



**Te Kaunihera Rata
o Aotearoa**

Medical Council
of New Zealand

Consultation: Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certification

Executive summary

Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa | the Medical Council of New Zealand (the Council) is considering making changes to the advanced life support (ACLS) requirement for interns in the Provisional General scope of practice (postgraduate year 1, or PGY1) interns.

Currently, PGY1 interns must hold a current ACLS certification at the New Zealand Resuscitation Council (NZRC) CORE¹ Advanced level, less than 12 months old, to progress to PGY2 and obtain General scope registration.

In response to feedback we have received from prevocational training providers (the districts of Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand), we are revisiting this requirement and have developed three options for consultation. We welcome your feedback to inform our decision-making.

We are providing the following proposal and three options for your feedback:

1. We propose to extend our recognition of the validity of the certificates to at least 18 months.
2. In addition, we invite your feedback on the following three alternate options:
 1. *Council's preferred option*
Option 1: That Council only accepts NZRC CORE Advanced certification (with no alternatives accepted) undertaken during the PGY1 year.
 2. **Option 2:** That Council accepts alternatives to NZRC CORE Advanced certification undertaken during the PGY1 year.
 3. **Option 3:** That Council accepts NZRC CORE Advanced certification completed in the final year of medical school, or certification undertaken during the PGY1 year.

We have also published [explanatory notes and a rationale](#) for these options.

Any changes would take effect for interns commencing practice from **1 January 2026**.

¹ CORE stands for Certification of Resuscitation and Emergency Care. The New Zealand Resuscitation Council (NZRC) states that CORE Advanced is designed for health care responders who are expected to manage resuscitation events until advanced rescuers arrive or for those who respond as members of the advanced care response team.

Introduction

The Council is the regulator of doctors in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our primary purpose is to protect the public by ensuring that doctors are competent and fit to practise. One of our key regulatory functions under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 is the registration of doctors.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, prevocational training, also referred to as an 'internship', extends over two years after graduating from medical school, covering PGY1 and PGY2. It is a compulsory training programme for all graduates from New Zealand and Australian-accredited medical schools, as well as for doctors who are registered via our Examinations pathway. Doctors registered via the Examinations pathway will have successfully completed the New Zealand Registration Examination (NZREX Clinical) or have passed both Part 1 and Part 2 of the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test, administered by the General Medical Council in the United Kingdom.

Interns in PGY1 are registered in the Provisional General scope of practice. To be eligible for registration within the General scope of practice at the end of PGY1, interns must:

- satisfactorily complete four accredited clinical attachments; and
- substantively attain the learning outcomes outlined in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework for Prevocational Medical Training; and
- **hold advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) certification at the standard of New Zealand Resuscitation Council CORE Advanced less than 12 months old;** and
- be recommended for registration in the General scope of practice by a Council-approved advisory panel.

Options in full

Option 1 would change the ACLS requirement by:

- a. ceasing to accept alternatives to NZRC CORE Advanced certification
- b. extending our recognition of ACLS certification validity from 12 to 18 months
- c. only accepting certificates issued by the New Zealand Resuscitation Council (NZRC) at the level of CORE Advanced
- d. requiring NZRC CORE Advanced certification completion while registered and practising in the Provisional General scope of practice, as a PGY1 intern.

This is Council's preferred option; however we welcome feedback on the following alternate options below.

Option 2 would change the ACLS requirement by:

- a. extending our recognition of ACLS certification validity from 12 to 18 months
- b. accepting certificates issued by the NZRC at the level of CORE Advanced as well as alternative courses at the standard of NZRC CORE Advanced, where those alternative courses are at the standard of NZRC CORE Advanced
- c. requiring NZRC CORE Advanced certification completion while registered and practising in the Provisional General scope of practice, as a PGY1 intern.

As part of this option, we are also seeking feedback on a mechanism to assess whether alternative ACLS courses are at the standard of NZRC CORE Advanced.

Option 3 would change the ACLS requirement by:

- a) accepting NZRC CORE Advanced certification completed either:
 - i. while registered and practising in the Provisional General scope of practice, with a validity period of 18 months; or
 - ii. in the final year of study in an Aotearoa New Zealand medical school medical degree programme (that is, as a trainee intern) where the doctor commenced medical practice immediately following graduation.

Implementation and transitional period

We are proposing to change the requirement in the Gazette notice regarding ACLS certification for PGY1 interns to read 'meet the Council's requirements for advanced cardiac life support (ACLS)' and incorporate the ACLS requirement for PGY1 interns in a policy document.

To minimise any adverse effects on current interns and give accredited prevocational medical training providers time to prepare for any changes, we propose that any new policy would apply to interns first commencing practice from **1 January 2026**.

Consultation questions

To inform the Council's decision-making, we are interested in your feedback on the following questions.

Overall preferred option

1. Which is your preferred option? Please provide your rationale, including explaining the advantages of your preferred option, in comparison to the other options. Please also describe any risks you see to the options, including how they could be mitigated.

Option 2 – continuing to accept alternative ACLS certification

2. What is your suggestion for a mechanism to assess whether alternative ACLS courses are at the standard of CORE Advanced?

Questions for prevocational training providers only

3. What alternative ACLS course(s) does your organisation currently provide?
4. What does the alternative ACLS course your organisation provides consist of? Please consider the following when answering – curriculum content, qualifications of those teaching the course, how the training is delivered, whether there is an assessment and whether this is theoretical, practical, or both.

Option 3 – accepting NZRC CORE Advanced completed by final year medical students

Questions for medical schools only

5. Does your medical school offer NZRC CORE Advanced?
6. If your medical school does not offer NZRC CORE Advanced, what alternative ACLS course(s) does your medical school currently provide?
7. What does the alternative ACLS course your medical school provides consist of? Please consider the following when answering – curriculum content, qualifications of those teaching the course, how the training is delivered, whether there is an assessment and whether this is theoretical, practical, or both.

Other questions

8. Do you agree with incorporating the ACLS requirement for PGY1 interns in a policy document and changing the requirement in the Gazette notice to refer to this policy document?
9. Is the proposed timeframe of 1 January 2026 to implement the new policy appropriate? Please provide your rationale. If you do not consider this timeframe appropriate, please suggest an alternative timeframe.

Submissions

We invite you to provide feedback. This will be considered carefully before we make any decisions. Please provide written submissions by completing the [survey questions online](#). Alternatively, you can email your submission to education@mcnz.org.nz. The consultation closes on **Monday, 17 February 2025**.

Any decision made as a result of this consultation will be shared with stakeholders and all consultation respondents.

Publication of submissions

We publish submissions at our discretion on our website. Published submissions will include the names of the individuals and/or the organisations that made the submission unless confidentiality is requested.

Please advise us if you do not want all or part of your submission published.

We will not place on our website, or make available to the public, submissions that contain offensive or defamatory comments or which are outside the scope of the subject of the consultation.