



### REGENCY OF PRACTICE

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The introduction in April 2008 of recency of practice requirements of Queensland's 38,000 registered health practitioners is on schedule following a second round of consultation on the issue.

The consultation process has been staged deliberately over some years to allow practitioners in the regulated health professionals an opportunity to identify and undertake appropriate continuing professional education.

For the same reason, the requirement will not be introduced before next year's annual registration renewal period for general registrants, from 30 April to 30 June 2008. This will provide a further 14 months for practitioners to undertake appropriate education to meet requirements.

The Boards are seeking to introduce a requirement that every practitioner who applies for registration or to renew registration must, at the time of application, be able to show that they have practised their profession - while registered - within the last five years.

Practitioners who cannot meet this requirement will be required to remedy this by undertaking activity such as an examination, a return to practice course, continuing professional development and/or accepting conditions on practice before registration will be granted.

By introducing recency of practice requirements, each Board is acting to fulfill its duty under its respective registration Act - to ensure safe and competent practice by registrants and to maintain the public's confidence in the profession.

In February 2005, Queensland's 13 health practitioner registration Boards released a discussion paper on the issue of recency of practice for feedback to help develop a draft policy.

Feedback on the discussion paper was collated and distributed, with the draft policy, for consultation from November 2006 to end January 2007.

The Boards will now review information provided by members of the 18 regulated health professions, professional associations and the community. This

second round of feedback will inform the final recency of practice policy which will be referred to Queensland Health to develop into a Regulation.

Information on recency of practice can be viewed at individual Board websites by choosing the relevant Board at [www.healthregboards.qld.gov.au](http://www.healthregboards.qld.gov.au).

**\*\*Note:** There are 18 health professions regulated in Queensland by 13 registration Boards. They are chiropractors, dental (comprising dentists, dental auxiliaries and dental specialists), dental technicians, dental prosthetists (regulated by the Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Board), medical, medical radiation technology (comprising medical imaging technology, nuclear medicine technology and radiation therapy), occupational therapists, optometrists, osteopaths, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists, psychologists and speech pathologists

### DIAGNOSTIC THERAPEUTIC AUTHORISATION (DPA)

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Having DPA is now regarded as the standard of care required for practising optometry and is Board policy. After extensive publicity, the final QUT DPA course has been completed. All optometrists applying for new registration in Queensland must have DPA.

### THERAPEUTIC DRUG LEGISLATION

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The Board is disappointed with the lack of progress. The Board continues to administer the interim legislation as a result of changes emanating from the formation of the Optometrists Drug Authority Committee. The committee now does not appear to function and the Board has not been notified of any recommendations. This is an unsatisfactory situation and attempts are being made to meet with the Health Minister to resolve the situation.

In the interim, certified registrants continue to prescribe the drugs on the currently approved list without any reported adverse effect.

## LOCUM REGISTRATION

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Recent legislation now allows qualified interstate registrants to register for short periods without paying any application or registration fee. Applicants are still required to apply in the normal manner. It is hoped that other states will adopt this in the future.

## OPTOMETRIC SPECIALTIES

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The Board recognises specialties that have university educational qualifications and are recognised in the Optometrists Act. The only current recognised specialty is the Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics at QUT which eventually will become a core part of practice.

It is not envisaged that further specialties will be approved if they involve an activity that is a core part of normal optometric practice.

Nearly all medical specialties are secondary care specialties requiring referral from primary care practitioners. The Board does not see this as a viable process for optometry at this time.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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There are more optometrists registered to practise in Queensland than ever before, with 882 optometrists registered to practise in Queensland as at 30 June 2006 - a net increase of 34 practitioners since 30 June 2005.

There were 100 practitioners who were new to Queensland, including 34 optometrists already registered in another State or Territory or in New Zealand processed under Australasian mutual recognition legislation.

Of a total 583 complaints involving Queensland's 37,912 health practitioners, six matters or 1% related to optometrists.

There were five complaints received under the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*. Three were referred to the Health Quality and Complaints Commission) for consideration; one was closed after assessment; and one continues to be assessed. There was one complaint received under the *Optometrists Registration Act 2001* which was still under assessment at the end of the reporting period.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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