



Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander health practice
Chinese medicine
Chiropractic
Dental
Medical
Medical radiation practice
Nursing and Midwifery
Occupational therapy
Optometry
Osteopathy
Pharmacy
Physiotherapy
Podiatry
Psychology

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Consultation report: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

July 2019

1. Introduction

The National Law¹ requires National Boards to develop registration standards about the requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) for registered health practitioners.

Five National Boards have collaborated in a review of their continuing professional development registration standards (CPD). The following three boards have undertaken a scheduled review of their CPD registration standards:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (ATSHPBA)
- Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (CMBA)
- Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (OTBA)

The Chiropractic (ChiroBA) and Optometry (OptomBA) Boards of Australia also decided to participate in the multi-profession review.

The CPD registration standard is supported by the CPD guidelines which were included in the review.

2. Development of revised standards

National Boards considered the objectives and guiding principles of the National Law and the *Regulatory principles for the National Scheme*² in deciding whether they should propose changes to the existing registration standards. The National Boards also adopted a risk-based approach to the review, drawing on their experience with the existing registration standards and other sources of information, including research and other published documents and the approach of other National Boards and comparable regulators. National Boards considered the Medical Board of Australia's research to support their work on a professional performance framework and following preliminary consultation undertook an additional expanded literature review.

The National Boards noted previous feedback from Ministers that strongly supports greater convergence of National Boards' registration standards. National Boards collaborated on the development of the revised standards including by participating in a multi-profession workshop in the early stages of the review to discuss issues and develop consistent approaches where appropriate. This collaboration resulted in CPD registration standards and guidelines that are more consistent.

¹ The *National Health Practitioner Regulation Law* as in force in each state and territory.

² The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

3. Consultation

National Boards undertook an eight-week public consultation process between March and May 2018, following a preliminary consultation round with key stakeholders in August and October 2016 to provide a broad opportunity to comment on proposed changes – a requirement under the National Law. The Commonwealth Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) was also consulted during preliminary consultation in order to assess the potential for any significant regulatory impacts. The OBPR advised that a regulation impact statement was not required.

Public consultation documents and submissions (except those made in confidence) are published under the *News* tab of each National Board website.

4. Issues

The proposed CPD registration standards are based on a cross-profession template developed using research, expert advice, the experience of all National Boards and feedback from key stakeholders.

The draft revised standards for all participating National Boards require practitioners to complete 20 hours of CPD annually which meet a set of consistent criteria, and include a minimum of 5 hours CPD in an interactive setting with other practitioners (except chiropractic). The exemption in the revised CPD standards are consistent for all five professions.

The revised CPD standards draw on the best available evidence about effective CPD. This includes the requirement for practitioners to document their learning goals, the CPD activities they undertake and their reflection on the effect that the CPD has had on their practice.

The profession-specific differences in the proposed revised CPD standard are largely due to differences in registration types. Chinese Medicine practitioners who are registered in more than one division must do CPD relevant to each division. Optometrists can be endorsed for scheduled medicines and endorsed practitioners must complete additional hours of CPD relating to endorsement.

The Chiropractic and Optometry Boards continue to require practitioners to remain qualified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The Chiropractic and Optometry Boards have revised their proposed standards to align with other National Boards and removed the current requirements for practitioners to undertake formal CPD learning hours (Chiropractors) and accredited CPD points (Optometrists).

Overall there is greater consistency across the proposed revised CPD registration standards than is currently the case for these National Boards. Boards have moved to a largely consistent format, structure and style for their CPD registration standards with fewer profession-specific requirements.

The CPD guidelines provide additional guidance about the requirements in the CPD registration standard. There is more diversity in the CPD guidelines as some National Boards included profession-specific guidance for practitioners.

5. Conclusion

National Boards consider that the revised registration standards address the majority of the issues raised during the public consultation and improve the consistency of the requirements where profession-specific issues do not require differences. Some stakeholders suggested that additional explanatory material about the requirement for evidence based activities that improve patient outcomes and for planning and self-reflection would be helpful. National Boards will publish further explanatory material including an example of a completed portfolio to assist practitioners to understand and comply with these and other requirements.

In addition to the CPD guidelines the National Boards will publish further explanatory material to assist practitioners to understand and comply with the requirements.