Fact sheet: New obligations for pharmacists

Registration Standards

The Pharmacy Board of Australia has developed registration standards which have been approved by the Ministerial Council. All registered pharmacists must comply with the registration standards.

A short summary of the standards is included below. However, pharmacists are required to be familiar with the full standards and in particular, with how they apply to them. The full standards can be accessed at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx.

Continuing Professional Development

There are new requirements that apply to registered pharmacists to complete continuing professional development (CPD).

Under section 128 of the National Law, all registered pharmacists (except for those who hold non-practising registration) are required to undertake CPD consistent with the requirements set out in the Continuing Professional Development Registration Standard published by the Board.

Pharmacists must complete a minimum of 20 CPD credits for the period ending 30 September 2011; 30 CPD credits for the period ending 30 September 2012; and 40 CPD credits for the period ending 30 September 2013. The number of credits that may be claimed for each type of CPD activity is detailed in the Board’s Guideline on Continuing Professional Development, also published on the Board’s website. The standard applies from 1 July 2010 and pharmacists must ensure that they maintain accurate records of CPD undertaken from this date.

At your first renewal of registration under the national scheme, you will be asked to confirm that you understand that you are required to meet pro rata requirements of the Board’s Continuing Professional Development Registration Standard during the period of registration applied for.

The Board will conduct an annual audit of compliance with the standard. The first compliance audit will take place at the end of the first 12 month audit period under
the national scheme (30 September 2011) and will involve an audit of records of CPD undertaken by randomly selected pharmacists.

All registered pharmacists are required to maintain complete and accurate records of their CPD and be able to demonstrate, if audited, that they have complied with the standard.

When you renew your registration, if you are unable to make a declaration that you have met the CPD standard, the Board may refuse to renew your registration, or may grant renewal of registration subject to conditions.

**Recency of Practice**

There are new requirements that apply to registered pharmacists to ensure they maintain recency of practice.

The Pharmacy Board of Australia may decide that a pharmacist is not suitable to hold registration if they have had insufficient recent practice experience. All registered pharmacists should be familiar with the requirements of the Board’s *Recency of Practice Registration Standard*.

The standard applies to all applicants for registration who are not new graduates, and all applicants for renewal of general registration as a pharmacist. The standard requires all pharmacists registered in the general category to demonstrate, at annual renewal, that they have maintained their competence to practise through sufficient pharmacy practice experience within the previous three-year period. The standard also sets out requirements that apply to pharmacists intending to change their area of practice.

Pharmacists who are unable to meet the requirements of the standard may be required to complete supervised practice, education courses, assessment and/or an examination.

The standard requires pharmacists to make a declaration of compliance with the standard at annual renewal. Pharmacists who are unable to make a declaration at annual renewal or who are unable to complete the requirements set by the Board, may be denied renewal of general registration or may have conditions imposed on their registration.

**Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII)**

The requirement for registered pharmacists to be covered by professional indemnity insurance (PII) is set out in the Board’s *Professional Indemnity Insurance Registration Standard*. The standard applies to all registered pharmacists except those who hold non-practising registration. All pharmacists required to hold PII must ensure that their PII arrangements comply with the standard.
At annual renewal, you will be required to make a declaration that you are covered for all aspects of your practice.

**Criminal History**

There are new powers for the Pharmacy Board to check the criminal history of registered pharmacists.

You will be required, at annual renewal (section 109), and at any time during the registration period (section 130) to advise the Board of any charges, convictions or findings of guilt for offences punishable by imprisonment.

The Board may check a registrant’s criminal history before making a decision about an application for renewal of registration, or at any time during the registration period. It can do so by obtaining a written report from CrimTrac, a police commissioner or an entity in a jurisdiction outside Australia that keeps records about the criminal history of persons in that jurisdiction. It has this power under sections 79 and 135 of the National Law.

The Board’s *Criminal History Registration Standard* sets out the factors that the Board will consider when it decides whether a pharmacist’s criminal history is relevant to your practice.

**Supervised Practice Arrangements**

The *Supervised Practice Arrangements Registration Standard* applies to internships which commenced before and from 1 July 2010. Interns who commenced supervised practice prior to commencement of the national scheme will be able to continue their internships under existing arrangements must have their placements approved by the Board unless placements were previously approved by state or territory pharmacy boards. New internships must be approved by the Board. An application for approval of supervised practice as a pharmacist must be submitted to have an internship placement approved. The standard ensures that all interns, regardless of the jurisdiction in which they are completing their supervised practice, will complete the same number of supervised practice hours to meet this particular requirement for general registration under the National Law.

All interns must have provisional registration from 1 July 2010. Application forms for provisional registration for interns are available on the Board’s website.

**Examinations for General Registration**

From 1 July 2010, the Pharmacy Board of Australia commenced conducting registration examinations consistent with the *Examinations for General Registration, Registration Standard*.

The Board introduced a national oral examination for all interns undertaking examinations for general registration which commenced in 2011.
Guidelines

The Board has published the following guidelines:

- Guidelines on Continuing Professional Development
- Guidelines for Dispensing Of Medicines
- Guidelines on Practice-Specific Issues
- Guidelines on Specialised Supply Arrangements
- Guidelines on The Advertising of Regulated Health Services
- Guidelines for Mandatory Notifications
- Guidelines for pharmacists practising as proprietors

All registered pharmacists should be familiar with their obligations under these guidelines.

The Board may, from time to time publish guidelines that will apply to registered pharmacists. These will be released for consultation before being finalised and issued by the Board.

Registration of Pharmacy Premises/Businesses

Registration and regulation of pharmacy premises/businesses is not a matter covered by the National Law. Most States and Territories are in the process of establishing new pharmacy authorities to take on responsibility for regulating pharmacy premises. Information on the arrangements that apply in your State or Territory is available on the Board’s website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/About/Pharmacy-Premises.aspx.

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