



# The Medical Council of Tasmania

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## **Nationally consistent assessment processes for International Medical Graduates ('IMG's)**

It has taken some time for all of the necessary arrangements (around the country) to be finalised, however, we are now in a position to advise all stakeholders that there are nationally consistent assessment processes for International Medical Graduates ('IMGs') will be implemented on 1 July 2008.

These nationally consistent assessment processes have been brought about at the instigation of the Council of Australian Governments ('COAG') as part of their reform initiatives.

### **What are the nationally consistent assessment processes?**

There are four pathways for IMGs outlined in the national process:

1. The Competent Authority pathway;
2. The Standard pathway;
3. The Specialist pathway; and
4. The AMC examination pathway.

Most literature about the new processes will refer to 3 pathways (those listed from 1 to 3 above). However, I think it's important to point out that there will be (for some time to come), a place for the 4th pathway. The current AMC examination pathway may, in the future, simply be used by those IMGs who are not employed in

clinical practice. To avoid confusion, I will not refer to the 4th pathway any further in this communication.

Pathways 1 and 2 relate to new pathways to the Australian Medical Council ('AMC') Certificate. Pathway 3 relates to the pathway to "recognition" as a Specialist by the relevant Specialist Medical College or Fellowship of an Australian and New Zealand Specialist Medical College (as applicable). From 1 July 2008, all IMGs who are not eligible for pathways 1 or 3, will be required to progress along pathway 2.

### **Pathway 1**

IMGs can assess their eligibility for pathway 1 through the AMC's website: [www.amc.org.au](http://www.amc.org.au) by scrolling down the home page and going to the Competent Authority self-assessment page. If they are eligible to apply under pathway 1, they can make an application directly to the AMC for "Advance Standing" towards the AMC Certificate. Information regarding this process is also available on the AMC website.

Current National policies such as English language proficiency ('English'), Primary Source Verification ('PSV') and Identification Validation ('ID') continue to apply in addition to the usual documentary requirements for conditional registration.

Tasmania has been given initial accreditation of a workplace-based performance assessment which is in essence a 12 month prospective "supervision program". This applies for pathway 1 IMGs only. It is important to note that this is a transitional provision only and will only be in place until a more formal workplace-based performance assessment is developed and accredited by the AMC.

For non-Specialist IMG General Practitioners ('GPs), who are eligible to apply under pathway 1 please see my specific comments below.

### **Pathway 2**

As of 1 July 2008, all IMGs applying under pathway 2 will have to **successfully complete** the AMC's Multiple Choice Questionnaire ('MCQ') screening examination, **prior to registration and therefore prior to employment.** On that basis, all IMGs applying for conditional registration in Tasmania (under pathway 2) will

either have passed the MCQ screening examination or be registered (with the AMC) to undertake the MCQ screening examination (at the time of making their application to the Medical Council). The IMG **"must"** present documentary evidence of having passed the MCQ screening examination at the time of their conditional registration interview with the Medical Council. There will be no exceptions to this Nationally consistent requirement.

The MCQ screening examination may be taken onshore or offshore and information can be found on the AMC's website: [www.amc.org.au](http://www.amc.org.au) regarding the dates and locations where the examination can be taken.

Current National policies such as English, PSV and ID continue to apply in addition to the usual documentary requirements for conditional registration.

Tasmania is yet to apply to the AMC Interim Accreditation Committee for initial accreditation for the pre-employment clinical assessment and the workplace-based performance assessment for this category of IMG. That will occur once the AMC has advised this jurisdiction the date it is able to receive an accreditation application for those processes.

For non-Specialist IMG GPs who are eligible to apply under pathway 2 please see my specific comments below.

### **Pathway 3**

To determine eligibility for pathway 3, IMGs can refer to the relevant Specialist Medical College and/or access relevant Specialist assessment information from the AMC's website: [www.amc.org.au](http://www.amc.org.au)

Current National policies such as English, PSV and ID continue to apply in addition to the usual documentary requirements for conditional registration.

Specialist assessment will be conducted by the relevant Specialist College through the AMC (as is currently the case).

### **What about IMG GPs?**

The current Medical Council policy of IMG GPs being required to successfully complete a pre-employment clinical assessment through General Practice Workforce Tasmania ('GPWT') will still apply. In addition, it is very important that employers seeking to employ IMG GPs for "after hours deputising services" are aware that these IMGs will now also be required to undergo the nationally consistent pre-employment clinical assessment (through GPWT). It is very important that employers of IMG GPs are aware that this applies to pathways 1 and 2 and that IMG GPs applying under pathway 2 will also be required to have successfully passed the MCQ exam before they are conditionally registered.

### **All pathways**

There will be a requirement for completion of nationally consistent Position Descriptions ('PDs') for all IMG positions. A template of these PDs will be provided to employers who have made themselves known to the Medical Council.

There is also a requirement to comply with nationally consistent Orientation and Supervision Programs. Relevant documentation will be provided to employers who have made themselves known to the Medical Council.

It is very important that all employers are aware of the requirements for the assessment of the IMGs they seek to employ.

### **What applies for currently registered IMGs?**

IMGs who are already registered will have no change to the "current" conditions on their registration at this time. However, it is important to note that "conditions" are reviewed at least annually and the Medical Council can review a practitioner's conditions at any time.

### **What applies for all IMG applications received by the Medical Council up to and including 7 March 2008?**

Current Medical Council policies apply for all IMG applications received up to and including the close of business on Friday, 7 March 2008. That is, if an employer is seeking to employ a temporary resident IMG who has not passed the MCQ exam, they will still be given "**two years**" (from their first registration date) in which to successfully pass the MCQ exam in order to be entitled to apply for

ongoing conditional registration. If an employer is intending to seek to employ a permanent resident IMG, they must have passed the MCQ exam to be entitled to conditional registration. The new nationally consistent assessment processes will seek to remove the current inequities that may apply between resident and non-resident IMGs.

The applicant must have a start work date no later (but including) 31 December 2008. If the applicant is not to start work until after that date, they will be required to have successfully passed the MCQ exam before they can be conditionally registered in order to commence work.

**What applies from 10 March 2008 up to and including the close of business on 30 June 2008?**

For all applications received from 10 March 2008 up to and including the close of business on 30 June 2008, all IMGs who have not yet passed the MCQ exam, will have only "**one year**" (from their first registration date) to successfully pass that exam in order to be entitled to apply for ongoing conditional registration.

Those IMGs making an application before the close of business on 30 June 2008 "**must**" have a start work no later (but including) 31 December 2008. If the applicant is not to start work until after that date, they will be required to have successfully passed the MCQ exam before they can be conditionally registered in order to commence work.

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Registrar/Chief Executive Officer  
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**8 April 2008**