thing to note down the bottom is that the pass result is valid for 18 months, so once you have your written exam done you have 18 months to complete the oral exam.

Where do you find that information? You can go to the Australian Pharmacy Council's website, and as you can see there under interns it's got a tab that says prepare for the exam, and that'll give you all the information you need to find out about what is in the exam and how to prepare for the exam. One is a written exam, the second one is the oral practice exam. This assesses the competency that's required to demonstrate that you have the knowledge and the skills in situations that you encounter in practice. So this is your final assessment piece to enable you to be able to gain general registration as a pharmacist in Australia.

Details are coming up on the next slide. Just to give you a little bit more information about the oral exam, I'm not going to go into great detail but overall it's a nationally-consistent exam held at the same period three times a year, over all jurisdictions. You have to have finished 75 per cent of your intern hours to be eligible to be able to sit the oral exam. You also must have passed, have a current pass in the written exam prior to the examination application closing date for the oral exam. A couple of important things: 40 per cent of hours have to be completed before you can sit the written exam, 75 per cent of your intern hours have to be completed before you can sit your oral exam.

Just highlighting here too, for those people who did their course in one state and then are doing their supervised practice year in another state/their internship in a different state, you must sit in the jurisdiction the oral exam where you did your supervised practice. So that's an important thing to remember for those practising interstate. With the oral exam, the application for approval of the oral exam must be lodged before the application closing date, so that's just something to bear in mind with that too. Then you'll be advised the time and place by post or email two weeks before the examination period.

But, as I said, we've got a pharmacy oral examination candidate guide as well, which is on the Pharmacy Board website, so you'll find all these details on the website that you'll be able to access. The format of the exam, just quickly giving you a little bit of detail about the oral exam, you’ve got two examiners and it's in four parts. I won't go into a great deal of detail there, as I said you can find all that detail in the Board's candidate guide that's on the website for you. Then some of the things that we'll be assessing you on in the oral exam, it's all about your practice and how you cope in situations with that.

Again I'm not going to go into a great deal of detail but all the information is there on the website for you and in the guide. Okay, so important, at the end of your intern year, so we've moved forward from applying for provisional registration, through your internship year and now we're looking at applying for initial general registration. So as a graduate with provisional registration you're eligible to apply for general registration if you have passed both the written and oral examinations. You successfully completed your period of supervised practice, which is 1,824 hours, and you've successfully completed an accredited intern training program.

When you submit your application for general registration, you must include all your supporting documents, so that's important that you have everything together. Just like the provisional registration you've got to make sure that you've completed everything well and completely done everything, otherwise it'll come back to you to be completed and that of course will take lots of extra time. You might have a job lined up so make sure that you've completed everything before you send in your application. Of course the application will then be considered against all the Board's registration standards that I've just gone through for you.

So your intern training program provider, they're going to have checked off for you your continuing professional development that happens through your supervised practice year as well. They'll check off that you've got a current first aid certificate and also they're involved with checking off your extemporaneous dispensing exercises to make sure that has all been completed. So you must provide your ITP provider with evidence of completion of your annual CPD requirement, which obviously is an achievement of at least 40 CPD credits during the period of your internship, so that's important to do as well.

Moving forward we now have general registration and you have as a registered pharmacist lots of obligations that must be met being registered and practising. This just gives you a little bit of an overall view of what is required, just highlighting some of these obligations. For example, the need to meet the Board's standards, codes and guidelines when you're practising, or the requirement that you have to renew your registration every year. In that renewal you have to demonstrate recency of practice and complete enough CPD as well, so they're just a couple of things that you have to do when you're doing your renewal each year.

So just bear that in mind when you get general registration that's not the end of it, you've got lots of obligations to carry forward when practising in the profession. So I just wanted to spend a little bit of time now just talking about impairment. The Board recognises that people can suffer from things that, really, from time to time can impair their ability to practice. We realise that people can get sick and may develop significant mental or physical illness. It's important that you look after yourself as a health practitioner, and others as well. It is important that if needed you can seek help and support.

So what is an impairment? Looking at it, an impairment is a physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect your capacity to practise the profession. That's what the Board will be looking at, so you are required at application time, both when you applied for provisional registration and then again at general registration and at every renewal to declare if you have any impairments. If you do have an impairment the Board requires the following information, so a description of the impairment and advice on how you are managing that impairment.

So the Board will consider the information declared in deciding on an application, including are there sufficient safeguards in place in order to prevent the risk of substantial harm to the public? So that is the concern of the Board, and also to make sure that you're being well looked after as well. So please consider that carefully when you come to making your declaration each year. So really the final advice that I want to give you tonight is to ensure that your provisional registration and supervised practice has been approved before you start supervised practice. I can't emphasise that enough.

Where do you go? You go back to our website and check and keep checking to make sure that that has been approved before you start to count your supervised hours. If you're not compliant it will need to be considered by the Board's registration examinations committee, and here are some of the possible consequences. If no provisional registration has been approved you actually have no legal status to be working in that capacity. If supervised practice hours have not been approved, hours completed will not be retrospectively approved.

So if you've done a number of hours before you have been approved, that will not be retrospectively approved. You will be required to redo those hours. This is clear in the revised supervised practice arrangement standard. Prior approval is required so what I've been stressing in today's webinar is that it's very, very important for you. There also could be issues around validity of professional indemnity insurance cover if supervised practice has not been approved by the Board before you start practice. Really, what I wanted to stress to you all is do not assume that the application, once it's been received by the Board and AHPRA, has been approved.

As I said before, you need to confirm by checking on the online register, before your supervised practice commences, that you've been approved for provisional registration and your site and all the requirements there have been approved as well. Okay, so please double check that and triple check it, and it's your responsibility to make sure that has been done before you start your practice hours.

So where can you get more information? As I said, we have an intern pharmacist and a preceptor guide. There's information about extemporaneous dispensing procedures, there's sample community hospital training plans there and our registration standards as well as FAQ's for pharmacy interns and preceptors. You’ll also find continuing professional development for pharmacists and intern FAQ's, and the Board guidelines for pharmacists. So that's all available on the Board's website. So please don't hesitate to go back and have a look at that and as I said continually check and update that as well.

Joe Brizzi: Thank you everyone for your participation today, and thank you Brett for talking to us about the pharmacy internship. Just a reminder that a recording of this webinar will be published on the Board's website in a couple of weeks, along with the updated frequently asked questions document for pharmacy interns and preceptors.

For more information about the pharmacy internship is available on the Board's website. So thank you very much participants and have a good evening.

Brett Simmonds: Thanks everyone.

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