

This is the second edition of the Osteopathy Board of Australia newsletter. An email version has been sent to all osteopaths who have supplied AHPRA with an email address. Practitioners who have not yet given an email address will receive this edition in hard copy. In future,

the Board will reduce the number of hard copy mail outs. To keep in touch with the latest Board news, please provide your email address at the Update Contact Details tab on the home page of [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) or [www.osteopathyboard.gov.au](http://www.osteopathyboard.gov.au).

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## Recency of Practice – Will you meet the Board's standards?

Osteopaths will soon need to show that they meet the Board's recency of practice registration standard. The standard aims to make sure all registered osteopaths have the skills and recent experience to provide safe care. From 1 July 2012, osteopaths must be able to show they have accrued **at least 400 hours of osteopathic practice in a clinical domain over the previous three years**. Teaching, research or clinical supervision of students in an academic setting are not counted as clinical practice hours.

This requirement does not apply to students, practitioners with non-practising registration, or practitioners who have graduated within six months of applying to register. There are pro-rata requirements for recent graduates with less than three years experience.

All practitioners need to make sure they are familiar with – and meet – the standard which is published on the website under [Registration Standards](#).

### What happens if an osteopath doesn't meet the standards?

Registered osteopaths will be required to sign a declaration that confirms they are complying with this standard when renewing registration in November from

2012 onwards. If it is found that an applicant does not meet the recency of practice standard, their registration may not be renewed or they may be registered in a different category of registration, for example, non-practising.

All osteopaths may be subject to a random audit in regard to recency and need to keep evidence of recency. If an osteopath does not meet the recency standard, the Board may require them to undertake an assessment of their competency to practise, practise under supervision or undertake other activities.

## Panel List – Expressions of Interest

Interested in helping the Board protect the public by being on a hearing panel?

The Board and AHPRA are looking for interested osteopaths and community members who are keen to be included on a list of people approved to sit on future health or performance and professional standards panels. The Board can refer registered osteopaths to a panel hearing if there are concerns about the practitioner's conduct, performance or health. More information about the role of panel members and the application process is published on the Board's website under the [News](#) tab. Applications close 6 April 2012.

## Advertising – testimonials, discounts and time-limited offers

A *Fact Sheet* and *FAQ* have been published on the Board's website under the [Registration Standards](#) tab. They are designed to guide osteopaths about their obligations as set out in Section 133 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law*, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) and should be read with the [Osteopathy Guidelines for Advertising of Regulated Health Services](#).

Advertising time-limited offers is prohibited due to the potential to encourage the indiscriminate or unnecessary

use of health services. Testimonials of any form, such as visual or text, are prohibited.

Advertisements must set out the **full** terms and conditions associated with the advertised gift or discount in a clear and truthful way in order that the consumer can make an informed decision about what the offer involves.

### What happens if an osteopath doesn't comply?

In the first year of the National Scheme the Board focused on educating the profession about the new advertising requirements. The Board is taking a more structured approach to dealing with concerns about advertising, including an escalating series of warnings to practitioners. If a practitioner who has been reminded of their obligations under the National Law fails to take corrective action, the Board may take legal action against them for non-compliance of the Board's standards and guidelines. All osteopaths who advertise their services need to be aware of – and comply with – the [guidelines](#).

## Guidelines for Infection Control

The Board has issued new *Guidelines for Infection Control* published under the [Codes and Guidelines](#) tab on the website. They were published in December 2011 after public consultation. The Board has adopted the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) *Australian guidelines for the prevention and control of infection in healthcare*. They are designed to guide practitioners about acceptable infection control practice.

The Board recognises that most osteopaths work in an office-based environment, and because the NHMRC guidelines are lengthy and designed for all health service environments the Board has published a [Supplementary paper](#) and [FAQ](#) designed for osteopaths in private practice. These are also published on the website. Some key points in the Board's guidelines include:

- regular cleaning and vacuuming is recommended on a daily basis, and adherence to hygiene standards is expected in all osteopathic practices
- every treatment room must have a secure sharps bin
- as good practice, hand basins or alcohol-based hand rubs should be available to all healthcare workers in every treatment room.
- domestic laundry machines and powders adequately cover the requirements of the guidelines for washing towels, gowns and treatment bench covers in most instances, and
- osteopaths who use techniques involving skin penetration must read and comply with relevant state and territory requirements.

## Student osteopaths

Be sure to do your homework before switching universities mid-course.

Osteopaths and students are reminded that the Board's approved programs of study require both a Bachelor and Masters degree from the same university. The combination of Bachelors and Masters degrees from the same university comprises an approved qualification under section 53(a) of the National Law, which leads to qualification for registration. A Masters degree in isolation is not an approved program of study.

If current or future osteopathy students change institutions part-way through their studies, i.e. between their Bachelors and Masters degrees, they may not have an approved qualification. This may impact on their ability to be registered to practise the profession. A list of [accredited courses](#) is published on the Board website.

## Keeping in touch with the Board

The best way to stay in touch with news from the Board is to visit the Board's website regularly and make sure AHPRA has your up to date contact details, including your email address. A good way to learn about the work of the Board and important decisions that affect your practice is to read the monthly communiqués published on the website under the [News](#) tab.

All important documents and latest information are published on the website: [www.osteopathyboard.gov.au](http://www.osteopathyboard.gov.au)

For registration enquiries, please call 1300 419 495 (within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers).

An online enquiry form is available on the website under [Contact Us](#).

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