



Communiqué

Meeting of the Podiatry Board of Australia held on 26 June 2015

The Board held its meeting in Western Australia at the Perth AHPRA office.

Meetings and forum in Perth

The Board met with local stakeholders to coincide with its meeting in Perth. This provided an opportunity for Board members to discuss issues regarding the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) and local practice.

The Board also held a forum in Perth on the evening of 25 June 2015, which was attended by a number of podiatrists. The same Board presentation given at the Australasian Podiatry Conference on the Gold Coast on 6 May 2015 was presented to local podiatrists.

The presentation included outcomes of the Board's survey of registrants, the Board's audit of registrants and the Board's project analysing notification data from across Australia since the start of the National Scheme on 1 July 2010.

The Board welcomed the opportunity to meet informally with podiatrists from Western Australia and discuss issues of concern about the registration and regulation of podiatrists under the National Law¹.

The Board appreciated the assistance of Podiatry WA in organising the event.

Revised English language skills registration standard in effect from 1 July

On 1 July 2015 a new [registration standard](#) for English language skills came into effect for the podiatry profession. The revised standard is a largely common standard for 12 professions; Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology.

The new standard was developed following a review of the existing standards, which included public consultation.

Ensuring that podiatrists and podiatric surgeons practising in Australia have English language skills that support them to communicate effectively with patients and other healthcare professionals is of fundamental importance.

The intent of the new standard is to balance this need for public protection while providing a small amount of reasonable increased flexibility for applicants. Accordingly, the revised standard establishes additional ways in which health practitioners may be able to demonstrate that they meet the National Boards' English language skills requirements.

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

Who it applies to

The revised standard applies to:

- all individuals applying for initial registration as a podiatrist or podiatric surgeon (general and specialist registration) in Australia after 1 July 2015 if they are currently unregistered in Australia, and
- all individuals applying for registration as a podiatrist or podiatric surgeon (including moving from non-practising to another registration type) who have not used English as their primary language for more than five years.

What the change means

- The changes will not affect currently registered podiatrists or podiatric surgeons unless they let their registration lapse and apply for registration again at a later date or apply for a different type of registration in circumstances where they have not used English language for more than five years. If this happens, they will need to meet the new standard.
- The level of English language skills required has not changed
- From 1 July 2015, applicants relying on the test results of IELTS (academic module) are required to achieve a minimum overall score of 7 and a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking). Applicants will also have a small amount of increased flexibility in the ways that they can demonstrate that they meet the standard.
- Practitioners who need to take an English language test to demonstrate that they meet the standard are now able to choose between four different tests. The four tests are also used by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection for visa purposes.
- Individuals will be able to count the results of up to two sittings in a six month period, within strict parameters and provided certain minimum scores are maintained.

Revised criminal history registration standard in effect from 1 July

A revised criminal history registration standard came into effect for all registrants from 1 July 2015.

National Boards published the contents of the revised shared criminal history registration standard for all registered health practitioners, which is common to all National Boards.

Whenever possible, National Boards seek to work together to develop common or similar standards across professions.

The revised criminal history registration standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council and makes very minor amendments to the old standard. The changes are expected to have minimal impact on practitioners as no changes have been made to the factors National Boards will take into account when considering an applicant's or registrant's criminal history.

When an individual first applies for registration, the National Board requires the applicant to declare their criminal history in all countries, including Australia. All registered health practitioners must inform their National Board if they are:

- charged with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more, or
- convicted or found guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment in Australia and/or overseas.

When practitioners renew their registration they must disclose any changes to their criminal history.

More information about how criminal history checks are conducted is available on the [criminal history checks](#) page on the AHPRA website, including which checks are required from countries other than Australia for [some applicants and registrants](#).

Security tip – keep your web browser updated

AHPRA and the National Boards have made changes to our websites to ensure your information is kept safe.

If you are using Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view the Board's website and are experiencing difficulty accessing web pages and online services, the Board recommends you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our website please contact us to report your experience.

Call **1300 419 495** Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

Updating contact details

To check or update your contact details, go to the online services panel for practitioners on the homepage of the Board's website and click on the relevant link. Enter your user ID, date of birth and password to access your account. Please note that your user ID is not your registration number. If you cannot remember your user ID or password, contact us [online](#) or call 1300 419 495.

Further information

Further information about the Board can be found on its [website](#) and practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policies and guidelines affecting their profession.

Cathy Loughry
Chair
Podiatry Board of Australia
6 July 2015