Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa | Medical Council of New Zealand

Policy on registration within the Physician Associate Provisional scope of practice and the Physician Associate General scope of practice

Policy Statement	This policy must be read with reference to the Medical Council of New Zealand's (Council) policy on *Registration in New Zealand*. Council has several scopes of practice, each designed to fit a specific aspect of medical practice. Physician associates wishing to practice in New Zealand must first register with Council in a relevant scope of practice. This policy applies to physician associates wishing to practice in New Zealand in the Physician Associate Provisional and Physician Associate General scopes of practice.
Rationale	Council is responsible for protecting the health and safety of the public by providing mechanisms to ensure that physician associates are competent and fit to practise in New Zealand (HPCAA, section 3). Specifically, Council can only register a physician associate who meets the following three requirements: a. has a prescribed qualification; **and** b. is fit for registration; **and** c. is competent to practise in the scope of practice for which they have applied. Council is responsible for formally 'prescribing' the specific qualifications that physician associates must possess to be eligible for registration in each scope of practice. A prescribed qualification is a combination of overseas qualifications, training and experience. It is important Council provides options (in the form of different prescribed qualifications) for a physician associate to obtain registration in the Physician Associate Provisional General scope of practice and progress to registration in the Physician Associate General scope of practice. These 'pathways' reflect the different combinations of qualifications, training and experience that physician associates obtain internationally.

Prescribed Qualifications – Physician Associate Provisional Scope of Practice

To apply for registration in the Physician Associate Provisional scope, a physician associate must satisfy all the requirements within one of the following pathway options:

Pathway 1 **United Kingdom qualifications-based**

- Hold a qualification approved by the General Medical Council (GMC) for registration as a physician associate/assistant; and have successfully completed the Physician Associate Registration Assessment (PARA) or the Physician Associate National Examination (PANE); and
- hold current full registration as a physician associate/assistant with the GMC, or with a state, provincial or territorial regulatory/licensing authority for physician associates/assistants in the United States of America or Canada; and
- have practised clinically for at least 36 months' (working at 0.5 full-time equivalent or more) during the 5 years immediately prior to application. This work must have been undertaken in the UK, the United States of America or Canada, practising in the same or a similar area of clinical practice to the proposed position in New Zealand; and
- provide evidence of satisfactory completion – within 12 months prior to applying for registration – of a Council-approved induction programme that orientates physician associates to the New Zealand health environment.

Pathway 2 **United States of America qualifications-based**

- Hold a qualification accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) for state licensure as a physician associate/assistant in the United States of America and have successfully completed the Physician Assistants National Certification Examination (PANCE) administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA); and maintained current certification with the NCCP; and
- hold current full registration as a physician associate/assistant with the GMC, or with a state, provincial or territorial regulatory/licensing authority for physician associates/assistants in the United States of America or Canada; and
- have practised clinically for at least 36 months' (working at 0.5 full-time equivalent or more) during the 5 years immediately prior to application. This work must have been undertaken in the UK, the United States of America or Canada, practising in the same or a similar area of clinical practice to the proposed position in New Zealand; and
- provide evidence of satisfactory completion – within 12 months prior to applying for registration – of a Council-approved induction programme that orientates physician associates to the New Zealand health environment.

Pathway 3 **Canada qualifications-based**

- Hold a physician assistant qualification accredited by Accreditation Canada and recognised by the Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada (PACCC) and have successfully completed the Physician Assistant Entry to Practice Certification Examination administered by the PACCC, and maintained current certification with the PACCC; and
- hold current full registration as a physician associate/assistant with the GMC, or with a state, provincial or territorial regulatory/licensing authority for physician associates/assistants in the United States of America or Canada; and

- have practised clinically for at least 36 months' (working at 0.5 full-time equivalent or more) during the 5 years immediately prior to application. This work must have been undertaken in the UK, the United States of America or Canada, practising in the same or a similar area of clinical practice to the proposed position in New Zealand; and
- provide evidence of satisfactory completion – within 12 months prior to applying for registration – of a Council-approved induction programme that orientates physician associates to the New Zealand health environment.

Pathway 4 **New Zealand experiential**

- Hold a qualification approved by the General Medical Council for registration as a physician associate/assistant; and have successfully completed the Physician Associate Registration Assessment (PARA) or the Physician Associate National Examination (PANE); and hold current full registration as a physician associate/assistant with the General Medical Council; or
- hold a qualification accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) for state licensure as a physician associate/physician assistant in the United States of America; and have successfully completed the Physician Assistants National Certification Examination (PANCE) administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA); and maintained current certification with the NCCPA; or
- hold a physician assistant qualification accredited by Accreditation Canada and recognised by the Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada (PACCC) and have successfully completed the Physician Assistant Entry to Practice Certification Examination administered by the PACCC, and maintained current certification with the PACCC

and

- have practised clinically for at least 36 months (working at 0.5 full-time equivalent or more) during the last 5 years, in New Zealand, United Kingdom, the United States of America or Canada, including at least 24 months' practice in New Zealand immediately prior to application. This work must have been undertaken in the same or a similar area of clinical practice to the proposed position in New Zealand; and
- provide evidence of satisfactory completion – within 12 months prior to applying for registration – of a Council-approved induction programme that orientates physician associates to the New Zealand health environment.

To progress to registration within the Physician Associate General scope of practice, a physician associate must satisfy the following requirements:

Pathway 1: **United Kingdom qualifications-based**

- Hold Physician Associate Provisional registration in New Zealand;

And

- Complete the following requirements:
  - 12 months (full-time equivalent) working in the physician associate provisional scope of practice; and

- receive satisfactory supervision reports for the nine months of practice completed immediately prior to applying for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice; and
- achieve advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) certification less than 12 months old at the level of New Zealand Resuscitation Council
  - CORE Advanced for doctors working in hospital-based practice; or
  - CORE Immediate for doctors working in general practice or non-clinical based practice; and
- been recommended for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice by the approved supervisor who has been the applicant's supervisor for at least 3 months immediately prior to the application.

Pathway 2: United States of America qualifications-based

- Hold Physician Associate Provisional registration in New Zealand;

And

- Complete the following requirements:
  - 12 months (full-time equivalent) working in the physician associate provisional scope of practice; and
  - receive satisfactory supervision reports for the nine months of practice completed immediately prior to applying for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice; and
  - achieve advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) certification less than 12 months old at the level of New Zealand Resuscitation Council
    - CORE Advanced for doctors working in hospital-based practice; or
    - CORE Immediate for doctors working in general practice or non-clinical based practice; and
  - been recommended for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice by the approved supervisor who has been the applicant's supervisor for at least 3 months immediately prior to the application.

Pathway 3: Canada qualifications-based

- Hold Physician Associate Provisional registration in New Zealand;

And

- Complete the following requirements:
  - 12 months (full-time equivalent) working in the physician associate provisional scope of practice; and
  - receive satisfactory supervision reports for the nine months of practice completed immediately prior to applying for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice; and
  - achieve advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) certification less than 12 months old at the level of New Zealand Resuscitation Council
    - CORE Advanced for doctors working in hospital-based practice; or
    - CORE Immediate for doctors working in general practice or non-clinical based practice; and
  - been recommended for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice by the approved supervisor who has been the applicant's supervisor for at least 3 months immediately prior to the application.

Pathway 4: New Zealand experiential

- Hold Physician Associate Provisional in New Zealand;

And

- Complete the following requirements:
  - 6 months (full-time equivalent) working in the physician associate provisional scope of practice; and
  - receive satisfactory supervision reports for the six months of practice completed immediately prior to applying for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice; and
  - achieve advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) certification less than 12 months old at the level of New Zealand Resuscitation Council
    - CORE Advanced for doctors working in hospital-based practice; or
    - CORE Immediate for doctors working in general practice or non-clinical based practice; and
  - been recommended for registration in the physician associate general scope of practice by the approved supervisor who has been the applicant's supervisor for at least 3 months immediately prior to the application.

Version management

Date	Details
November 2026	Approved by Council
November 2031	Scheduled for review