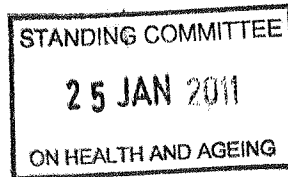




Australian  
Health Practitioner  
Regulation Agency



21 January 2010

Standing Committee on Health and Ageing  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



**Submission No. 20**  
(Overseas Trained Doctors)  
Date: 25/01/2011

Dear Sir/Madam

**SUBMISSION – INQUIRY INTO REGISTRATION PROCESSES AND SUPPORT FOR OVERSEAS TRAINED DOCTORS**

This submission will outline the registration process, in Western Australia, of Overseas Trained Doctors (OTDs) in accordance with the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Act 2010* and the policies developed to ensure that registration is granted to OTDs with the knowledge, skills and experience to practise safely and effectively in the community for which registration is sought. The process endeavours to ensure that OTDs who are granted registration are of the same standard as an Australian medical practitioner.

In Western Australia, OTDs are separated into two groups when determining eligibility for registration.

1. OTDs who have successfully completed both the:
  - a. Australian Medical Council (AMC) Multiple Choice Examination (MCQ) and
  - b. AMC Clinical Examination
2. OTDs who have not completed both AMC Examinations

Under these two groups, OTDs may obtain registration under three different categories, Provisional Registration, General Registration and Limited Registration.

**1. Overseas Trained Doctors who have successfully completed both the AMC MCQ and AMC Clinical Examination**

OTDs who fall into this group can obtain registration under two categories.

A. Provisional Registration

An OTD who has successfully completed both the AMC MCQ and the AMC Clinical Examinations is eligible to apply for Provisional Registration to enable them to undertake a 12 month period of supervised practise, which is necessary for them to be eligible for General Registration. At completion of the period of supervised clinical practise, and subject to satisfactory performance, the OTD is eligible to apply to transfer to General (unconditional) Registration.

B. General Registration

General (unconditional) Registration is available to an OTD who has received the AMC certificate and has successfully completed the necessary period of supervised clinical practise. The Medical Board of Australia is consulting on a registration standard for granting General Registration to AMC certificate holders who are in the standard pathway.

## 2. Overseas Trained Doctors who have not completed both AMC Examinations

OTDs who are classified in this group can obtain registration under this one category.

### Limited Registration

OTDs who have not completed both AMC Examinations will be applying for Limited Registration and must select one of the following pathways to registration.

#### a) Competent Authority Pathway

The Competent Authority Pathway is for OTDs applying for non-specialist positions and have completed specified training and assessment through approved overseas competent authorities. Such OTDs are eligible to apply for advance standing towards the AMC Certificate. A person granted advanced standing is not required to sit the AMC MCQ or AMC Clinical Examinations, but must undertake a work-placed based assessment while working under supervision for a period of 12 months. To be eligible for registration under Competent Authority, the OTD must provide evidence of receipt of Certificate of Advance Standing from the AMC.

Under the Competent Authority Pathway, some OTDs have been required to successfully complete a Pre-employment Structured Clinical Interviews (PESCI) as a pre-requisite to being considered for Limited Registration in Western Australia. A description of the PESCI process will be outlined below.

#### b) Standard Pathway

OTDs who are not eligible for Limited Registration under the Competent Authority or Specialist Pathways may be eligible to apply via the Standard Pathway. Under the Standard Pathway, all new OTDs must successfully complete the AMC MCQ examination as a pre-requisite to applying for Limited Registration.

Under the Standard Pathway, some OTDs have been required to successfully complete a PESCI as a pre-requisite to being considered for Limited Registration in Western Australia.

#### c) Specialist Pathway

An OTD who is recognised as a specialist in their own country of training will be required to provide a letter of support from the relevant Australian Specialist Medical College. Overseas Trained Specialists and Specialists-in-Training applying for registration under the Specialist Pathway will not be required to sit the AMC MCQ examination as long as they remain in the Specialist Pathway. OTDs who do not satisfy the criteria for the Specialist Pathway will need to progress through either the Competent Authority or Standard Pathways.

### **Pre-employment Structured Clinical Interview**

The registration process of OTDs in Western Australia has taken into consideration the approach to a nationally consistent assessment of OTDs. As part of this approach the AMC released guidelines setting out requirements for OTDs in respect of clinical screening, which is one of the pre-requisite components necessary for Limited Registration in high risk positions.

As a result some OTDs will be required to successfully complete a PESCI as a pre-requisite for Limited Registration in Western Australia. The purpose of a PESCI is to establish whether the OTD has the knowledge, skills and experience to practice safely and effectively in the particular position in the community for which Limited Registration is sought.

The PESCI is a clinical assessment tool and therefore, clinical scenarios will be presented during the PESCI. The OTD will be required to demonstrate his/her knowledge of clinical symptoms and signs, investigations, investigation results, differential diagnoses, appropriate treatment (including prescribing medications) and likely outcomes of several scenarios.

OTDs seeking employment in Western Australia (under the standard and competent authority pathways) may require a PESCI as a mandatory component of their application for Limited Registration. OTDs who are registered and working in Western Australia who apply to transfer to a new position may be required to participate in a PESCI as part of their application for registration in the new position if the new position is substantively different (i.e. at a higher risk) to their current position.

'Higher risk positions' are likely to be one that is:

- In a completely different discipline (e.g. Psychiatry to Surgery)
- At a much higher level with more responsibility (e.g. RMO to Senior Registrar)
- From a hospital or health service position to a GP position
- In a significantly different location (e.g. outer metro GP to rural/remote GP).

In general, those OTDs requiring a PESCI are as follows:

1. Competent Authority Pathway

- **Mandatory**  
All GP positions (regardless of location).

WA Registration Committee of the Medical Board of Australia (Registration Committee) reserves the right to exempt an OTD from a PESCI. The decision of the Registration Committee will be based on the risks associated with the position and the qualifications and experience of the OTD.

- **Case-by-Case**  
Applications for position in rural or remote hospitals or health services will be considered on a case-by-case basis as outlined in the table below. Case-by-case decisions regarding the requirement for a PESCI will be determined by the Registration Committee.
- **Not Required**  
All metro and outer-metro hospital or health service positions.

2. Standard Pathway

- **Mandatory**  
All GP positions (regardless of location).  
All rural and remote hospital or health service positions.

The Registration Committee reserves the right to exempt an OTD from a PESCI.

- **Case-by-Case**  
Applications for positions in metro or outer metro hospitals or health services will be considered on a case-by-case basis as outlined in the table below.

Case-by-case decisions regarding the requirement for an interview will be determined by the Registration Committee.

<b>HOSPITAL OR HEALTH SERVICE</b>		
<b>Pathway</b>	<b>Rural or Remote</b>	<b>Metro or Outer-Metro</b>
Standard	✓	Case-by-case
Competent Authority	Case-by-case	Not required

<b>GENERAL PRACTICE</b>		
<b>Pathway</b>	<b>Rural or Remote</b>	<b>Metro or Outer-Metro</b>
Standard	✓	✓
Competent Authority	✓	✓

### ***PESCI Assessment Format***

The assessment format will be standardised and the OTD will be assessed by a PESCI panel comprising of three medical practitioners. The OTD will be assessed on the following, as appropriate:

- Medical interviewing skills
- Description of physical examination skills
- Description of procedural skills
- Clinical judgement
- Treatment or advice given
- Communication (language and interpersonal) skills
- Professionalism

The PESCI identifies the OTD's strengths, weaknesses, critical failures, omissions and any general concerns.

The standard expected of the OTD is one of safe practice with reference to the orientation and level of supervision that will be available in the position for which the OTD is being assessed.

The Chairperson of the PESCI panel will write the following reports:

1. A detailed standardised Interview Report with a recommendation and a summary of the reasoning for the consideration of the Registration Committee.
2. A draft Outcome Report for the consideration of the Registration Committee containing:
  - A statement as to whether or not the OTD is considered suitable for the position description.
  - Brief reasons for the decision.
  - Recommendations, if appropriate.

No information about the scenarios presented in the PESCI will be contained in the Outcome Report.

The Outcome Report will be released to the OTD and recruiter/sponsor/employer after the Medical Board's consideration of the OTD's application for Limited Registration.

If the Medical Board determines that the OTD is not suitable for the proposed position, this does not preclude the OTD from applying for another position for which a PESCI will be required.

### ***PESCI Review***

An OTD may request a review of the Assessment Outcome within three months of receiving the Outcome Report by completing a review form and paying a prescribed fee. On receipt of the review form and fee, arrangements will be made for the Assessment Outcome to be reviewed (the Review).

The Review will be conducted by an independent panellist (who was not involved in the original PESCI) selected from a pool of panellists. The Review will not be a fresh interview of the OTD.

Rather, the Review will examine the processes undertaken by the panel in arriving at the Assessment Outcome. In doing that, it will examine whether, in reaching the Assessment Outcome, the panel:

- Took into account an irrelevant consideration.
- Failed to take into account a relevant consideration.
- Failed to give the OTD a reasonable opportunity to answer the questions put to him/her.
- Was biased against the OTD.

The Review Report is an internal document and will not be provided to the OTD.

The OTD will be advised in writing of the outcome of the Review. Reasons need not be given, and will not be given if to do so would compromise the confidential nature of the scenarios or processes of the PESCI.

If the Review is upheld, the OTD will be entitled to undergo another PESCI, either for the original position or a new position, at no charge for the PESCI, subject to availability.

### **Appeal of Decision**

If the Medical Board of Australia decides not to register an OTD, a written notice will be sent to the OTD with a reason for the decision. The OTD may appeal against the decision of the Medical Board of Australia not to grant registration. The OTD is invited to make a written or verbal submission by the date stated in the notice, being not less than 30 days after the day the notice is given, about the decision of the Medical Board of Australia.

### **Conclusion**

This submission outlines the administrative processes currently in place in relation to the assessment processes and appeal mechanisms available to OTDs in their application for registration to practise medicine in Western Australia. The processes outlined should provide OTDs and the wider community with a better understanding of the requirements of an OTD obtaining registration in Western Australia.

Yours Sincerely



**Paul Scicluna**

Director of Registrations