


Area of Need

**Assessment Process for
Area of Need Specialists**

User's Guide

2002 EDITION



A National Initiative of the
Australian Medical Council
Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges
State and Territory Medical Boards
Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing
State and Territory Health Departments
Health Industry

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Introduction

User's Guide

Assessment process for Area of Need specialists

This Guide is intended to assist employers, overseas trained specialists whose primary medical qualifications are not recognised in Australia, Specialist Medical Colleges ('Colleges'), State and Territory Medical Boards ('Boards') and others involved in the processing of applications for Area of Need (AON) specialist positions.

The Guide should be read in conjunction with the approved 'flow chart', which is a diagrammatic representation of the steps involved in the assessment process. The flow chart, which is reproduced on pages ii and iii of this Guide, has been developed through consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders, including through avenues such as a National Forum on Area of Need Practitioners, held in Sydney on 1 December 2000.

Details of useful contacts that may assist those involved in the assessment process are given at each step of the process. (Details are current at the time of publication.) Also included are suggestions to facilitate timely processing of applications.

A statement by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing regarding schemes to recruit overseas trained doctors to rural areas is at **Appendix 1**. These schemes relate specifically to general practitioner placements in AON positions.

Implementation of assessment process

Implementation of the assessment process will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that any unforeseen problems or impediments to the fast-track approach to handling AON applications can be addressed. It is proposed that a further National Forum be convened 12 months after the introduction of the assessment process, to review progress and propose any further improvements that may be necessary. A further report will be provided to Health Ministers following that review.

Statement on privacy

The AMC and Colleges are required to observe the provisions of the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000, which has effect from 21 December 2001 and sets out the requirements for the collection and use of personal information collected before and after that date.

Each of the Application Forms referred to in Step 4 of this Guide includes a statement relating to the AMC's privacy procedures. Each must be signed by the applicant to give formal consent for the AMC to collect and hold personal information. If this consent is not provided, the AMC will not be able to process the application.

Assessment Process for Area of Need Specialists

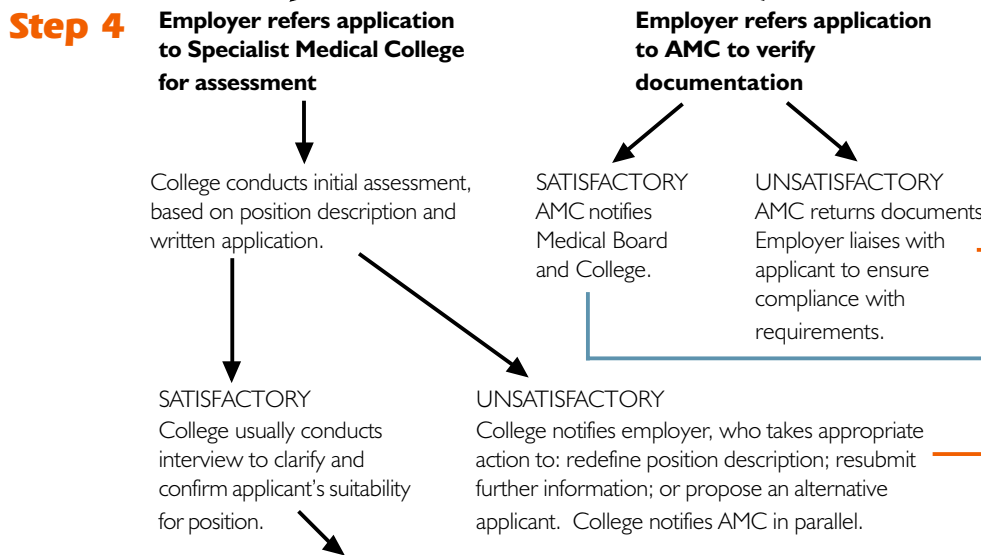
Step 1 **Employer identifies position requiring to be filled and contacts relevant Specialist Medical College for assistance with preparing detailed position description and key selection criteria in terms of clinical responsibility and qualifications or experience required.**

NOTE: It may be possible to find an alternative solution to declaration of position as Area of Need.

College will advise on match of skills and expertise required for specific position. Employer to specify remuneration package, indicating whether applicant will be providing services that will need to attract Medicare rebates: if access to Medicare is required, contact the Department of Health and Ageing.

Step 2 **Employer contacts State Health authority to have position declared as Area of Need. If position approved as such, the following process can proceed.**

Step 3 **Employer matches applicants for Area of Need positions against position description and selection criteria, and selects suitable applicant. Applicant and employer complete relevant documentation, including visa application, where necessary.**



Step 5 **College recommendation to Medical Board (within 8 weeks of receipt by College of satisfactory documentation)**

College recommends applicant for consideration by Medical Board for appropriate category of Area of Need registration **and** defines any limitations on nature and extent of practice involved. College notifies employer and AMC in parallel with Medical Board.

Step 6 Medical Board consideration

Applicant applies and is considered for Area of Need registration in accordance with provisions of State or Territory Medical Practitioners Act. Medical Board notifies employer, College, Health Insurance Commission (SRACs) and AMC of decision.

Registration will be linked to further assessment and monitoring by the relevant College.



Does applicant need a Medicare Provider Number?



Step 7 NO No further action by Commonwealth



YES

1. Applicant applies for exemption from Provider Number restrictions, which gives access to Medical Benefits Schedule + consultation items at A2 level.
2. If applicant requires access to A3 items, he or she must apply to SRACs/OSACs.



Step 8 Ongoing action

College undertakes ongoing assessment after a defined period (initially 3 months and follow-up, as required, and after 12 months) – findings reported to employer and relevant Medical Board.

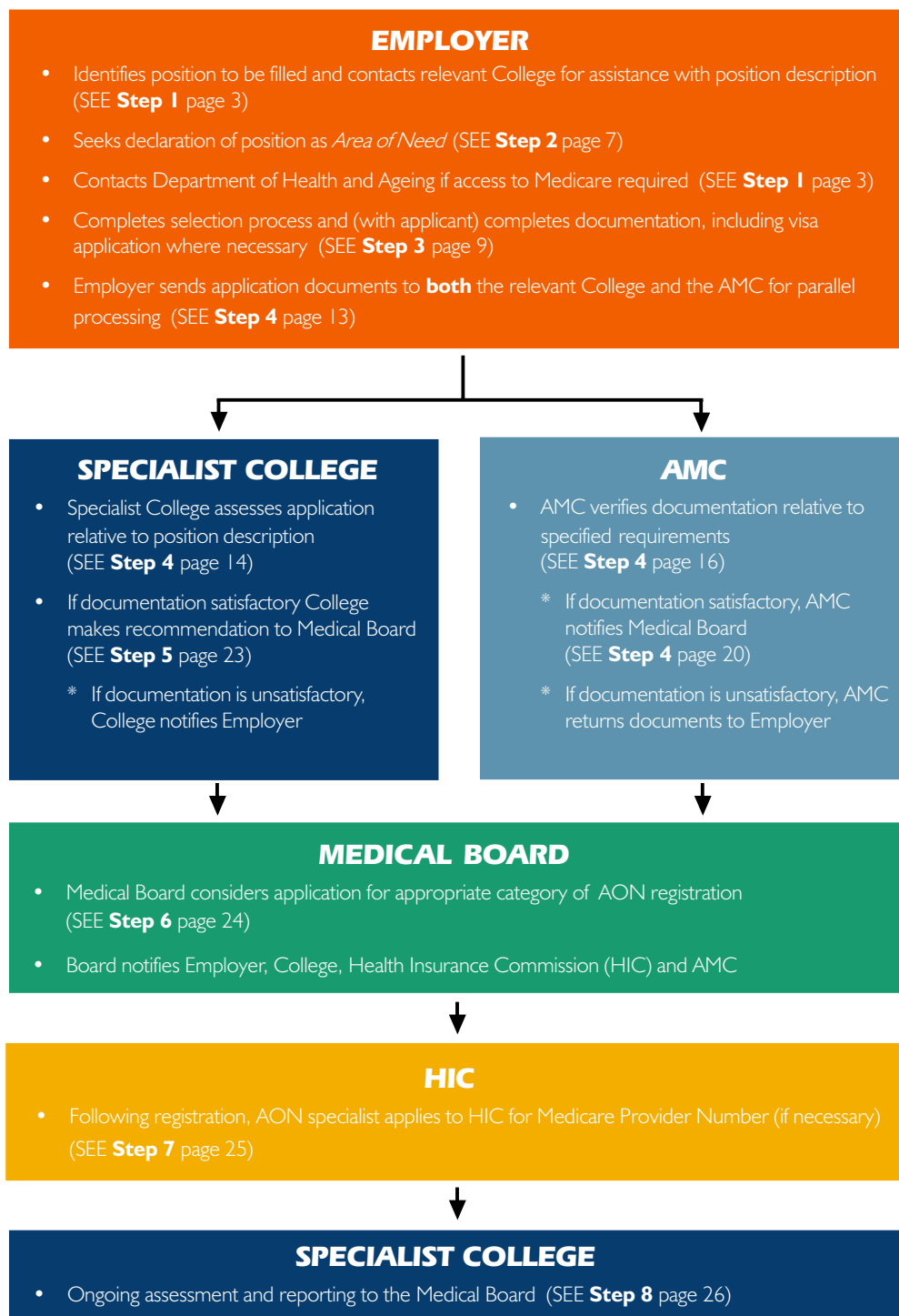
If any major deficiencies are notified by a College, the relevant Medical Board may alter conditions of registration (if deficiencies are not significant) or withdraw the registration if deficiencies are considered significant or constitute a danger to the community.

An applicant holding Area of Need registration may apply to proceed through AMC/ Specialist Medical College pathway for overseas trained specialists, in which case the College may use alternative assessment methods.

Appeals: the mechanisms already available under Specialist Medical College and Medical Board arrangements can be utilised to resolve appeals by applicants for Area of Need positions.

The Joint CPMC/AMC Standing Committee on Overseas Trained Specialists will monitor and review the operation of the assessment process over the next 12 months. A further National Forum should be convened 12 months after the introduction of the assessment process, to review progress and propose any further improvements that may be necessary.

Stages in the Recruitment and Registration for Area of Need Specialist Positions



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Step 1

Initiating the Process

Action

Employer identifies position requiring to be filled and contacts relevant Specialist Medical College for assistance with preparing detailed position description and key selection criteria in terms of clinical responsibility and qualifications or experience required.

Preliminary action regarding position to be filled

Action by Employers and relevant Specialist Medical College

Responsibility for identifying positions to be filled under AON provisions rests, in the first instance, with employers. When approaching the relevant State or Territory health authority for declaration of a position as AON, an employer will be expected to demonstrate that advertising has failed to attract a suitably qualified local applicant and that, unless the position is filled, service delivery will be affected adversely.

If access to Medicare is required, the employer will need to contact the Department of Health and Ageing – tel: (02) 6289 5903 - to confirm that the position identified as an AON position is also in a District of Workforce Shortage.

Employers are urged to consult the relevant College **at the earliest opportunity** because it may be possible to find alternative solutions to declaration of positions as AON. Employers should indicate to the College if a short-term appointment is being proposed.

A detailed position description must be prepared – wherever possible, with the assistance of the relevant College.

The Colleges should develop relevant 'core criteria' for application to a range of specialty/sub-specialty fields, to assist employers in determining the specific requirements of AON positions.

The position description should include information such as:

- the position title;
- a comprehensive statement of duties;
- qualifications and experience – identifying and distinguishing between what selection criteria are regarded as 'essential' or 'desirable' and clarifying whether applicants must demonstrate either that they have practical experience or show they have aptitude in a particular aspect of clinical practice;
- special requirements of the position which may be due to the geographic location or specific nature of the medical services to be provided;
- clinical practice privileges or appointments relating to the position;
- any special conditions of employment;
- the remuneration package for the position, including whether the applicant will be providing services that need to attract Medicare rebates.

A list of medical specialties, and the Colleges responsible for assessments, is given below:

FIELD OF SPECIALIST PRACTICE [Including sub-specialties]	SPECIALIST COLLEGE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSESSMENT
ANAESTHESIA Pain Medicine	Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA)
DERMATOLOGY	Australasian College of Dermatologists
EMERGENCY MEDICINE	Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
GENERAL PRACTICE *Please Note: Not all medical registration authorities in Australia recognise General Practice as a specialty. Applicants should check with the Medical Board in the State or Territory in which they wish to practise.	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE & PAEDIATRIC INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE	Joint Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine/Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) & ANZCA
INTERNAL MEDICINE General Medicine Geriatric Medicine Cardiology Infectious Diseases Clinical Genetics Medical Oncology Haematology Nephrology Immunology & Allergy Neurology Clinical Pharmacology Rheumatology Endocrinology Sleep Medicine Gastroenterology & Hepatology Thoracic Medicine	Adult Medicine Division, Royal Australasian College of Physicians
MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION	Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators
OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY Gynaecological Oncology Maternal-Fetal Medicine Urogynaecology Obstetrics & Gynaecology Obstetric & Reproductive Gynaecological Endocrinology & Ultrasound Infertility	Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE	Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine/RACP
OPHTHALMOLOGY	Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
PAEDIATRICS AND CHILD HEALTH Community Child Health Paediatric Rehabilitation Neonatology & Medicine Perinatology Paediatric Subspecialties Paediatric Emergency (as for Internal Medicine) Medicine	Paediatrics & Child Health Division/RACP
PALLIATIVE MEDICINE	Australasian Chapter of Palliative Medicine/RACP
PATHOLOGY General Pathology Clinical Chemistry Anatomical Pathology Genetics (including Cytopathology Haematology & Forensic Pathology) Immunology Microbiology	Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
PSYCHIATRY	Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE	Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine/RACP
RADIOLOGY Diagnostic Radiology Nuclear Medicine Diagnostic Ultrasound Radiation Oncology	Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Radiologists
REHABILITATION MEDICINE	Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine/RACP

FIELD OF SPECIALIST PRACTICE [Including sub-specialties]	SPECIALIST COLLEGE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSESSMENT
SURGERY General Surgery Paediatric Surgery Cardiothoracic Surgery Plastic & Reconstructive Neurosurgery Surgery Orthopaedic Surgery Urology Otolaryngology Vascular Surgery	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

A number of Colleges have documents available that describe their own internal AON application processes (which will be consistent with the agreed assessment process as set out in this Guide). Employers should approach the relevant College to check whether such documents are available, and comply with College arrangements.

Contact details for all Colleges are given below:

Chief Executive Officer Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists 630 St Kilda Road MELBOURNE VIC 3004 Telephone: (03) 9510 6299 Facsimile: (03) 9510 6786 Email: ceoanzca@anzca.edu.au Website: www.anzca.edu.au	Chief Executive Officer Australasian College of Dermatologists PO Box 2065 BORONIA PARK NSW 2111 or 136 Pittwater Road GLADESVILLE NSW 2111 Telephone: (02) 9879 6177 Facsimile: (02) 9816 1174 Email: admin@dermcoll.asn.au Website: www.dermcoll.asn.au
Chief Executive Officer Australasian College for Emergency Medicine 17 Grattan Street CARLTON VIC 3053 Telephone: (03) 9663 3800 Facsimile: (03) 9663 8013 Email: acemadmin@acem.org.au or jenny.freeman@hcn.net.au Website: www.acem.org.au	Chief Executive Officer Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 1 Palmerston Crescent SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205 Telephone: (03) 9214 1414 Facsimile: (03) 9214 1400 Email: racgp@racgp.org.au Website: www.racgp.org.au
Executive Officer Joint Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine The Royal Australasian College of Physicians & the Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists 630 St Kilda Road MELBOURNE VIC 3004 Telephone: (03) 9530 2861 Facsimile: (03) 9530 2862 Email: ficanzca@anzca.edu.au Website: www.fic.anzca.edu.au	Chief Executive Officer Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators 35 Drummond Street CARLTON VIC 3053 Telephone: (03) 9663 5347 Facsimile: (03) 9663 4117 Email: registrar@racma.org.au or racma@bigpond.com.au Website: www.racma.org.au
Chief Executive Officer Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists 254-260 Albert Street EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002 Telephone: (03) 9417 1699 Facsimile: (03) 9419 0672 Email: ranzcog@ranzcog.edu.au Website: www.ranzcog.edu.au	Chief Executive Officer Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine The Royal Australasian College of Physicians 145 Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000 Telephone: (02) 9256 5481 Facsimile: (02) 9247 8082 Email: afom@racp.edu.au Website: www.racp.edu.au/afom

<p>Chief Executive Officer The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists 94-98 Chalmers Street SURRY HILLS NSW 2010</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9690 1001 Facsimile: (02) 9690 1321 Email: ranzco@ranzco.edu Website: www.ranzco.edu</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer Australasian Chapter of Palliative Medicine The Royal Australasian College of Physicians 145 Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9256 5444 Facsimile: (02) 9252 3310 Email: racp@racp.edu.au Website: www.racp.edu.au</p>
<p>Chief Executive Officer Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia 207 Albion Street SURRY HILLS NSW 2010</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 8356 5858 Facsimile: (02) 8356 5828 Email: boc@rcpa.edu.au Website: www.rcpa.edu.au</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer Paediatrics & Child Health Division The Royal Australasian College of Physicians 145 Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9256 5408 Facsimile: (02) 9256 5465 Email: paed@racp.edu.au Website: www.racp.edu.au</p>
<p>Chief Executive Officer The Royal Australasian College of Physicians 145 Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2010</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9256 5444 Facsimile: (02) 9252 3310 Email: racp@racp.edu.au Website: www.racp.edu.au</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists 309 Latrobe Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000</p> <p>Telephone: (03) 9640 0646 Facsimile: (03) 9642 5652 Email: ranzcp@ranzcp.org or robert@ranzcp.org Website: www.ranzcp.org</p>
<p>Chief Executive Officer The Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine The Royal Australasian College of Physicians 145 Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9256 5404 Facsimile: (02) 9252 3526 Email: afphm@racp.edu.au Website: www.racp.edu.au/afphm</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Radiologists Level 9, 51 Drutt Street SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9264 3555 Facsimile: (02) 9264 7799 Email: warden@ranzcr.edu.au Website: www.ranzcr.edu.au</p>
<p>Chief Executive Officer Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine The Royal Australasian College of Physicians 145 Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9256 5402 Facsimile: (02) 9251 7476 Email: afrm@racp.edu.au or sapted@racp.edu.au Website: www.racp.edu.au/afrm</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer Royal Australasian College of Surgeons College of Surgeons' Gardens Spring Street MELBOURNE VIC 3000</p> <p>Telephone: (03) 9249 1200 Facsimile: (03) 9249 1219 Email: college.sec@surgeons.org Website: www.surgeons.org</p>

Step 2

Declaration of Area of Need Position

Employer contacts State Health authority to have position declared as Area of Need. If position approved as such, the following process can proceed.

Action by State and Territory Health Authorities

These authorities are responsible for approving positions for the purpose of AON designation (in the Northern Territory, the Medical Board has this responsibility). An AON refers to a geographic area (in New South Wales, a medical position) in which the general population need for health care is not met. It is determined by examining a range of factors, including Medicare statistics, health workforce data and evidence of unsuccessful attempts to recruit an Australian doctor to a position.

As part of their applications to health authorities, employers will be required to provide evidence of reasonable efforts to recruit locally – for example:

- copies of job advertisements and the dates and publications in which they were placed;
- the outcome of placing the advertisements;
- an explanation as to why particular applicants (if any) were not suitable;
- details of the health services to be provided, strategies that have been developed to explore other avenues of service provision, and an explanation of the progress of implementation of those strategies;
- details of the impact (for example, on service delivery and staff rostering arrangements) of leaving the position unfilled – for example, necessity for additional rostering of existing staff, high cost of locum services.

Judgement will be made by the health authority concerning whether service delivery will be affected to the extent that the position must be filled. This will be based on information such as epidemiological and workforce analysis and details provided by the employer.

Inquiries relating to AON approvals can be directed to the AON/health workforce unit of the relevant State or Territory health authority at the address given on page 8.

If a position is approved as AON, the employer can proceed with the process as described in this Guide.

Area of Need/Health Workforce Units within State and Territory Health Departments

<p>New South Wales</p> <p>Manager Medical Education Training and Workforce Unit Research and Clinical Policy Public Health Division NSW Health 73 Miller Street NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 9391 9201 Facsimile: (02) 9391 9019 Switch: (02) 9391 9000</p>	<p>Victoria</p> <p>Manager Department of Human Services GPO Box 4057 MELBOURNE VIC 3001</p> <p>Telephone: (03) 9616 7071 Facsimile: (03) 9616 8877 Switch: (03) 9616 7777</p>
<p>Queensland</p> <p>Principal Medical Advisor Health Advisory Unit Queensland Health GPO Box 48 BRISBANE QLD 4001</p> <p>Telephone: (07) 3234 0200 Facsimile: (07) 3234 0062 Switch: (07) 3234 0111</p>	<p>South Australia</p> <p>Department of Human Services PO Box 287 Rundle Mall ADELAIDE SA 5000</p> <p>Telephone: (08) 8226 6290 Facsimile: (08) 8226 6649 Switch: (08) 8226 7000</p>
<p>Western Australia</p> <p>WA Health PO Box 8172 PERTH WA 6849</p> <p>Telephone: (08) 9222 2100 Facsimile: (08) 9222 2108 Switch: (08) 9222 4222</p>	<p>Tasmania</p> <p>Chief Medical Officer Department of Health and Human Services GPO Box 125B HOBART TAS 7001</p> <p>Telephone: (03) 6233 3297 Facsimile: (03) 6233 6392 Switch: (03) 6233 8011</p>
<p>Northern Territory</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer Territory Health Services PO Box 40596 CASUARINA NT 0811</p> <p>Telephone: (08) 8999 2761 Facsimile: (08) 8999 2800 Switch: (08) 8999 2400</p> <p>NOTE: In the Northern Territory, the Medical Board is responsible for designating Area of Need positions.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer ACT Community Care GPO Box 825 CANBERRA ACT 2601</p> <p>Telephone: (02) 6205 1937 Facsimile: (02) 6205 1644 Switch: (02) 6205 5111</p>

Step 3

Selection of Suitable Applicant for Area of Need Position

Employer matches applicants for Area of Need positions against position description and selection criteria, and selects suitable applicant. Applicant and employer complete relevant documentation, including visa application, where necessary.

Employers should ensure they have suitable arrangements in place for receiving and processing applications for AON positions, in accordance with recognised recruitment practices. Employers will also need to be ready to respond to inquiries from potential applicants on a range of matters relating to the position, including – for example - clinical practice privileges (if any), remuneration, conditions of employment, assistance with relocation expenses and guarantees of income. Details relating to housing, community infrastructure and amenities available in the area concerned should also be readily available for potential applicants.

Applicants should be matched against the position description and selection criteria, as developed in Step 1.

Selection panels should – whenever possible - include practitioners experienced in rural/remote area medical practice in areas similar to that in which the subject position is located.

Employers should not advise applicants about responses they anticipate will be provided by other bodies involved in the process. This will help to avoid discontent on the part of applicants arising from failure to achieve anticipated outcomes.

Arrangements relating to the issuing of visas to overseas trained doctors

Employers and applicants will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) regarding respective responsibilities of applicants and employers, applications for entry visas and permanent residency, etc.

Details of the requirements, from information provided by DIMIA, are set out below. Details of how to obtain the relevant application forms direct from DIMIA's Website are also given. It should, however, be noted that DIMIA will not finalise the processing of visa applications until medical registration is granted to the applicant (see Step 6).

Temporary resident doctors (visa subclass 422)

Background

The Medical Practitioner visa, subclass 422, is the principal entry mechanism for temporary resident doctors (TRDs) practising in Australia. Overseas trained doctors may be sponsored under this visa by an Australian employer to fill a specific position, which cannot be filled by a suitably qualified Australian citizen or permanent resident. TRDs are often recruited to fill identified AON positions.

The main requirements in the Migration Regulations for entry under subclass 422 are that:

- the applicant is sponsored by the prospective employer;
- the applicant's qualifications are recognised by the relevant State or Territory Medical Board as entitling the applicant to practise as a medical practitioner in that State or Territory; and
- labour market requirements have been met.

Visa applicants must also meet health and character requirements.

Main requirements

Sponsorship

Visa applicants must be sponsored by an Australian employer regardless of their intended period of stay in Australia. To be approved as a sponsor, the employer must agree to accept responsibility for:

- (i) all financial obligations to the Commonwealth incurred by the applicant arising out of the applicant's stay in Australia; and
- (ii) compliance by the applicant with all relevant legislation and awards in relation to any employment entered into by the applicant in Australia; and
- (iii) unless the Minister otherwise decides, compliance by the applicant with the conditions under which the applicant was allowed to enter Australia.

The employer must also adequately remunerate the visa applicant in accordance with Australian levels of remuneration and conditions of employment.

Recognition of qualifications

The visa applicant must provide DIMIA with written evidence that the relevant State or Territory Medical Board has recognised the applicant's qualifications and has given the applicant conditional registration to practise as a medical practitioner in that State or Territory. The registration stipulates the period of approval and any restrictions placed by the Medical Board on the geographic region of practice (e.g., AON), type of service delivery, specific locations and any need for supervision.

Labour market testing

Labour market testing is required in all cases to ensure that there are no suitably qualified Australian doctors to fill vacant positions. Under policy, where a position is in an AON identified as such by the relevant State or Territory health authorities, labour market requirements are considered to have been met and no labour market testing is required.

Health checking

Health checks are designed to protect Australia from high health risks, costs and overuse of health resources. TRDs are considered of 'special significance' as they work in high public contact situations and are subject to the more rigorous health checking procedures, including a chest x-ray examination and medical examination.

Character checking

All applicants must be of good character. Police clearances are generally required to be undertaken for all applicants over 16 years of age who intend to stay in Australia for more than 12 months. They are required for any country that the applicant has lived in for more than 12 months in the last 10 years since turning 16 years of age.

Visa conditions

Visa condition 8107 is a mandatory condition for all primary visa holders on the subclass 422 visa. This visa condition means that, after arriving in Australia, the visa holder cannot change employer or occupation without written permission from DIMIA. If the visa holder wishes to change employer or occupation, they must seek written permission from the nearest DIMIA office before changing employer. Failure to do so would be a breach of the visa condition, which may result in the cancellation of the visa and the visas of any accompanying family members.

Visas of dependants do not have condition 8107 and dependants may work and study in Australia.

Visa period

The visa is normally granted to have effect for the period of conditional medical registration. The visa holder may apply for a further visa on the same ground and be granted a further period of stay consistent with the period of further conditional registration. This can usually be done while the doctor is in Australia.

The granting of an extension to the visa period is subject to the granting of further conditional registration. The latter requires the approval of an extension of the AON position for a further period by the relevant health authority.

How to apply

Sponsorship and visa application forms

To apply to come to Australia as a TRD, the relevant forms are:

- (i) Sponsorship for temporary residence visa (non business)** (Form 55); and
- (ii) Application for a temporary residence visa (non-business)** (Form 147).

Both of the forms can be obtained from a DIMIA office or the DIMIA website at www.immi.gov.au/allforms/formlist.htm

Lodging sponsorship and Visa applications

Sponsorship applications should be lodged at the DIMIA Business Centre closest to the sponsor's address. Please refer to the DIMIA website: www.immi.gov.au/business/bctitle.htm or call the DIMIA enquiry line on 131 881 for the contact details of business centres in Australia.

Visa applications may be made either in Australia or outside Australia. If the visa applicant is in Australia, they may lodge the visa application at the same time as the sponsorship application.

If the visa applicant is outside Australia, they should lodge the visa application at the nearest Australian mission after the sponsorship application has been approved. To find the DIMIA office closest to the visa applicant, please refer to the DIMIA website: www.immi.gov.au/wwi/index.htm

Sponsors and visa applicants should ensure that their applications are accompanied by all the required supporting information to avoid delays in sponsorship and visa processing. Visa applicants are strongly encouraged to commence medicals and police clearances (where required) as soon as the job offer is received. However, DIMIA will not finalise the processing of visa applications until medical registration is granted to the applicant (see Step 6).

Step 4

College Assessment of Applicant and Australian Medical Council (AMC) Verification of Documentation

The Process

**Employer refers application to Specialist Medical College for assessment and
Employer refers application to AMC to verify documentation**

NOTE: These actions are intended to be taken **in parallel**, in order to minimise delays in processing applications.

Application Forms for assessment of Area of Need specialists

There are three Application Forms used for assessment of Area of Need specialists. These are:

- **Form AON-SA** (Application to Determine Eligibility to be Assessed for Appointment as an Area of Need Specialist). When applications are submitted, the *original* Form AON-SA should be sent to the AMC, with a *copy* to the relevant College (in parallel);
- **Form AON-SB** (Summary of Basic Medical Training and Postgraduate Training and Experience). When applications are submitted, the *original* Form AON-SB should be sent to the relevant College, with a *copy* to the AMC (in parallel); and
- **Form AON-E** (Application for Exemption (from the Vocational Tests of English Proficiency)). The *original* of this Form is required by the AMC only.

Please note that each set of documents forwarded to the AMC and the relevant College should be accompanied by a completed copy of the **Attachment to Application for Assessment as Area of Need Specialist**. This Form provides employer contact details, details of the AON position and important payment details.

Copies of the above-mentioned Forms are available from the AMC at the following address:

Australian Medical Council
PO Box 4810
KINGSTON ACT 2604

Telephone: (02) 6270 9777
Facsimile: (02) 6270 9799
Email: amc@amc.org.au

Fees

Applications must be accompanied by the College's interview/assessment fee (details available from the relevant College) and the AMC administration fee of \$250. Payment details must be given in the Form **Attachment to Application for Assessment as Area of Need Specialist**.

Payment of fees is the responsibility of the employer or applicant.

The AMC and Colleges reserve the right to introduce, alter, amend or make other changes to fees at any time without notice. It should be noted that Colleges may charge fees for ongoing assessment of Area of Need specialists (see Step 8).

College assessment of applicant for Area of Need position

Documentary evidence of specialist qualifications

To enable initial assessment of the application to be conducted in parallel by the AMC and the relevant College, the following documentation - in the form of *certified photocopies*, NOT originals - must be provided **AT THE SAME TIME TO BOTH THE COLLEGE AND THE AMC** under the following headings and lodged by the employer, on behalf of the applicant, with **Form AON-SB** (Summary of Basic Medical Training and Postgraduate Training and Experience):

- a) Proof of completion of twelve months' training as an intern and details of the training program;
- b) Certificates of completion of training programs conducted by the specialist medical body;
- c) Depending on the position description, evidence required includes the following:
 - (i) Basic Specialist Training (or equivalent); and
 - (ii) Advanced Specialist Training (or equivalent) covering, in each case, wherever possible:
 - Periods of training;
 - Status of hospitals/institutions;
 - Number and nature of clinics;
 - Levels of appointment;
 - Clinical responsibility to inpatients;
 - Logbooks of procedures carried out;
 - Special studies/research undertaken;
 - Forms of supervision and names, positions and qualifications of supervisors;
 - Supervisors' reports for each training period;
- d) Certificates of specialist examinations passed and names of specialist medical bodies conducting the examinations;
- e) Details of specialist examinations, including:
 - number and type of examination (MCQ, viva voce, clinical);
 - subject areas of each examination;

- f) Published research papers and other specialist papers;
- g) Certificates of Fellowship of specialist medical bodies and/or specialist degree;
- h) Post-Fellowship experience, including the location and nature and duration of specialist practice and details of casemix;
- i) Certificate of Good Standing from the registration body (or bodies) covering the most recent two year period of practice;
- j) Names and current contact details of (preferably three) referees;
- k) A curriculum vitae;
- l) A description of involvement in MOPS/CME/CPD programs; and
- m) Other relevant supporting material.

(Certificates and reports should be submitted as certified copies).

A **Form AON-SB** (Summary of Basic Medical Training and Postgraduate Training and Experience) must be accompanied by documentary proof of qualifications and experience. CVs/bio data attached to this Form will only be accepted if relevant entries are summarised on **Form AON-SB**.

The *original* of the **Form AON-SB** must be submitted to the relevant College, with a *copy* to the AMC (in parallel).

If an applicant has difficulty in compiling the documentation requested in **Form AON-SB**, the employer should advise on the steps that have been taken to obtain them and explain the problems encountered.

Further information regarding lodgement of documents with **Form AON-SB** is given under the heading 'REQUIREMENTS FOR LODGEMENT OF FORM AON-SB WITH COLLEGE AND - IN PARALLEL - WITH THE AMC' on page 19.

One copy of the **Attachment to Application for Assessment as Area of Need Specialist** Form should accompany each set of documents submitted to the AMC and the College.

College assessment process

The relevant College will usually conduct an initial assessment of the applicant, based on the position description and written application and other documentation forwarded by the employer. Concurrently, the AMC will verify the documentation it has received from the employer in parallel with the College. If the documentation does not comply with the requirements, it will be returned by the AMC to the employer, who will liaise with the applicant to ensure compliance with the requirements. The AMC will, if necessary, notify the College if documentation remains unsatisfactory.

It is expected that, in most cases, the review of an applicant's documentation by the assessing College will be followed by an interview which will involve a committee of senior Fellows.

The committee will comprise members with expertise in the assessment of local trainees and, ideally, include one who is familiar with practice in the particular specialty in an 'Area of Need' in Australia.

General principles for the conduct of the committee are outlined in the document **Assessment of Overseas Trained Specialists – Template for Colleges**, issued in April 2000. The **Template** includes

sections on documentation of criteria and procedures for assessment, procedural fairness, documentation of the assessment process, evidence used for assessment, and an appeals process.

The purpose of the interview is to clarify the applicant's suitability for the position, by confirming details of the training and experience provided in the written documentation. Where the committee obtains information from other sources, it should give the applicant the opportunity to respond.

The College will be responsible for communicating to the applicant, the date, time and place of interview and for outlining the issues to be covered at interview.

If, in the opinion of the College, an application is unsatisfactory, the College will notify the employer and, in parallel, the AMC. The employer will be required to take appropriate action to:

- redefine the position description;
- resubmit further information to the College and the AMC (in parallel); or
- notify the College and the AMC of an intention to propose an alternative applicant.

In the case of the latter, a new application must be referred simultaneously to the College and the AMC for processing.

Following its assessment - **and within 8 weeks of receipt by the College of satisfactory documentation** - the College will forward its recommendation to the relevant State or Territory Medical Board (and, in parallel, the employer and the AMC) for consideration by the Board for an appropriate category of AON registration. At the same time, the College will define for the Board any limitations on the nature and extent of practice involved, and provide recommendations regarding requirements for ongoing assessment.

The assessing College will provide recommendations to the relevant Medical Board (with a copy to the AMC) regarding requirements for ongoing assessment of the applicant.

Verification of documentation by AMC

An applicant selected for appointment to an AON position will need to complete an application to the AMC on **Form AON-SA** (Application to Determine Eligibility to be Assessed for Appointment as an Area of Need Specialist).

The original **Form AON-SA** should be sent to the AMC, with a copy (in parallel) to the relevant College. Receipt of **Form AON-SA** by the AMC will initiate action to verify the accompanying documentation.

The following paragraphs describe the AMC's requirements and arrangements for processing applications for AON positions. While these are broadly similar to those for the processing of applications for specialist assessment through the standard AMC/Specialist Medical College pathway for overseas trained specialists, there are some differences that arise because of the need to accommodate accelerated processing of AON applications by the AMC and the relevant College, in parallel. The most important differences are in relation to the provision to the AMC or the College of either originals or copies of Application Forms and the need for **two** sets of copies of relevant documents – correctly certified, where required - to be provided in parallel to the AMC and the College.

Requirements for English language proficiency

Australia is an English speaking country and it is essential that overseas trained doctors have a very good knowledge of the language to enable them to communicate with their patients, other doctors, other health professionals, hospitals, nursing homes, etc, as well as to keep abreast of changing medical information. In some States and Territories, proficiency in English is a legislative requirement for registration.

All applicants for assessment must satisfy the English language proficiency requirements before the assessment process can proceed. In the majority of cases this will require the applicant to complete and pass a designated vocational test of English proficiency – namely, to have completed and passed the Occupational English Test (OET) administered by Language Australia with grades A or B ONLY in each of the four components, or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination at an overall band score of 7 or higher in the Academic Module. Applicants who sat the OET prior to 1 January 2002 and obtained a grade of A, B or C in the four components will be permitted to proceed with assessment.

A provision exists for applicants, in certain circumstances, to be granted an exemption from the requirement to pass a designated vocational test of English proficiency. Applications for exemption must be submitted to the AMC using **Form AON-E**. **Form AON-E** should be submitted by the employer at the same time as **Form AON-SA** (see below).

The AMC accepts the following vocational tests of English for the purposes of exemption (using **Form AON-E**):

- English language component of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (**USMLE**) (previously **ECFMG**) [NOT the TOEFL component of the current USMLE examination]; OR
- Professional Linguistic Assessment Board (**PLAB**) Examination (UK); OR
- English language component of the New Zealand Registration Examination (**NZREX**).

Note:

1. A pass in a general English test such as TOEFL is not within the guidelines approved by the AMC for granting an exemption.
2. An exemption from an English proficiency requirement granted by another licensing body, such as the General Medical Council (UK) or the Medical Council of New Zealand, is not recognised for the purposes of specialist assessment and registration in Australia.

Other criteria for exemption

An exemption may also be considered when an applicant provides (together with **Form AON-E**) certified copies of documentary evidence of:

- birth certificate and formal primary education; OR
- secondary education (NOT University training)

in a country where English is the native or first language (not merely the official language).

All applications and supporting documentation must be forwarded by the employer to the AMC, on behalf of the applicant. Details of the documentation requirements and the verification process follow.

Requirements for lodgement of Form AON-SA

In order for **Form AON-SA** (Application to Determine Eligibility to be Assessed for Appointment as an Area of Need Specialist) to be accepted by the AMC, it **MUST**:

- a) be an original, made on the approved Form and filled out in full;
- b) contain a Statutory Declaration by the applicant. This Declaration **MUST** be witnessed by one of those persons able to witness Statutory Declarations (see below);
- c) be accompanied by a certified copy of the degree (basic or primary) certificate awarded by the medical school or University on completion of the medical course. If the degree certificate awarded is not in English, a certified copy of the translation of the document is required and this must be attached to the degree certificate. The translation should be certified as being a true copy of the original by a person authorised to witness Statutory Declarations;

Note: A transcript of an academic record or statement that the applicant has qualified for the award of the degree in medicine is not sufficient proof of formal qualifications.

- d) be accompanied by four photographs correctly certified which should be clipped to **Form AON-SA**. One of these photographs will be sent to the relevant College and another to the relevant Medical Board when the AMC has determined that the documentation is satisfactory;
- e) be accompanied by a copy of **Form AON-SB** (Summary of Basic Medical Training and Postgraduate Training and Experience) [the original of which is to be sent in parallel to the relevant College] and copies of the required documents (including translations if the documents are not in English).
IMPORTANT NOTE: THE ORIGINAL OF FORM AON-SB AND THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION MUST BE LODGED WITH THE RELEVANT COLLEGE, WITH A COPY SENT SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE AMC;
- f) be accompanied by certified documentary evidence of proof of identity in the form of one of the following:
 - Photographic page from current passport showing the following information: name, nationality, date of birth, sex, place and country of birth, date of issue of passport, passport number, photograph, and country of issue;
 - Current Australian Driver's Licence;
- g) be accompanied by certified documentary evidence of name change (e.g., marriage certificate or deed of name change) if the name of an applicant shown on a document or documents submitted is different from that shown in another document or documents and/or on his/her passport.

Note: Application Forms and documents which have not been correctly witnessed are not legally recognised in Australia and will not be accepted.

The provision of the documentation required by the AMC and the assessing College is a key step in the assessment process, both for the initial review of qualifications and experience, and for the interview. It is in the interest of the applicant and employer to make every endeavour to supply as much of the documentation as possible. The AMC (or College) will return an application and all papers associated with it to the employer if the documentation does not comply with the requirements.

The AMC will not process applications until all necessary action has been taken by the applicant and employer and the completed documentation has been returned to the AMC.

Requirements for lodgement of original Form AON-SB with College and a copy (in parallel) with the AMC (see also pages 14 and 15)

Form AON-SB (Summary of Basic Medical Training and Postgraduate Training and Experience) must be accompanied by documentary proof of qualifications and experience. CVs/bio data attached to this Form will only be accepted if relevant entries are summarised on Form AON-SB. The original Form AON-SB is to be sent to the relevant College, with a copy to the AMC (in parallel).

The original Form AON-SB is to be completed, showing the relevant specialist qualifications and training and employment history of the applicant, and is to be submitted to the College by the employer together with a copy of Form AON-SA.

All formal Certificates and reports must be correctly certified, with English translations (as required) also certified.

General instructions regarding documents

Note: All documents included must be LEGIBLY CERTIFIED PHOTOCOPIES. ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS ARE NOT TO BE SUBMITTED IN PLACE OF PHOTOCOPIES. If original documents are submitted and subsequently lost, the AMC will not take responsibility for their loss.

If the information includes documents issued in a language other than English they must be accompanied by certified English translations. Professional documents must be provided in the original language. If they are issued in a language other than English, they must be translated into English by an authorised translation service or professional translator. Copies of these translations must be certified and both the translation and the certified copy of the professional documents in the original language should be stapled together and the translation certified as a true translation of the attached document and submitted with the application.

Receipt by the AMC of application and associated documents

The original of Form AON-SA, a copy of Form AON-SB, and the original of Form AON-E and associated documentation must be lodged by the employer with the AMC Secretariat at the following address:

The Executive Officer
Australian Medical Council Incorporated
PO Box 4810
KINGSTON ACT 2604

The AMC will notify the relevant State or Territory Medical Board WHEN:

- i) the applicant is assessed as being eligible to present for assessment; and
- ii) Application Forms are complete and all relevant documentation has been received by the AMC.

Photographs

All applicants must provide four current passport size (no larger than 50mm x 40mm) colour photographs of good quality, each certified on the reverse side by the same person who certified **Form AON-SA**, and clipped to **Form AON-SA**.

Photographs should be certified as follows:

I certify that this is a true photograph of

.....

(full name of applicant)

.....

(signed)

.....

title and number (if applicable)

.....

date

Photographs should be:

- In colour;
- Not more than twelve months old;
- Not smaller than 35 x 45 mm and not larger than 40 x 50 mm;
- Good quality with no ink or marks on the image;
- Not too dark and not too light;
- Not too close and not too distant;
- In front of a plain light coloured background;
- Sharply focused, not blurred or unclear; and
- Full front view of the applicant's head and shoulders with his or her eyes open and clearly visible (if glasses are worn).

The AMC will provide one of these photographs each to the assessing Specialist Medical College and the relevant Medical Board.

Certification and Declaration

Each page of the documentary evidence that is lodged with the **Form AON-SA** must be certified by the same person witnessing the Declaration on **Form AON-SA**. Original documents are not to be submitted in place of photocopies.

The certification on each page must read:

I certify this document to be a true copy of
the original sighted by me

.....
(signed)

.....
title and number (if applicable)

.....
date

On the back of **Form AON-SA**, each applicant **MUST** make a Statutory Declaration. This Declaration **MUST** be witnessed by one of the persons specified under Australian law to witness Statutory Declarations. A list of eligible persons follows.

Statutory Declarations witnessed in Australia

The AMC accepts the following as eligible to witness Declarations in Australia:

- Chief Magistrate - Police Magistrate - Resident Magistrate - Special Magistrate;
- a Justice of the Peace;
- a person appointed under the *Commonwealth Statutory Declarations Act 1959* as amended, or under a State Act to be a Commissioner for Declarations;
- a Notary Public;
- a person appointed as a Commissioner for Declarations under the *Statutory Declarations Act 1911*, or under that Act as amended, and holding office immediately before the commencement of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*;
- a person before whom a Statutory Declaration may be made under the law of the State in which a Declaration is made.

Application Forms and documents that have not been witnessed as specified above are not legally recognised in Australia and will not be accepted.

Statutory Declarations witnessed overseas

The AMC accepts the following as eligible to witness Declarations in countries other than Australia:

- a Notary Public;
- a Commissioner of Oaths (South Africa and Canada only);
- a person appointed to hold, or act in, the office in a country or place outside Australia in an Australian Embassy, High Commission, Legation or other post as:
 - Australian Consul-General, Consul or Vice-Consul;
 - Australian Trade Commissioner or Consular Agent;
 - Australian Ambassador or High Commissioner;
 - Australian Minister, Head of Mission, Commissioner, Charge d'Affaires or Counsellor; or
 - Australian Secretary or Attaché.

Important Note: A Justice of the Peace registered outside Australia is NOT accepted by the AMC for witnessing documentation.

Application Forms and documents that have not been witnessed as specified above are not legally recognised in Australia and will not be accepted.

Penalties for making false declarations

A person who wilfully makes a false statement in a Statutory Declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act 1959, as amended, is guilty of an offence against that Act, the punishment of which is a fine not exceeding \$200 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both if the offence is prosecuted summarily, or for a term not exceeding four years if the offence is prosecuted upon indictment.

An applicant for assessment for an AON appointment who wilfully makes a false statement or provides false information in his/her Application Forms or in the documents attached may forfeit his or her eligibility to present for assessment, or be subject to de-registration (if registration has already been obtained) and/or other penalties as prescribed in the relevant State or Territory medical registration laws.

When the AMC has determined that the documentation provided is unsatisfactory, the documents will be returned to the employer (with a notification to the relevant College), who will need to liaise with the applicant to ensure compliance with requirements. The correct documents must then be sent to the AMC to enable the processing of the application to continue.

If the documentation is satisfactory, the AMC will notify the relevant State or Territory Medical Board (and, in parallel, the relevant College), accordingly.

Step 5

College Recommendation to Medical Board Recommendation

College recommendation to Medical Board (Within 8 weeks of receipt by College of satisfactory documentation)

The assessing College will provide recommendations to the relevant Medical Board (with a copy to the employer and the AMC) regarding any limitations on the nature and extent of practice involved and requirements for ongoing assessment of the applicant.

Contact details for the State and Territory Medical Boards are as follows:

Registrar Medical Board of the Australian Capital Territory PO BOX 976 CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608 Telephone: (02) 6205 1600 Facsimile: (02) 6205 1602 Email: bob_bradford@dpa.act.gov.au	Registration Manager Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria GPO Box 773H MELBOURNE VIC 3001 Telephone: (03) 9655 0500 Facsimile: (03) 9655 0580 Email: mpbofv@mpbofv.org.au Website: www.mpbofv.org.au
Manager Registration New South Wales Medical Board PO Box 104 GLADESVILLE NSW 1675 Telephone: (02) 9879 6799 Facsimile: (02) 9816 5307 Email: nswmb@doh.health.nsw.gov.au Website: www.nswmb.org.au	Registration Coordinator Medical Board of Western Australia PO Box 1040 WEST PERTH WA 6872 Telephone: (08) 9481 1011 Facsimile: (08) 9321 1744 Email: medicalboard@stamfords.com.au
Registrations Manager Medical Board of the Northern Territory PO Box 4221 DARWIN NT 0801 Telephone: (08) 8999 4165 Facsimile: (08) 8999 4196 Email: ProfessionalBoards.THS@nt.gov.au	Registrar The Medical Council of Tasmania PO Box 8 SOUTH HOBART TAS 7004 Telephone: (03) 6233 5499 Facsimile: (03) 6233 7986 Email: mct@our.net.au
Deputy Registrar The Medical Board of Queensland GPO Box 2438 BRISBANE QLD 4001 Telephone: (07) 3225 2515 Facsimile: (07) 3225 2527 Email: medical@healthregboards.qld.gov.au Website: www.medicalboard.qld.gov.au	Registrar Medical Board of South Australia PO Box 359 STEPNEY SA 5069 Telephone: (08) 8362 7811 Facsimile: (08) 8362 7906 Email: admin@medicalboardsa.asn.au

Step 6

Consideration by Medical Board of Application for Area of Need Registration

Medical Board consideration

The AMC will notify the relevant State or Territory Medical Board and College when the documentation submitted for verification is considered satisfactory.

The applicant must apply to the relevant State or Territory Medical Board for registration, using the prescribed applications forms available from the Board. The applicant must obtain from the employer, for inclusion with his or her application for registration, relevant authorisation that the position for which registration is sought has been formally designated as an AON.

On the recommendation of the relevant College, the State or Territory Medical Board will consider the applicant for AON registration in accordance with the provisions of the State or Territory Medical Act.

The Medical Board will notify the employer, relevant College, Health Insurance Commission (SRACs) and the AMC of its decision concerning registration of the applicant.

The applicant must pursue with DIMIA, matters relating to the issuing of visas.

Step 7

Post-registration Stage

Role of Health Insurance Commission

Does applicant need a Medicare Provider Number?

Following registration, and if the applicant requires access to a Medicare Provider Number, he or she will need to apply to the Health Insurance Commission (HIC) for exemption from Provider Number restrictions, which gives access to the Medical Benefits Schedule and consultation items at A2 level.

If the applicant is a pathologist and wishes to become an Approved Pathology Provider (APP), he or she will need to make a separate application for APP status to the HIC.

If the applicant requires access to referred specialist or consultant physician items, he or she must apply to the relevant Specialist Recognition Advisory Committee for consideration. Application forms can be obtained by calling 132 150 or downloading from HIC's Website at www.hic.gov.au

The HIC has notified the AMC that temporary and permanent resident doctors need to apply for specialist recognition each time they have an exemption issued – or extended - under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*. Should temporary resident doctors who are holders of a 19AB exemption obtain permanent residency status, they will need to advise the HIC in writing and would need to re-apply for specialist recognition.

For any enquiries regarding Provider Number eligibility or specialist recognition, please 'phone 132 150 (local call cost).

Step 8

Continuing Assessment Modification of Conditions of Registration

Withdrawal of Registration

Assessment

Ongoing action

The relevant College will undertake ongoing assessment of the applicant after a defined period [initially 3 months and follow-up, as required, and after 12 months]. The College will report its findings to the employer and the relevant Medical Board.

NOTE: The College may charge fees for ongoing assessment. Payment of fees is the responsibility of the employer or applicant.

If any major deficiencies are notified by a College, the relevant Medical Board may alter conditions of registration (if deficiencies are not significant) or withdraw the registration if deficiencies are considered significant or constitute a danger to the community.

An applicant holding AON registration may apply to proceed through the AMC/Specialist Medical College pathway for overseas trained specialists, in which case the College may use alternative assessment methods.

Appeals

The mechanisms already available under College and Medical Board arrangements can be utilised to resolve appeals by applicants for AON positions.

Appendix 1



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Health Industry and Investment Division
GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6289 5903 Fax: (02) 6289 1352
ABN 83 605 426 759



STATE AND TERRITORY SCHEMES TO RECRUIT OVERSEAS TRAINED DOCTORS TO RURAL AREAS

The Commonwealth is acutely aware of the difficulties that many rural communities experience in attracting doctors on a long-term basis. It is for this reason that in 1999 Dr Michael Wooldridge, Minister for Health and Aged Care, offered to help States and Territories streamline processes for recruiting overseas trained doctors to work in rural areas. All States and the Northern Territory have expressed interest in developing initiatives to address the rural medical workforce shortages on a permanent basis.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the growth, distribution and standard of the medical workforce are appropriate to the needs of the Australian community. Data from the Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee demonstrates that there is nationally an oversupply of general practitioners (GPs) in metropolitan areas and a shortage in rural areas. The Government's aim is to reduce the growth in the general practice workforce and to encourage both new and existing GPs to relocate to rural areas through a variety of incentive programs.

The Australian Health Ministers' Conference adopted a national framework to facilitate the recruitment of overseas-trained doctors to work in rural areas on 4 August 1999. This allows overseas-trained doctors with general practice qualifications, who seek or possess permanent residency, to be assessed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) as an alternative to their undertaking Australian Medical Council (AMC) examinations. Doctors going through this process are conditionally registered to work in rural areas for a period of 5 years.

The State recruitment schemes aim to attract general practitioners who do not require training or supervision whilst undertaking placements in rural and remote areas. Each State scheme is specifically aimed at those rural and remote areas in most need. The Commonwealth assists by providing streamlined immigration processes and Medicare access to help fill positions in those areas which otherwise face great difficulties in attracting doctors.

A special incentive for participation in the State schemes is provided by the Commonwealth. Overseas-trained doctors are normally not eligible to obtain an unrestricted Medicare provider number for 10 years from the date they are first registered in Australia. The Commonwealth has undertaken to waive the remainder of this 10-year moratorium for all doctors who complete the 5 years service on the State schemes.

The two main incentives for eligible overseas-trained doctors who complete the five years in approved *districts of workforce shortage* and obtain the FRACGP are:

1. Streamlined immigration procedures; and
2. Reduction in the 10-year moratorium on provider numbers under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.

The National Reference Panel (NRP) on Overseas Trained Doctors (OTDs) was established to oversee the development of standards for assessment of general practice skills. The NRP on OTDs has developed a five-category classification, based on postgraduate general practice qualifications and general practice experience.

To date, the five categories are as follows:

CATEGORY 1:

General Practitioners who hold

- Fellowship of The Royal New Zealand College of GPs (FRNZCGP);
- Certificates in Family Practice from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) **and** successful completion of both parts of the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination;
- Both Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP UK) **and** Certificates from Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice (JCPTGP) UK.

Doctors who hold these qualifications are eligible for admission to Fellowship of the RACGP *ad eundem gradum*.

CATEGORY 2:

General Practitioners who hold:

- Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners UK (MRCGP)
- Membership of the Irish College of General Practitioners (MICGP);
- Membership of the Faculty of General Practitioners; or Member of the College of Family Practitioners, South Africa by examination (MFGP or the new MCGP)
- The Certificate of the American Board of Family Practice USA (ABFP);
- The Certificate of the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice (JCPTGP) UK;
- Masters of Medicine (Family Medicine) from the National University of Singapore;
- Registration as a Family Physician with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (formerly the South African Medical and Dental Council of South Africa)
- Masters of Family Medicine, South Africa;
- Masters of Prax Medicine, South Africa.

Doctors who hold these memberships/qualifications are required to undertake the RACGP Fellowship exam. They have two years in which to successfully complete the exam.

CATEGORY 3:

General practice training and post graduate qualifications not recognised by RACGP but who have more than five years of full time general practice experience.

Doctors in this category are eligible for award of Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP) via the practice eligibility route after a determination by the RACGP of the equivalence of their general practice experience to five years full time of Australian general practice and completion of the RACGP examination.

CATEGORY 4:

No general practice training or postgraduate qualifications, but more than five years full time general practice experience in another country.

CATEGORY 5:

No general practice training or postgraduate qualification and less than five years of equivalent full time GP experience in another country. Doctors in this category would not be eligible for FRACGP until they have completed five years of equivalent general practice.

For further details regarding Fellowship of the RACGP, please refer to the RACGP website – <http://www.racgp.org.au>

Contact details for these State/Territory schemes are provided below:

NSW: NSW Rural Doctors' Network

Lisa McFayden

Ph: (02) 4929 1811

Fax: (02) 4929 1911

Email: lmcfayden@nswrdn.com.au

Website: www.nswrdn.com.au

VIC: Rural Workforce Agency of Victoria (RWAV)

Ph: (03) 9349 4899

Fax: (03) 9349 4211

Email: rwav@rwav.com.au

Website: <http://www.rwav.com.au>

QLD: Queensland Health

Denis Lennox

Rural Health Services

Ph: (07) 4699 8671

Fax: (07) 4699 8705

Email: denislennox@health.qld.gov.au

SA: Rural Doctors Workforce Agency

Angela Despotovici

Ph: (08) 8357 7444

Fax: (08) 8357 7088

Website: www.ruraldoc.com.au

WA: WA Health

WA Centre for Rural and Remote Medicine

Ph: (08) 9384 2811

Fax: (08) 9385 2938

Website: www.wacrrm.uwa.edu.au

NT: Northern Territory Remote Health Workforce Agency

Ph: (08) 8952 3881

Fax: (08) 8952 3536

Email: ntrhwa@ntrhwa.org.au

Website: www.ntrhwa.org.au

TAS: Tasmanian General Practice Division

(Incorporating Rural Workforce Support)

Ph: (03) 6334 2355

Fax: (03) 6334 3851

Website: www.tgpd.com.au

December 2001

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