



**Te Kaunihera
Rata o
Aotearoa**

Medical
Council of
New Zealand

Text-only copy of online survey – Consultation on regulation of PAs

FIRST PAGE OF SURVEY

Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa | Medical Council of New Zealand (the Council) is responsible for regulating physician associates/physician assistants (PAs).

We have worked with stakeholders to develop a proposed regulatory framework, and we would like your feedback.

There are five sections:

1. What PAs can do – Scopes of practice
2. Qualifications PAs need for registration – Prescribed qualifications, registration pathways, and changing scope of practice
3. How PAs will be supervised – The supervision framework
4. Cultural safety – Ensuring PAs practise in a culturally safe way
5. Deciding the right name for PAs – The title for PA scopes of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The titles 'physician associate' and 'physician assistant' are both used internationally to describe the same profession. To avoid confusion, we will use the abbreviation of 'PA' throughout this survey, except in the section about deciding the right name. The title that is ultimately decided on will be applied to the regulatory framework, after consultation and Council's consideration of the feedback.

In the meantime, the Council is also working on:

- recertification (ongoing professional development) requirements for PAs
- developing accreditation standards for training programmes that deliver PA education
- standards of clinical competence, cultural competence and ethical conduct for PAs
- establishing fees for applications for registration and for practising certificates for PAs.

Consultation on these matters will take place at a later date.

ABOUT YOU

The first few questions below are about you and will help us analyse the feedback we get.

[questions with an asterisk are mandatory]

Q1. Please provide your name (optional).

Q2. If you are comfortable with us contacting you about your response if we need to, please provide your email address (optional).

Q3.* What is your role or who do you represent?

- ☐ Consumer or patient
- ☐ Physician associate/assistant
- ☐ Medical doctor
- ☐ Professional organisation (eg. college, union)
- ☐ Regulatory authority
- ☐ Government agency
- ☐ Other health professional
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q4.* Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

No

Yes – what is the organisation's name?

Q5.* Please tell us where you are located.

Aotearoa New Zealand

Overseas

Q6.* We may publish a summary of responses so people can see what feedback we received. We won't publish individual names, but we may publish the names of organisations. Do you consent to your responses being made publicly available?

Yes – My responses can be published (I understand my name will not be published but if I am representing an organisation, its name will be published).

No – I don't want any of my responses to be published.

SECTION 1

This section is about what PAs can do - their scopes of practice

The Council is proposing two scopes of practice:

- The Provisional PA scope of practice – the PA must work in a Council-approved position under Council-approved supervision with a Council-approved supervision plan.
- The General PA scope of practice – the PA works under employer-approved supervision by a doctor registered in a vocational scope of practice that is relevant to the practice setting and the PA's role.

PAs seeking to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand will first be registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice for a set period, and must meet a range of requirements, before being eligible for registration in the General PA scope of practice.

We propose that PAs will be able to:

- take histories and examine patients
- order and interpret some tests
- contribute to diagnosis and treatment
- educate patients
- undertake specified minor surgical procedures.

All PAs – regardless of which scope of practice they are registered in – must work under the supervision of a doctor. We ask specific questions about supervision later in this survey.

The Council's [website](#) has these full details about the proposed [scopes of practice](#) and the proposed [supervision requirements](#).

Q7. The proposed scopes of practice outline at a high level what PAs can do. Employer credentialling will define the specific clinical responsibilities within the scope of practice, based on the PA's qualifications, training and experience, and the facilities and support available at that workplace. Are the proposed scopes of practice for PAs set appropriately?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

Provisional PA scope of practice

Q8. Is the proposed Provisional PA scope of practice clearly defined?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us what needs to be made clearer)

Q9. Are the clinical responsibilities that PAs are able to undertake as outlined in the proposed Provisional PA scope of practice (and to be further defined through credentialling) appropriate?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q10. Is the proposed time limit (up to 36 months) appropriate for a PA registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice to meet requirements for the General PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q11. Do you have any other comments about the proposed Provisional PA scope of practice?

No / Yes (please tell us here)

General PA scope of practice

- Q12. Is the proposed General PA scope of practice clearly defined?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us what needs to be made clearer)

- Q13. Are the clinical responsibilities that PAs are able to undertake as outlined in the proposed General PA scope of practice (and to be further defined through credentialling) appropriate?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q14. Do you have any other comments about the proposed General PA scope of practice?

No / Yes (if yes, please tell us here)

SECTION 2

This section is about proposed qualifications, registration pathways, and changing scope of practice

The Council is proposing that all PAs will need to first register in the Provisional PA scope of practice.

To apply for registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice, the Council proposes that PAs with qualifications from the United Kingdom or the United States of America must have all of the following:

1. A university qualification recognised by the regulator in the United Kingdom or the United States of America.
2. A pass in the national PA examination in one of these countries.
3. At least three years of recent work as a PA in one of these countries.
4. A pass in a knowledge-based cultural safety programme approved by the Council (approved programme(s) yet to be decided).

This group of PAs is divided into two separate (but essentially identical) pathways, with the only difference being the country where the PA trained: pathway 1 is for United Kingdom qualification-holders and pathway 2 is for those holding a United States qualification.

A separate entry pathway is proposed for PAs who have been working in Aotearoa New Zealand for two years or more before registration commences. These PAs must hold the same qualifications as described in pathways 1 and 2, but will be eligible for a reduced period in the Provisional scope of practice, recognising their local experience.

At a later time, we may recognise qualifications of PAs from other countries.

The Council's [website](#) has these full details about proposed [qualifications and registration pathways](#).

Registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice

- Q15. Do you agree that the qualifications, training and experience for proposed pathways 1 and 2 (for UK and USA trained PAs) are appropriate for registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q16. Do you agree that the qualifications, training and experience for proposed pathway 3 (for PAs who have been practising in Aotearoa New Zealand for more than two years when registration opens) are appropriate for registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q17. Do you agree with the proposed requirement that all applicants seeking registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice must complete a Council-approved knowledge-based cultural safety programme within 12 months prior to applying?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

Q18. Do you have any other feedback on the proposed pathways for registration in the Provisional PA scope of practice?

No / Yes (if yes, please tell us here)

Registration in the General PA scope of practice

To be eligible for registration in the General PA scope of practice, an applicant must complete a minimum period of practice under Council-approved supervision in the Provisional PA scope of practice. They must also have current advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) certification or an alternative approved by the Council, and meet additional requirements.

PAs holding UK or USA qualifications (pathways 1 and 2) need to work under Council-approved supervision for at least 12 months and meet the same requirements to be eligible for registration in the General PA scope of practice.

PAs who registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice under pathway 3 need to work under Council-approved supervision for at least 6 months and meet requirements to be eligible to apply for registration in the General PA scope of practice. This pathway will only be available for a transitional period.

The key difference is the duration of time spent as registered in a Provisional scope of practice, and recognises PAs who have been practising in New Zealand for more than two years.

Q19. Do you agree that the qualifications, training and experience for proposed pathways 1 and 2 (for UK and USA trained PAs) are appropriate for registration in the General PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

Q20. Do you agree that the qualifications, training and experience for proposed pathway 3 (for PAs who have been practising in Aotearoa New Zealand for more than two years when registration opens) are appropriate for registration in the General PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

Q21. Do you agree that PAs registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice should be required to hold current Council-approved Advanced Cardiac Life Support (or similar) certification to be eligible to apply for registration in the General PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q22. Do you agree with the other requirements for all PAs registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice to apply for registration in the General PA scope of practice? that is:
- a period of Council-approved supervision in a Council-approved workplace
 - a minimum period of satisfactory supervised practice
 - a recommendation from the supervisor of the PA for registration in the General PA scope of practice.

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q23. Do you agree with the proposal that PAs registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice through pathways 1 and 2 (for UK and USA trained PAs) must have at least 12 months of supervision before applying for registration in the General PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q24. Do you agree with the proposal that PAs registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice through pathway 3 (i.e. PAs with experience in Aotearoa New Zealand) must have at least six months of supervision as a Provisional PA before applying for registration in the General PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

- Q25. Do you have any other feedback on the proposed pathways for registration in the General PA scope of practice?

No / Yes (if yes, please tell us here)

SECTION 3

This section is about how PAs will be supervised

PAs will always be required to work under the supervision of a registered medical doctor. The Council has developed a proposed supervision framework explaining the roles and responsibilities of PAs, their supervisors and their employers.

There are two parts to the proposed supervision framework:

1. For PAs registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice: The Council will approve the appointment of supervisors, workplace and supervision plan, with regular monitoring.
2. For PAs registered in the General PA scope of practice: The PA's employer will have greater responsibility for ensuring ongoing supervision requirements are met.

The Council's [website](#) has these full details about the proposed [supervision requirements](#).

Q26. Do you agree with the proposed supervision requirements for PAs registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

Q27. Do you agree with the proposed supervision requirements for PAs registered in the General PA scope of practice?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

Q28. Are the Council's expectations of PAs, supervisors and employers clear?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

SECTION 4

This section is about cultural safety

To help ensure that PAs practise in a culturally safe way, the Council is proposing the following requirements for all PAs:

- **Before registration:** Completion of a knowledge-based programme in cultural safety for health practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **While practising:** Work in collaboration with patients, their whānau, communities, and the multi-disciplinary healthcare team to deliver equitable person/whānau-centred healthcare, and practise in a culturally safe way.
- **As part of supervision:** For PAs registered in the Provisional PA scope of practice, their workplace orientation must include cultural competency, cultural safety training and hauora Māori education. For PAs registered in the General PA scope of practice, there is a requirement that supervisors support ongoing development of cultural capability.

The Council's [website](#) has these full details about the proposed [cultural safety requirements](#).

Q29. Do you support the multi-staged approach the Council is proposing to ensure that all PAs are able to practise in a culturally safe way?

Yes / No (if no, please tell us why)

SECTION 5

This section is about the title for scopes of practice

The Council wants to consider the title assigned to the scopes of practice and under which PAs will practise in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is important that the name describes what PAs do.

We are considering two options:

- physician associate **or**
- physician assistant.

The title ultimately decided on will guide future decision-making on an appropriate te reo Māori title.

The Council's [website](#) has these full details about [deciding the right title](#).

Q30. Which title do you think is better suited for the PA scopes of practice in the Aotearoa New Zealand context?

- physician associate
- physician assistant.

Q31.* Please tell us why you chose that answer.

LAST PAGE OF SURVEY

Q32. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the regulation of PAs?

Consultation closes at midday on 16 February 2026. Following this, we will carefully consider all feedback to inform final decisions that ensure we are regulating PAs in the right way.

The Council plans to start regulating PAs in late 2026.

Thank you for giving us your feedback.

We appreciate the time you have taken to tell us your views.