

JOINT MEDICAL BOARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE POSITION STATEMENT

SUPERVISION OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS WITH CONDITIONAL REGISTRATION

APPROVED 24 OCTOBER 2007

Medical Board
of the ACT



1. Purpose

- To provide an agreed statement of nationally consistent principles of supervision for medical practitioners with conditional registration.
- To enable the principles to be adopted in the development of jurisdiction specific supervision guidelines, consistent with relevant state and territory legislation.

2. Background

Each Australian State and Territory Medical Board is responsible for ensuring that those medical practitioners registered under their relevant Act, can practice competently and safely. It is also each Board's responsibility to ensure compliance with state/territory legislation concerning specific or conditional registration.

State and Territory Medical Boards have a particular duty to ensure safe and competent work practices of those registered medical practitioners who are not eligible for general unconditional registration but who may be registered to practice in supervised positions within the Australian healthcare system.

3. What is Supervision?

Supervision is defined as the oversight of a medical practitioner's clinical practice to ensure that he/she is practicing safely, providing quality patient care and developing ongoing technical and professional competence.

Supervision is intended to ensure that a medical practitioner with conditional registration:-

- Is evaluated and monitored using a standardised format;
- Can demonstrate the he/she can practice safely and is clinically competent to do so;
- Can develop skills that will enable him/her to practice effectively within the Australian healthcare system.

Supervision requirements will be determined by the relevant State and Territory Medical Boards and will complement and be in addition to rigorous and consistent assessment processes at the point of registration.

Supervision should not be used as a substitute for appropriate assessment. Thorough and comprehensive assessments should be used to screen and evaluate medical practitioners for high risk clinical positions where close supervision is likely to be limited or difficult to implement. Given the practical issues associated with close

supervision, it is expected that practitioners assessed as requiring close supervision would not be appointed or registered to work in remote, high risk clinical positions.

Supervision will apply to registrants in the following circumstances: -

- International Medical Graduates (IMG's) with conditional registration, whether or not they have completed the Australian Medical Council examination;
- Registrants who have given undertakings that they will only practice under supervision;
- Registrants who as a consequence of disciplinary action, health investigation or poor performance, are required to practice under supervision;
- Registrants, who are interns prior to meeting requirements of general registration.

4. What methods of supervision should apply?

Various methods of supervision may be applied which should be determined and agreed between the supervisor and registrant and approved by the relevant State/Territory Medical Board. The methods or type of supervision used, may include, but are not limited to: -

- Observations of clinical practice – consultation and procedural;
- Case presentation and reviews;
- Audit of records;
- Telephone consultation;
- Face to face topic discussions.

The agreed program of supervision must ensure an adequate level of oversight and meet the supervision requirements as determined by the relevant State/Territory Medical Board.

5. What is expected of a supervisor?

Supervisors should be appropriately qualified and should have relevant experience to assume the role. Generally it is expected that supervisors will: -

- Consent to assuming the role of supervisor;
- Have full and unrestricted medical registration – i.e. with no imposed conditions;
- Not be the subject of adverse findings in the previous five years;
- Have experience in the relevant area of medicine and preferably hold a Fellowship of an appropriate College;
- Be appropriately indemnified to undertake supervision, including assessments and preparing reports.

In fulfilling his/her obligations, the Supervisor is expected to: -

- Implement and conduct the supervision as per the Supervision Program endorsed by the relevant State/Territory Board;
- Endorse that the registrant is practicing safely and not placing the public at risk;
- Immediately advise the relevant State/Territory Board about and identified issues related to clinical competence, health or non-compliance with the agreed Supervision Program or conditions on registration;
- Establish agreed processes or means to rectify any identified problems or issues with the registrants practice;
- Provide timely reports to the relevant State/Territory Board about the registrants performance, measured against the Board endorsed supervision program

6. What is expected of a registrant?

Having been granted Conditional Registration to practice by the State/Territory Board, it is expected that the registrant will:-

- Actively participate in and comply with the agreed Board endorsed supervision plan;
- Seek to immediately remediate any problems or issues identified through the course of the supervision;
- Practice in accordance with the conditions and/or undertakings imposed on his/her registration;
- Seek immediate assistance from, or alert the supervisor to, any problems or issues in the course of their medical practice.

7. What is expected of an employer?

An employer, whether a hospital or a private practice, is expected to commit to the following to ensure the registrant's safe practice:-

- Be informed about and comply with the conditions of the registrants medical registration and supervision program;
- Ensure that the requirements for supervision are clearly articulated within the registrant's position description;
- Ensure that and appropriately skilled and experienced supervisor is available to support the registrant;
- Arrange for a proper induction program on commencement of employment, for the registrant;
- Ensure that appropriate mechanisms and/or audit processes are in place to monitor the agreed and Board endorsed supervision program;
- Support and assist the registrant in working towards AMC Certificate for general registration , or Fellowship of a specialist college;
- Where a potential conflict exists between the role of employer and supervisor, every effort should be made to separate the roles and mitigate any conflicts of interest;
- The employer must arrange a suitable replacement supervisor, during any period of absence of the supervisor.

8. How should progress be reported?

Regular and timely reports at intervals agreed between the State/Territory Board must be provided to the Board by the supervisor. Reports should be discussed with and made available to the registrant and include proposed actions to remedy any problems or issues identified in the course of the supervision program. Reports should directly relate to and report against the agreed supervision plan, as endorsed by the State/Territory Board.