

Communiqué

26 October 2016

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) meets each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory function under the National Law¹ and within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board and matters regarding the National Scheme. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in its content.

Meeting with the Australian Pharmacy Council

The president and deputy CEO of the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) met with the Board to discuss work carried out by APC on behalf of the Board.

Under the National Law, the Board determined that the accreditation function for the pharmacy profession is to be exercised by APC. The accreditation agreement between the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and APC facilitates the collaboration between APC, AHPRA and the Board. The agreement outlines the funding provided by the Board to ensure successful delivery of the accreditation functions by APC under the National Scheme.

In accordance with provisions in the National Law, APC accredits education providers and programs of study and the Board approves programs of study as providing qualifications that are suitable for registration in the pharmacy profession.

The APC also has other important functions such as the assessment of overseas-qualified pharmacists seeking registration to practise in Australia, the administration of the written examination component of the Board's Registration Examination and the accreditation of intern training programs that interns complete during their supervised practice (internship).

Change to the written examination eligibility criteria from 1 January 2018

From **1 January 2018**, interns wishing to sit the Intern Written Examination will need to have completed **40 per cent of their required approved supervised practice hours** by the date of the examination. The current eligibility requirement is completion of 30 per cent of approved supervised practice hours which will be maintained for examinations conducted during 2016 and 2017.

The decision was made by the Board in conjunction with APC. The decision was based on APC's recommendation regarding the optimum time for candidates to sit the written examination during the intern year and is based on data collected by APC over more than five years.

The change in eligibility criteria will ensure interns have had sufficient time and experience in their supervised practice in order to demonstrate their competence and also have the best possible chance to be successful at the examination. With written examinations scheduled on a regular basis, the change in eligibility criteria is expected to have little or no impact on interns.

¹ The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law)

Reminder: renewal of registration for 2016/17

The Board reminds pharmacists to renew their registration by 30 November 2016, the registration expiry date for general and non-practising registration. Under the National Law, pharmacists are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year. Renewal applications received within a month after the expiry date will incur a late fee.

Pharmacists who do not renew registration within one month of their registration expiry date must have their name removed from the Register of Pharmacists. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise or work as a pharmacist in Australia until a new application for registration is approved.

A series of reminders to renew are being sent to practitioners by AHPRA, on behalf of the Board. The email reminders include links to [online renewal](#) and to a [video](#) which explains the process.

The Board encourages pharmacists to renew online and reminds them to make sure AHPRA has their current contact information to receive future email and hard copy reminders to renew.

Board and AHPRA publish health profession agreement

The Board and AHPRA have published the health profession agreement (HPA) for 2016-20.

The HPA sets out the partnership between the Board and AHPRA, and the services AHPRA will provide in supporting the Board to carry out its functions.

Publishing the HPA demonstrates the Board's and AHPRA's commitment to transparency and accountability in implementing the National Scheme.

The *2016-20 Pharmacy Board of Australia and AHPRA Health Profession Agreement* is available on the Board's [Health Profession Agreements](#) page.

Board member vacancy arising

Applications for appointment to the Pharmacy Board of Australia as a community member are being called for due to the scheduled expiry of a current member's term.

All appointments are made by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Ministerial Council) under the National Law. Appointments are for up to three years as decided by the Ministerial Council.

More information about the roles, eligibility requirements and the application process can be found on the Board's [website](#).

Applications close Monday 28 November 2016, 5pm AEDT.

Quarterly registration data

The Board publishes quarterly data profiling Australia's pharmacy workforce.

At June 2016, there were a total of 29,717 registered pharmacists comprising the following number of registrants according to registration type:

- 26,948 – general registration
- 1,727 – provisional registration
- 7 – limited registration, and
- 1,035 – non-practising registration.

The quarterly registration data at June 2016 for the pharmacy profession is published on the Board's website under [About>Statistics](#). The report includes a number of statistical breakdowns.

Provisional registration: pharmacy students can apply online now

Pharmacy students who will soon complete an approved program of study can go online now to apply for provisional registration before they graduate.

In addition to making an online application for provisional registration, graduates must lodge a separate application for approval of supervised practice. They cannot start supervised practice (internship) until both of these applications have been received and then approved by the Board which can take place once the education provider has advised that the student is eligible to graduate.

Completion of a Board-approved period of supervised practice during provisional registration is one of the requirements that must be met in order to be eligible for general registration as a pharmacist in Australia at the end of the internship period.

The [online graduate application](#) service on the AHPRA website helps to smooth the path from study to work by enabling students to apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. A short, animated [video for pharmacy graduates](#) is published on the Board's website.

Australian Health Ministers' communiqués published

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council has published two communiqués after its most recent meeting, one highlighting the main topics of discussion at the recent COAG Health Council meeting and a second announcing the start of the reviewer for the Independent Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Go to the [COAG Health Council website](#) to access this information.

Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for pharmacists on its website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au. For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme also refer to information published on www.ahpra.gov.au or send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

William Kelly
Chair, Pharmacy Board of Australia
26 October 2016

[The Pharmacy Board of Australia](#) is the regulator of pharmacists in Australia and acts to protect the public by ensuring that suitably qualified and competent pharmacists are registered. The Board is responsible for developing registration standards, codes and guidelines for pharmacists and managing notifications (complaints) about pharmacists and pharmacy students. The Board does this through its powers under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory, and the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Board's work in regulating Australia's pharmacists in the public interest is underpinned by [regulatory principles](#), which encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation.*

**Except in NSW and Qld which have co-regulatory arrangements.*