

NATIONALLY CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES

A national process to assess International Medical Graduates (IMGs) will be phased in from July 2007. This follows the announcement at the July 2006 meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

This process has been developed in consultation with representatives of state and territory medical boards, health departments, specialist medical colleges, the Australian Medical Council (AMC), the Australian Medical Association (AMA), postgraduate medical councils and consumer representatives.

Principles

The new assessment process is founded on these principles:

1. Australian governments aim to ensure all doctors registered in Australia meet the agreed minimum standards of practice.
2. In addition to the existing AMC pathway, the new assessment model provides a variety of pathways to registration, depending on the IMG's previous training and assessment, knowledge base, clinical skills, and suitability of their skills and experience for the position for which they are applying.

The new assessment process consists of three main pathways.

1. The Competent Authority pathway

IMGs applying for non-specialist positions that have completed training and assessment through AMC designated and approved Competent Authorities are eligible to apply for 'advanced standing' toward the AMC certificate. If the AMC grants advanced standing status to the individual, he or she is not required to sit the AMC Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ) or AMC clinical

examinations, but is required to undertake a workplace based assessment whilst working under supervision.

2. The Standard pathways

IMGs applying for non-specialist positions that are not eligible for registration under the Competent Authority pathway. Doctors who have obtained qualifications from authorities who are not presently on the AMC Competent Authority list will be required to sit the AMC MCQ and AMC clinical examinations or workplace based assessment.

3. The Specialist pathway

Overseas Trained Specialists (OTS) applying for specialist positions that are eligible for registration under the specialist pathway. This pathway is intended for the range of available specialist positions.

Common Elements of the Three Pathways

All three of the new pathways are likely to have a number of common elements. These include the following:

- **Primary Source Verification**

All IMGs will have their medical qualifications independently verified.

- **English language proficiency standards**

All IMGs will be required to satisfy the national English language proficiency standards for registration in Australia.

- **Screening Examination**

A screening examination (based on the AMC MCQ examination) is expected to be required of all IMGs in the Standard pathway. The screening examination will be available off-shore and on-shore in Australia.

- **Pre-employment Structured Clinical Interview**

A Pre-employment Structured Clinical Interview, against the position description form will be carried out by an AMC accredited provider.

- **Workplace-based Assessment**

It is expected that workplace-based assessment will form part of the national assessment process for IMGs to ensure that their clinical performance is at the required level for their appointed position. The AMC will accredit workplace assessments and assessing bodies to ensure the workplace-based assessment is valid, reliable and equitable.

- **Orientation**

All IMGs will be expected to undertake orientation to the health system, workplace and culture in order to work successfully in the Australian health environment.

- **Continuing Professional Development**

All IMGs will be expected to undertake appropriate continuing professional development to maintain registration.

When fully implemented, the new national assessment process, regardless of the assessment pathways followed, is intended to enable IMGs to proceed to general registration, or, in the case of overseas trained specialists, to the relevant category of registration as a specialist in Australia.

Further advice

Further advice will be provided as it becomes available as follows:

Australian Medical Council: www.amc.org.au

Email: amc@amc.org.au

WA Health – OTD Website: <http://www.overseasdoctors.health.wa.gov.au/home/>

Email: overseasdoctors@health.wa.gov.au

Ph: +61 8 9222 2076

Medical Board of Western Australia: <http://www.medicalboard.com.au/>

Email: registrations@wa.medicalboard.com.au

Ph: +61 8 9481 1011

Post Graduate Medical Council: <http://www.pmcwa.health.wa.gov.au/home/>

Email: PMCWA@health.wa.gov.au

Phone: +61 8 9222 2125

Rural Health West (formerly WACRRM): www.ruralhealthwest.com.au

Email: info@ruralhealthwest.com.au

Ph: +61 8 6389 4500