



# **Policy:** Supervised practice requirements for specialist registration

Effective date: 21 October 2024

# 1. Background

The Medical Board of Australia's (the Board) *Registration standard: Specialist registration* (the Standard) requires all individuals to have successfully completed a minimum period of six months of full-time equivalent supervised practice in the specialty, in Australia, to be eligible for specialist registration.

Supervision is defined in the National Boards and Ahpra's *Supervised practice framework* as 'a mechanism to give the National Board the assurance that the supervisee is practising safely, competently, and ethically for a range of regulatory purposes. Supervised practice may be direct, indirect or remote according to the nature in which the practice is being supervised.'<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of the minimum period of supervised practice is to confirm that an individual is competent and safe to practise as a specialist in their specialty field of practice in Australia.

## 3. Scope

The Board's *Registration standard: specialist registration* requires individuals to have successfully completed a minimum period of six months of full-time equivalent supervised practice in the specialty, in Australia, to be eligible for specialist registration.

Individuals are exempt from this if they have been awarded an approved qualification for the specialty<sup>2</sup> which has been completed in Australia or internationally.

For individuals who are not exempt and do not meet this eligibility requirement, the Board may grant specialist registration with a condition that enables them to meet this requirement.

## 4. Minimum requirements

Supervised practice assures the Board that an individual can practise the specialty safely and competently at the level expected of a specialist. To satisfy the requirements of section 57(1)(b) of the the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), individuals will have successfully completed a minimum of six months of full-time equivalent supervised practice approved by the Board within their specialty in Australia.

This may include supervised practice in the specialty that has already been completed:

- as part of an accredited program of study that provides an approved qualification for the specialty, or
- as part of the requirements of the Specialist pathway.

The Board may also consider any other periods of supervised practice successfully completed in the specialty in Australia.

## 5. Evidence

The documentary evidence that an individual needs to provide to confirm that they have completed the required supervised practice depends on how they qualified for specialist registration, and whether they have previously been registered (and practised) in Australia.

Individuals will have satisfactorily completed their supervised practice requirements when they have:

- shown competence against the relevant standards, as assessed by their approved supervisor, and/or
- successfully completed the required training, assessment and/or examination approved by the Board.

The Board's *Evidence guide: Eligibility for specialist registration* details the documentary evidence required.

Evidence may include:

- supervision reports
- Report 2 (final assessment by an Australian specialist medical college for specialist recognition/ outcome of comparability assessment).

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1 The *Supervised practice framework* is available on the Board's website at [www.medicalboard.gov.au](http://www.medicalboard.gov.au).

2 Under section 58(a) of the National Law, an individual is qualified for specialist registration if they hold an approved qualification for the specialty. The Board approved qualification for the purposes of section 58(a) of the National Law is fellowship of an AMC-accredited specialist medical college.

The Board has determined specific requirements for specialist international medical graduates (SIMGs) who qualify for specialist registration through the Expedited Specialist pathway as detailed in section 5.1 of this policy.

### 5.1 Requirements for SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway

The Board has decided that at a minimum, the assessment of competency of SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway will include:

- a multisource feedback assessment, and
- a minimum of one other assessment type (mini-clinical evaluation exercise (Mini-CEX), direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS) or case-based discussion (CBD)).

SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway will need to provide evidence of satisfactory completion of their six-month period of supervised practice by providing a minimum of two supervised practice reports in accordance with the conditions imposed on their registration. These reports should be provided to the Board after the completion of three months and six months of supervised practice. They must also include evidence of any additional requirements (such as orientation to the Australian healthcare system, cultural safety education and the required assessments) that have been completed.

The final report requires the Board-approved supervisor to:

- indicate if the SIMG is competent to practise the specialty
- confirm if the SIMG has successfully completed supervised practice as set out in the supervised practice plan approved by the Board, and
- confirm if the SIMG has achieved the objectives of the supervised practice.

The Board will assess two supervised practice reports along with the multisource feedback assessment and other nominated assessments (Mini-CEX, DOPS or CBD), to be assured that the SIMG can safely practise unsupervised in Australia.

Work performance reports that have previously been submitted to the Board for any periods of supervised practice while holding limited or provisional registration will be accepted if they confirm performance in a specialist position was consistently at the level expected in each performance statement.

SIMGs who hold limited or provisional registration and transition to the Expedited Specialist pathway will need to meet the above requirements to be eligible for unconditional specialist registration.

## 6. Requirements to supervise SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway

The *Supervised practice framework*<sup>3</sup> outlines the general requirements for supervisors. Supervisors must:

- have relevant experience (including their qualifications, responsibilities and relevant scope of practice)
- not be subject to supervised practice, conditions or undertakings that would affect their ability to effectively supervise.

For SIMGs who are on the Expedited Specialist pathway, the Board has also decided that supervisors must:

- be specialists who hold specialist registration in the same specialty field
- have practised in Australia for a minimum of 12 months full-time equivalent experience as a specialist in Australia with specialist registration, and
- can show that they have the demonstrated skills and competency to supervise specialists on this pathway.

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<sup>3</sup> The *Supervised practice framework* does not apply to international medical graduates (IMGs) who hold limited or provisional registration. However, it does apply to SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway who hold specialist registration and are required to complete a period of supervised practice.

## 7. Managing performance or safety concerns for SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway

The Board has options to take action in relation to managing performance under the National Law. SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway will be subject to conditions requiring satisfactory completion of supervised practice. Supervised practice must be completed in the specialty in Australia and in line with the supervision arrangements approved by the Board. If no supervision arrangements are approved, the SIMG will not be permitted to practise.

Supervisors and employers have an obligation to advise Ahpra of any concerns about the supervisee if they form an opinion that there is a risk to the public.

During the period of supervised practice, assessments will be completed that will identify if there are any performance concerns at the following intervals:

Month of supervised practice	Monitoring mechanism
3 months	Supervised practice report
4-5 months	Multi-source feedback
6 months	Supervised practice report
Variable – completed towards the end of the period of supervised practice	Additional assessment nominated by the SIMG and their supervisor and deemed to be a suitable assessment tool for the specialty. This will either be a Mini-CEX, DOPS or CBD.

To manage performance or safety concerns, the Board has the following options available:

- **Review the conditions**

SIMGs on the Expedited Specialist pathway are required to satisfactorily complete a period of six months of supervised practice. If performance concerns are identified, the Board can review conditions on its own initiative at the end of the review period or if it believes there has been a material change in the SIMG's circumstances. The Board can propose to extend the period of supervised practice, or require a change in supervision level, to manage the identified risk posed by an individual's performance.

- **Require a performance assessment**

There are provisions in the National Law for the Board to require a SIMG to undergo an assessment of their performance. This could be initiated under section 80 of the National Law with an application for registration or renewal of registration, or if the applicant requests a review of conditions. Additionally, it could also be initiated under part 8 of the National Law if the Board reasonably believes, because of a notification or for any other reason, that the way the practitioner practises the profession is or may be unsatisfactory.

- **Decide there are sufficient grounds to raise a notification**

The Board can raise a notification on any grounds under section 144 of the National Law if it has concerns about a practitioner's performance, fitness to practice, impairment or if a practitioner has contravened conditions on their registration.

- **Refuse an application for renewal of specialist registration**

The Board can refuse an application for renewal of specialist registration on any grounds outlined in section 82 of the National Law or if an applicant has contravened any conditions on their registration. In refusing an application for renewal of specialist registration, the Board would require sufficient evidence that the applicant was not a suitable person to hold registration. This may be in the form of an unsatisfactory outcome following a performance assessment.