

POLICY DOCUMENT

MEDICAL STUDENT REGISTRATION POLICY

Background

The Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) is the peak representative body for medical students in Australia.

In March 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) signed an intergovernmental agreement to create a single national scheme for the registration and accreditation of health practitioners (National Scheme). The commencement date for the National Scheme was 1st July 2010. In addition to providing for the protection of the public, another objective of the National Scheme is to facilitate workforce mobility across Australia.

As part of the new system, all Australian medical students will be registered with a new national registration body, the Medical Board of Australia (MBA). The term "Medical Student" pertains to all those enrolled in an approved program of study that qualifies them for general registration in the medical profession at the completion of their program.

Medical students will not need to make an application for registration. After they have enrolled in the program of study, their education provider (university) is required to provide the relevant National Board with a list of enrolled students. On receiving this list, the National Board will register the students. Students who are not already registered with a State or Territory Board will not be registered in the National Scheme until March 2011. A student's registration ends when they have completed their program of study, or when the student ceases to be enrolled in the program of study.

The Board's power in relation to the investigation and remediation of registered students is limited to students who:

1. May be suffering from an impairment as defined in the Act;
2. Have been charged with or found guilty of an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more, or;
3. Have breached a condition of their registration.

Position Statement

AMSA welcomes the implementation of national registration for medical students, recognising the potential value of registration in maintaining high standards of medical practice. However, AMSA believes that several conditions are vital to ensuring the registration process remains fair and equitable to medical students.

Policy

Australian Medical Students' Association – Medical Student Registration Policy

1. AMSA believes that:
 - 1.1. the purpose of medical registration should be as follows:
 - 1.1.1. to facilitate early detection of impairments that would compromise patient welfare;
 - 1.1.2. to encourage impaired students to seek treatment and ongoing support, where appropriate, thereby increasing the likelihood of better outcomes for the student concerned;
 - 1.1.3. to facilitate and encourage alternative arrangements within medical schools that allow disabled or impaired students to complete their medical degree;
 - 1.1.4. to minimise the risk to patients, thereby protecting the public;
 - 1.1.5. to develop an impartial mechanism of notification and investigation of complaints against students that is independent of the university; and
 - 1.1.6. to allow recognition of medical students by any public hospital, teaching and non-teaching.
 - 1.2. wherever possible, complaints about a medical student should only be made to the Board when all other appropriate avenues have been exhausted.
 - 1.3. students should be exempt from reporting under mandatory reporting standards, because they are not qualified to ascertain whether a reportable incident has occurred, and an obligation to report would detract from peer and teacher relationships.
2. AMSA calls upon the Federal Government and its regulatory bodies (MBA and Australian

Health Practitioners Regulation Act) to ensure:

- 2.1. there are no cost to the medical student associated with registration or for any investigation, counselling or appeal that arises as a result of registration;
- 2.2. professional indemnity insurance is not a condition of registration as a medical student;
- 2.3. that all medical students are informed of their rights and responsibilities provided for by the Act [1], and of any changes to their rights and responsibilities as a result of any amendment to the Act;
- 2.4. that all measures are taken to ensure the absolute confidentiality of matters relating to medical student registration. In particular, the Board must not publish the personal data of medical students in that part of the register open to the public, nor in publications on the Board's website or annual reports;
- 2.5. only the following information about students is required to be provided to the Board for the purposes of registration: name, address, university and year level. Specifically, students should not have to provide health status or medical reports as a condition of registration;
- 2.6. that student welfare is a primary consideration in the notification of any student to the MBA as well as any subsequent processes.
- 2.7. there is an appropriate appeals process by which a student can appeal a decision of the Board. The appeals process should have no cost to the student associated with it; and
- 2.8. appropriate support to students wishing to make an appeal, including independent legal support.

Policy adopted March 2012

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