

A new graduate - what you need to know

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) began on 1 July 2010. At this time the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (the National Law) came into effect in each State and Territory.

The National Scheme means that 14 health professions are now regulated by a nationally consistent law. This includes Chinese medicine, which was only previously regulated in Victoria.

What this now means is that there is one Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (CMBA), and it is supported to perform its functions by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

Benefits of having one Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

For members of the public seeking Chinese medicine services, the scheme means greater protection to ensure that their Chinese medicine practitioner is suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner.

For Registered Chinese medicine practitioners, benefits include:

- Capacity to move around Australia without having to register in each state or territory in which they wish to practise
- consistent expectations of practice and registration standards to be adhered to, therefore ensuring ongoing professional standards
- education and training can be better aligned with the expectations and standards
- a national online public register publishes information about registered Chinese medicine practitioners, including current conditions on practice (except health-related conditions), and
- consistent assessment of overseas obtained qualifications.

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (CMBA) is a National Board, and is the regulatory body for the Chinese medicine profession. The primary role is to protect the public and set standards and policies that all registered health practitioners must meet.

It is important not to get confused about its function and those of professional associations.

The CMBA's functions include:

- registering Chinese medicine practitioners and Chinese medicine students
- developing standards, codes and guidelines for the Chinese medicine profession
- handling notifications, complaints, investigations and disciplinary hearings
- assessing overseas-trained practitioners who wish to practise in Australia, and
- approving accreditation standards and accredited courses of study.

Further information about the CMBA and its members can be viewed on the website:

<http://www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/About.aspx>

The functions of the CMBA are supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is an independent, statutory, regulatory body established under the National Law. It is not inside Government and is funded only by registration fees.

AHPRA is the agency that supports the National Boards in performing their functions. The Boards cannot enter into contracts and cannot employ staff. They rely on AHPRA to provide the human resources and infrastructure to enable the Boards to administer the National Law, and implement Board decisions.

Further information about AHPRA can be viewed on the website:

<http://www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA.aspx>

Registration

Student registration

All students enrolled in an approved program of study are included in the National Scheme as registered students. This is a free registration. Under the National Law, information about students is entered on the student register. This is not published online and is not publicly available.

AHPRA manages registration matters and work directly with the education providers to manage student registrations.

National boards and AHPRA do not play a part in dealing with the academic progress or conduct of students. These matters are for education providers to address.

The CMBA's role in relation to students is the registration of students, and dealing with notifications. Notifications against students (also known as complaints) may be received in any of the following situations:

- if health is impaired to such a degree that there may be substantial risk of harm to the public
- if a student is found guilty of an offence punishable by 12 or more months imprisonment
- if a student has a conviction of or is the subject of a finding of guilt for an offence punishable by imprisonment, and
- if an existing condition of registration (or undertaking) has been contravened.

Once, you have graduated you will need to become registered before you can practice the profession. More information is available, to ensure there is a smooth transition from education to the workforce.

Becoming a registered Chinese medicine practitioner

You must be a registered Chinese medicine practitioner to be able to practise the profession in Australia. There are three divisions of registration:

- Acupuncturists
- Chinese herbal medicine practitioner
- Chinese herbal dispensers

You can apply in any of the divisions or all depending on your qualifications.

The registration is not conditional on secured employment, so you can register regardless of whether or not you are employed. Students are encouraged to start the process as early as possible. The registration process is thorough and cannot be fast-tracked for practitioners beginning employment on a certain date.

By law you must be a registered Chinese medicine practitioner before you practise. To register you must meet the registration standards, listed at <http://www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx>

Every potential registered practitioner needs to meet the CMBA's five mandatory registration standards, and continue to meet these standards throughout their registration in the profession. The registration standards are outlined below.

Registration Standards

Under Section 38 of the National Law, the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia must develop and recommend to Ministerial Council mandatory registration standards and any other standards relevant to the eligibility of individuals for registration in the profession.

Registration Standard	Summary of requirements
Criminal History	All applicants for initial registration will be checked for a criminal history.
English language skills	All applicants for registration must satisfy the English language requirement.
Professional indemnity insurance	All registered Chinese medicine practitioners (except those who have non-practising or student registration) must be insured or indemnified. Annual renewal will require a declaration that a Chinese medicine practitioner has the required insurance.
Continuing professional development	All Chinese medicine practitioners (except those with non-practising registration) must undertake CPD to remain registered.
Recency of practice	The CMBA may grant an exemption from this standard for those persons who have graduated from an approved program of study in Chinese medicine in the 2 years prior to their application for registration.

Codes and Guidelines

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia develops codes and guidelines that are necessary to provide guidance to Chinese medicine practitioners and clarify the Board's views and expectations on a range of issues. The codes and guidelines are listed here as they become available: www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines.aspx

How to register

Students graduating in 2013 will be able to complete their initial application online, through the website: <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx>

Step 1

Students apply for registration 4 to 6 weeks before completing their course.

Step 2

Applicants fill out an [online application](#) (if eligible) or [download an application form](#). All applications require some documents to be sent to AHPRA by mail.

Step 3

Education providers advise AHPRA when applicants are eligible to graduate.

Step 4

AHPRA finalises assessment, confirms registration, publishes new graduates' names on the Register of Practitioners and sends out registration certificates.

Step 5

New graduates are registered with their profession's National Board and eligible to start working as soon as their name is published on the Register of Practitioners.

Please note that you will need a Visa or Mastercard credit or debit card to apply online.

Further Information: See [Apply Online](#) and [Graduate Online Applications Flyer](#) (46.0 KB,PDF) [media release](#) and answers to [frequently asked questions](#).

Professor Charlie Xue
Chair
Chinese Medicine Board of Australia

1 October 2013

This information has been prepared with the assistance of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.