

## Communiqué

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The 45th meeting of the Optometry Board of Australia (the National Board) was held on 26 September 2013 at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) national office in Melbourne.

This communiqué outlines the issues and decisions from this meeting as well as other points of interest.

We publish it on our website and email it to a broad range of stakeholders. Please forward it on to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

### **New optometry registration type now available: Limited registration for teaching or research**

Overseas-trained optometrists can now apply for limited registration for teaching or research when offered a position in Australia.

At its meeting on 26 July 2013, the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council approved the new registration type. Coming into effect on 2 October 2013, it offers optometrists who meet the Optometry Board of Australia's standard limited registration for a specific job or position.

Optometrists who are granted this type of registration will be published on the publicly available Register of Optometrists, including details of their registration.

The requirements of the new registration type are outlined in the Optometry Board of Australia's Registration standard: Limited registration for teaching or research available on the Registration standards section of the Board's website.

Further guidance is available in the accompanying FAQ: Limited registration for teaching or research.

The Board believes this is another important step in the regulation of optometry in Australia.

Maintaining public safety is the key focus for the Board. It is vital to ensure that optometrists, including overseas trained practitioners, meet the Board's national standards.

This new registration type will facilitate Australian optometrists' access to teaching and research by overseas practitioners, while ensuring that the Board's standards are still met.

Like all types of limited registration under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (National Law), limited registration can only be held for up to 12 months, and can only be renewed up to three times.

### **Consultation on international criminal history checking**

The 14 National Boards in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) have launched a public consultation on international criminal history checks.

Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback to National Boards on the consultation paper on a proposal to refine international criminal history checks for applicants for registration who have lived overseas. All 14 National Boards in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) are participating in further public consultation on this issue.

Consultation is an important part of the National Boards' engagement with registered health practitioners, members of the public and other stakeholders. The feedback provided is greatly valued, and informs the Boards' development of these important documents.

Feedback on the consultation document will generally be published, unless you request otherwise, although the Boards have a discretion not to publish submissions. Please let the Boards know if you do not want your submission published, or want all or part of it treated as confidential. To make sure your submission can be read easily by most people, please provide your submission in a Word document. More detail on accessibility requirements is included in the consultation paper.

**Please provide feedback by close of business on 31 October 2013 by email to [criminalhistoryconsult@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:criminalhistoryconsult@ahpra.gov.au).**

## Renewal

The 2013 renewal of registration campaign for optometrists is now open. More than 4,500 optometrists with general or non-practising registration are due to renew their registration with the Board by 30 November.

Anyone who experiences difficulties using the online renewal service can phone AHPRA Customer Service Team on 1300 419 495 and a team member will talk them through the process.

Please carefully read the Board's [registration standards](#) which specify the requirements for practice before applying to renew your registration. Make sure you understand the declarations you are required to make about meeting the Board's registration standards. You could be asked to give to support your declarations so it's important to know what the requirements are for registration.'

AHPRA, on behalf of the Board, is sending out a series of reminders to practitioners who have provided AHPRA with their email address. It is important that optometrists make sure AHPRA has their current contact information so they don't miss future email and hard copy reminders to renew.

To update your contact details using AHPRA's secure online services, optometrists can visit the [AHPRA website](#):

- go to the bottom of the home page
- click on *Update Contact Details* under Services for Practitioners
- use their user ID and secure password, and
- follow the prompts.

Under the National Law, all registered optometrists are responsible for renewing their registration on time each year.

## Optometry Programs of Study Approval

The Board, on the recommendation of the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand has made the following decisions.

### **Deakin University: Bachelor of Vision Science & Master of Optometry**

The Board decided under section 49 of the National Law to approve this course until 31 December 2015 with conditions.

### **Flinders University: Bachelor of Science (Vision Sciences) & Master of Optometry**

The Board decided under section 49 of the National Law to approve this course until 31 December 2015 with conditions.

### **Queensland University of Technology: Bachelor of Vision Science & Master of Optometry**

The Board decided under section 49 of the National Law to approve this 5-year course until 31 December 2014

## Accreditation Standards

### Standards for Postgraduate Programs of Study in Ocular Therapeutics

The Board, on the recommendation of the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand has decided under section 47 of the National Law to approve the revised standard, which will soon be published on the OCANZ website.

### Audit

AHPRA and the National Boards are developing a nationally consistent approach to auditing health practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards. Pilot audits have been conducted. These were designed to determine the frequency, size and type of audits required and establish our ongoing audit methodology.

Each time a practitioner applies to renew their registration; they must make a declaration that they have met the registration standards for their profession. Practitioner audits are an important part of the way that National Boards and AHPRA can better protect the public by regularly checking these declarations made by a random sample of practitioners. They help to make sure that practitioners are meeting the standards they are required to meet and provide important assurance to the community and the Boards.

Auditing of all professions has started. If you are selected for audit you will be notified in writing and requested to provide evidence that you meet the requirements of the standard.

Further information will available shortly on each board website.

### More information

We publish a range of information about registration and our expectations of you as an optometrist on our website at [www.optometryboard.gov.au](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au) or [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

**For more detail or questions about your registration or renewal please send an online enquiry form or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.**

### Colin Waldron

Chair, Optometry Board of Australia

15 October 2013