



Communiqué

The 34th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the National Board) was held 14 September 2012 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre as part of the annual National Registration and Accreditation Scheme combined meeting. The meeting was the first with the changed membership structure outlined in last month's communiqué.

This communiqué outlines the issues discussed and decisions made by the Board at its meeting and other points of interest. The Board publishes this communiqué on its website and emails it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it on to colleagues and employees who may be interested in the work of the Board.

National registration and accreditation scheme combined meeting

The purpose of this annual meeting is to take stock, share ideas and innovations, identify future challenges and identify actions to make needed change to the national scheme. It brings together members of all fourteen National Boards, representatives of NSW councils, members of the Agency Management Committee, AHPRA staff, and representatives of the different professions' accreditation authorities.

This year's meeting saw a focus on a range of important regulatory issues such as practitioner performance and competence, engaging with health consumers, and identifying the opportunities for future work with key external stakeholders including Health Workforce Australia and government.

Meeting of the Optometry Regulatory Reference Group

Representatives of the Board held a meeting of the Board's newly-named Optometry Regulatory Reference Group on 7 September 2012. This was the second meeting of this group following a meeting in June 2011.

This group is made up of representatives of the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board of New Zealand, the Australian and New Zealand (absent for this year's meeting) professional associations, the Australian College of Optometry, OCANZ, as well as each of the Heads of Australian and New Zealand schools of optometry.

The meeting of the group provides the Board with an opportunity to discuss matters relating to the effective and efficient accreditation and registration of optometrists. The group agreed to continue to meet on an annual basis on line with terms of reference that are to be developed. These will be published on the Board's website when finalised.

Audit

As well as pharmacists and chiropractors, optometrists will take part in an audit to coincide with the registration renewal process this year. Practitioners will be randomly selected across these three professions when they apply to renew their registration for the 2012-13 period. This will apply to both paper and online renewal applications.

Optometrists will be audited for compliance against their board's registration standards: criminal history check, professional indemnity insurance, recency of practice and continuing professional development. Optometrists will need to provide evidence to support the declarations for these registration standards that they make at their registration renewal.

AHPRA will notify those individuals randomly selected for the audit and provide them with clear instructions on what they need to provide. Further information will also be made available on the AHPRA website, including optometry-specific guidance.

In the interim, optometrists are advised to review the record keeping requirements for the CPD registration standard including the available templates. These are published under the *Registration Standard – Continuing professional development* tab of the Board's website.

Consultations

Draft registration standard for limited registration for teaching or research

The Board has released a draft registration standard for limited registration for teaching or research for consultation.

The consultation document is available on its website under the News tab. Submissions will be accepted up until close of business on Tuesday 23 October 2012.

Guidelines for the prescription of ocular appliances

In 2013, the Board will conduct a review of Board specific registration standards and guidelines. One of the documents to be reviewed will be the Board's Guidelines for the prescription of ocular appliances.

In preparation for the review the Board is interested in hearing from the wider profession on the current effectiveness of these guidelines and what if anything needs to be improved.

The Board welcomes any comments on this matter. Comments and feedback can be forwarded to optomconsultation@ahpra.gov.au, with 'Guidelines for the prescription of ocular appliances' in the subject line, up to 15 October 2012.

Registration renewal information

The Board will be releasing its next e-newsletter and AHPRA registration renewal information in coming weeks.

To ensure that future editions of the newsletter reach you, please check your contact details and update them if necessary. Email accounts should be set to receive communications from AHPRA and the Board to avoid misdirection to an account junk box.

To update your contact details, go to www.ahpra.gov.au, click online services, use your unique contact number (User ID) and follow the prompts. Your User ID is not your registration number. If you do not have your User ID, complete an online enquiry form, selecting 'User ID' as the category of enquiry or by calling 1300 419 495.

Continuing professional development requirements at renewal

The Board has recently consulted on a revised registration standard for continuing professional development (CPD). This standard will allow for the accumulation of CPD requirements over two consecutive registration periods. This standard has been submitted to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for approval. Ministers will consider this at their next meeting.

For the purpose of registration renewal this year, the existing registration standard and guidelines still apply so optometrists will need to answer the same question as they did last year.

During your preceding period of registration, have you met the Board's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements, or do you have a plan in place to complete them by the end of the next registration period?

This is a transition arrangement that the Board had to put in place to allow some form of roll-over within the constraints of the existing requirements. The requirements that are listed in the Board's current registration standard are the minimum requirements expected.

If you answered this question last year on the basis of having a plan in place then you need to ensure that you have completed all the requirements for the 2011 registration period and this 2012 registration period.

The Board will communicate the outcome of the Minister's decision and how this affects optometrists and their point accumulation as soon as the Board is formally notified of the decision. The Board cannot pre-empt the decision of Ministers.

Conclusion

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and the Board's expectations of practitioners on its website at www.optometryboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

For more detail or with questions about your registration please send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHRPA on 1300 419 495.

Colin Waldron

Chair

19 September 2012