



Policy on doctors returning to medical practice in New Zealand after an absence of three or more years working overseas

Policy Statement

The Registrar may grant an annual practising certificate (APC) to those applicants who have been practising medicine outside New Zealand for three or more years, provided that they meet certain criteria. These criteria include that the applicant has previously been registered in New Zealand, has worked in medical practice in a comparable health environment, has been participating in CPD, provided relevant CGSs, has entered into a branch advisory body recertification programme, a collegial relationship, or supervision arrangement, has obtained satisfactory reference reports from their time outside of New Zealand, and has an offer of employment.

Rationale

- 1 Often New Zealand doctors travel and work overseas for a number of reasons. If these doctors have worked in a comparable environment, and met other conditions, their transition back into medical practice in New Zealand should be made as smooth as possible.
 - 2 Under clause 17 of the Third Schedule to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, Council has delegated to the Registrar the power to grant APC's to doctors who have been practising medicine overseas and have met the conditions detailed below.
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Procedures

- 3 A doctor who has been working as a medical practitioner outside of New Zealand for more than three years will be required to advise Council of the nature of their work while away from New Zealand.
 - 4 If the applicant can show Council that they have met the following criteria whilst overseas, the Registrar may grant them an APC to practice in New Zealand. The applicant must show that they:
 - have held registration in New Zealand; and
 - have worked in medical practice in a comparable health environment and in a similar position; and
 - have no gaps in their CV longer than three months; and
 - have been participating in CPD; and
 - provided a Certificate of Good Standing issued within previous three months from each Regulatory Authority practised under since left New Zealand, see note 5; and
 - have entered, or will soon be entering into a branch
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advisory body recertification programme, a collegial relationship, or a supervision agreement; and

- have obtained three satisfactory references from senior medical colleagues who the doctor has been working with overseas; and
- have received an offer of employment; and
- if necessary provide a suitable re-entry and re-skilling plan.

- 5 If you have worked outside New Zealand since you were last issued a practising certificate you must request a certificate of good standing (CGS) for each country or board you were registered or licensed with during this time. The CGS must be sent direct to Council from that country or board and must be less than three months old.

If you were working overseas in a voluntary capacity for no longer than three months, and you were lawfully not registered for that period, a letter of good standing from the person you reported to in the organisation or hospital you worked in is acceptable in lieu of a CGS. This will also apply when you were registered (whilst doing voluntary work for no longer than three months), but the overseas authority is unable to issue a CGS in a timely way.

- 6 If the applicant has not worked in a comparable health system but has met the rest of the criteria in 4 above then Council provides delegation to the Registrar to propose the following conditions on the doctor's scope of practice:
- The doctor must work under the supervision of a senior colleague registered within the vocational scope of practice they will be working in upon return;
 - The doctor may only work in positions approved by the Council's Registrar; and
 - These conditions may be removed by the Registrar upon receipt of satisfactory reports after one, three, and six months.

Council further provides delegation to the Registrar to issue the doctor's APC if the doctor agrees to the above conditions.

- 7 If the applicant does not fulfil the criteria in 4 and 5 above then the Registrar must promptly submit the application for an APC to Council, to determine whether to grant the APC notwithstanding policy, or to grant an APC with conditions, or decline to issue an APC. This includes application for those doctors who have not been working in a comparable health system whilst overseas.
- 8 When considering these applications for an APC, the Registrar and Council must always be aware of the principal purpose of the HPCAA 2003, to ensure the health and safety of members of the public by providing mechanisms to ensure that health practitioners are competent and fit to practise medicine.
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Notes

- 9 This policy is only for doctors who have been working as a medical practitioner in their three years or more away from New Zealand. Please see Council's "*Policy on doctors returning to medical practice after an absence from practice for three or more years*" where the practitioner has not been/doing little medical practice.

Approved by Council:

April 2005

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February 2009

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March 2011