



MEDICAL BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

POLICY PRE-EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURED CLINICAL INTERVIEW

Issued: July 2009

1. BACKGROUND

The Medical Board of Western Australia ("the Board") has taken into consideration the Council of Australian Government's ("COAG's") approach to the nationally consistent assessment of International Medical Graduates ("IMGs").

As part of this national approach, the Australian Medical Council ("AMC") has released guidelines setting out requirements for IMGs in respect of clinical screening, which is one of the pre-requisite components necessary for conditional registration in high risk positions.

As a result, from 1 December 2008, the Board will require some IMGs to successfully complete a Pre-employment Structured Clinical Interview ("the Interview") as a pre-requisite to being considered for conditional registration in Western Australia.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Interview is to establish whether the IMG has the knowledge, skills and experience to practice safely and effectively in the particular position in the community for which conditional registration is sought.

3. WHAT IS THE INTERVIEW?

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

4. WHO NEEDS AN INTERVIEW?

IMGs seeking employment in Western Australia [under the standard and competent authority pathways] may require an Interview as a mandatory component of their application for conditional registration to the Board.

IMGs who have successfully completed both the AMC Multiple Choice Questionnaire ("MCQ") and AMC Clinical Examinations, prior to making an application for conditional registration with the Board, will NOT be required to attend an Interview.

IMGs who are already registered and working are NOT required to participate in an Interview for the purpose of continuing their registration in the same role/location or if they are continuing in the same role at a new location (ie. same risk). Renewal of registration is subject to satisfactory performance reviews.

IMGs already registered and working in WA who apply to transfer to a new position may be required to participate in an Interview as part of their application for registration in the new position if the new position is substantively different (ie. at a higher risk) to their current position. Renewal of registration is also subject to satisfactory performance reviews.

The Board considers a 'higher risk position' to be one that is:

- in a completely different discipline (eg Psychiatry to Surgery); and/or
- at a much higher level with more responsibility (eg RMO to Senior Registrar); and/or
- from a hospital or health service position to a GP position; and/or
- in a significantly different location (eg outer metro GP to rural/remote GP).

The Board requires the following documentation to determine if an Interview is required when an IMG is transferring from one position to another:

- the current position description, indicating the location of the position; and
- the new position description, including all the prescribed information; and
- 'extension', 'amendment' or 'move location' application (Form S).

A risk matrix has been developed by the AMC to assist the Board, in determining who may require an Interview under the Standard Pathway and Competent Authority Pathway.

In general, those IMGs requiring an Interview are as follows:

Competent Authority Pathway

- **MANDATORY**
All GP positions (regardless of location)

The Board reserves the right to exempt an IMG from an Interview. The decision to exempt an IMG from an Interview will be made in rare cases by the Registration Sub-committee based on the risks associated with the position and the qualifications and experience of the applicant.

- **CASE-BY-CASE**
Applications for positions in rural or remote hospitals or health services will be considered on a case-by-case basis as outlined in the table below.

An Interview may be required by the Board taking into account the proposed position and using one or more of the following criteria:

- Recency of practice;
- The IMG is required to supervise other medical practitioners;
- The IMG is required to work predominantly independently (ie. the supervisor is absent or there is limited access to a supervisor);
- The IMG is required to be on call to work without supervision;
- The IMG is required to work after-hours without supervision;
- or
- The IMG will not be working within a training position accredited by the Postgraduate Medical Council (WA).

Case-by-case decisions regarding the requirement for an Interview will be determined by the Board's Registration Sub-committee.

- NOT REQUIRED BY MEDICAL BOARD
All metro and outer-metro hospital or health service positions

Standard Pathway

- MANDATORY
All GP positions (regardless of location); and
All rural and remote hospital or health service positions

The Board reserves the right to exempt an IMG from an Interview. The decision to exempt an IMG from an Interview will be made in rare cases by the Registration Sub-committee based on the risks associated with the position, the supervision available and the qualifications and experience of the applicant.

- 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.

An Interview may be required by the Board taking into account the proposed position and using one or more of the following criteria:

- Recency of practice;
- The IMG is required to supervise other medical practitioners;
- The IMG is required to work predominantly independently (ie. the supervisor is absent or there is limited access to a supervisor);
- The IMG is required to be on call to work without supervision;
- The IMG is required to work after-hours without supervision;
- or
- The IMG will not be working within a training position accredited by the Postgraduate Medical Council (WA).

Case-by-case decisions regarding the requirement for an Interview will be determined by the Board’s Registration Sub-committee.

Summary¹

HOSPITAL OR HEALTH SERVICE		
Pathway	Rural or Remote	Metro or Outer-Metro
Standard	✓	Case-by-case
Competent Authority	Case-by-case	Not required by the Board

GENERAL PRACTICE		
Pathway	Rural or Remote	Metro or Outer-Metro
Standard	✓	✓
Competent Authority	✓	✓

Upon review of a complete initial application, the Board will advise the recruiter/sponsor/employer of the need for the IMG to attend an Interview. If an Interview is required, the IMG will be required to complete a request for interview form.

The Interview is not designed to replace or make redundant any other recruitment processes that a recruiter/sponsor/employer would normally perform in relation to assessing the suitability of an IMG for a position.

5. THE INTERVIEW

The Interview for an IMG will be of approximately ¾ - 1 hour in duration. Interviews (face-to-face) will be regularly conducted at the Board’s premises. Interviews via video conference are possible in some circumstances.

The schedule of available interview times will be made available on the Board’s website.

The Board will charge the IMG an interview fee prior to the Interview. In addition, the IMG will need to pay the:

- Travelling expenses to attend the face-to-face Interview in Perth, Western Australia; or
- Video connection fees for attending an Interview via video conference from another location, subject to availability.

¹ The Board reserves the right to exempt an IMG from an Interview

Cancellation fees will apply if the IMG does not cancel giving at least five working days notice before the day of the planned Interview.

All Interviews will be recorded.

6. THE INTERVIEW PANEL

The Interview panel comprising three medical practitioners (two panellists and a panel chairperson) will be selected from a pool of trained panellists. A reserve panellist from the pool of trained panellists will be selected to be 'on call' to replace a panellist in case of illness or unforeseen circumstances at short notice. The Interview panel and the reserve will be selected based on the IMG's proposed position description.

Panellists will be required to declare a potential conflict of interest in relation to applicant IMGs or the practice to which the IMG is proposing to work.

The Interview panel will be required to interview at least two IMGs per panel session. Each panel session will be approx 3 – 3 ½ hrs duration. It is desirable that an Interview panel would sit for two panel sessions per day and interview four IMGs. This will allow approximately 1 ¾ hrs for preparation, conducting the Interview and decision-making per IMG.

Using the results from the Interview, the Interview panel will come to an individual and consensus decision ("the Assessment Outcome") on whether or not the IMG has the knowledge, skills and experience to practice safely and effectively in the position for which conditional registration is sought taking into account the:

- IMG's work experience outlined in a curriculum vitae;
- Position description of potential position;
- Risk associated with the position description (eg. working alone in a rural or remote area);
- Orientation arrangements available to the IMG; and
- Supervision arrangements available to the IMG.

The Chairperson of the panel will prepare the Reports of the Interview.

The panellists will be paid per session and the Chairperson of the panel will be paid an additional one hour per IMG for the preparation of the reports.

7. THE POOL OF PANELLISTS

The pool of panellists and potential panel chairpersons will be selected by the Board's Registration Sub-committee based on:

- Expression of interest;
- Availability;
- Qualifications, knowledge and experience;
- Previous experience as a medical practitioner in rural and remote areas; and

- Previous experience as a medical educator, trainer, assessor or interviewer.

All panellists and panel chairpersons will be trained so they are familiar with the interview tools and assessment processes.

8. INTERVIEW SCENARIOS

A 'bank' of clinical scenarios for use during interviews will be developed by medical practitioners at the request of the Board. All clinical scenarios will be approved by the Board's Registration Sub-committee prior to being incorporated into the 'bank' of scenarios. All scenarios are strictly confidential and must not be circulated.

The scenarios presented to the IMG during the Interview will be selected by the panellists who will be interviewing the IMG taking into consideration the proposed position description submitted with the IMG's application for conditional registration.

9. STANDARD FORMAT FOR ASSESSMENT

The assessment format will be standardised and the IMG will be assessed by the Interview panel 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; and
- Professionalism.

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

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

The Chairperson of the Interview panel will write the following reports to meet the deadlines of the Board's Registration Sub-committee meetings:

1. A detailed standardised Interview Report with a recommendation and a summary of the reasoning for the consideration of the Board's Registration Sub-committee; and
2. A draft Outcome Report for the consideration of the Board's Registration Sub-committee containing:
 - A statement as to whether or not the IMG is considered suitable for the position description;

- Brief reasons for the decision; and
- Recommendations, if appropriate.

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

The Outcome Report will be released to the IMG and recruiter/sponsor/employer after the Board's consideration of the IMG's application for conditional registration.

If the Board determines that an IMG is not suitable for the proposed position, this does not preclude the IMG from applying for another position for which an Interview will be required.

10. REVIEW

An IMG 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 to the Board. On receipt of the review form and the fee, the Board will arrange 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 Interview) selected from the pool of panellists. The Review will not be a fresh interview of the IMG.

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 IMG a reasonable opportunity to answer the questions put to him/her; or
- Was biased against the IMG.

The Reviewer will:

- Review all documentation available to the makers of the original Assessment Outcome;
- Review the available evidence, including the transcript or recording of the Interview;
- Discuss the review, as he/she sees fit, with any person who was involved in the original Interview(s); and
- Prepare a Review Report for the Board's consideration.

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

The IMG 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 Interview.

If the Review is upheld, the IMG will be entitled to undergo another Interview, either for the original position or a new position, at no charge for the Interview, subject to availability. The IMG will need to pay the:

- Travelling expenses to attend the face-to-face Interview in Perth, Western Australia; or
- Video connection fees for attending an Interview via video conference from another location, subject to availability.

11. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in twelve months time, and earlier if required.