

Information sheet

Medical practitioners – Who needs practising registration?

1 August 2025

This information sheet provides guidance to medical practitioners about whether or not they need medical registration (practising or non-practising registration).

Medical practitioners work in a broad range of roles. While you need to be registered if you provide direct patient care, you may not need practising medical registration for some roles.

When do you need practising registration?

You need practising registration if:

- you provide direct patient care
- you need to prescribe medication, refer to specialists or order tests
- your work impacts on safe, effective delivery of health care to people
- you are directing, supervising or advising other health practitioners about the health care of individual(s)
- your employer requires a person in your role to be registered, for example, if you are teaching or supervising other doctors
- your professional indemnity insurer requires you to be registered for a role
- your professional peers and the community would expect a person in your role to comply with the Board's registration standards (e.g. professional indemnity insurance, continuing professional development (CPD), recency of practice, etc). Examples include tribunal members, some board positions and medico-legal advisory roles
- you need to be registered by law to undertake a specific activity, such as issuing a death certificate.

What are my options if I am not doing any activities that need me to be registered?

If you are not doing any activities that need medical registration, you can choose to:

1. apply for non-practising registration, or
2. not be registered.

Non-practising registration

Non-practising registration is for doctors who want to stay on the *Register of medical practitioners*, but who are not currently doing any activities requiring medical registration. The decision to move to non-practising registration is individual. It may be appropriate for doctors who are taking a career break, working in a role that does not require registration or is outside Australia, or who are taking prolonged leave.

Key features of non-practising registration:

- Medical practice in Australia is not allowed. You cannot prescribe medication, refer to specialists or order tests.
- Reduced registration fees.
- No CPD or CPD home obligations.
- Professional indemnity insurance (PII) is not a registration requirement (however, check with your insurer if you plan to return to practice in the future).
- No recency of practice obligations.
- More streamlined process to return to practising registration compared to if you are not registered at all (see below).
- You can use the protected title 'medical practitioner' but can't make it seem as though you are currently practising medicine.

No registration

Medical practitioners who are not currently undertaking any activities that require medical registration can choose to not be registered at all.

Examples of activities that can be undertaken by a medical practitioner with non-practising registration or no registration

1. An examiner or assessor of medical students or graduates who is not treating patients as part of the assessment, provided their organisation does not need them to be registered for this purpose.
2. A tutor or teacher working with simulated patients or settings with no patients present, as long as the organisation they're acting for believes that practising registration is not necessary for the role.
3. A researcher whose work does not include any human subjects and whose research facility does not require them to be registered.
4. A person who speaks publicly about a health or medical related topic and who will not be giving any individual patient advice.
5. A person serving on a board or committee or accreditation body, when their appointment does not depend on their status as a 'registered medical practitioner'.
6. A person who may be using skills and knowledge gained from an approved qualification but is not using a protected title or claiming or holding themselves out to be registered, for example someone in an advisory or policy role.
7. A medical practitioner who is registered overseas and is visiting Australia for a role not involved in providing treatment or opinion about the physical or mental health of any individuals.

Can I call myself 'Dr' with non-practising registration or no registration?

Medical practitioners with non-practising registration or no registration can call themselves 'Dr' but can't make it seem as though they are currently practising medicine.

What if I want to apply for practising registration after a period of non-practising registration or no registration?

If you think you might return to practising registration at some stage, you should consider the implications of a period away from practising registration, and the registration requirements when you return to practice.

As an example, if you have non-practising registration and wish to apply for practising registration, you will need to provide evidence of recent practice as detailed in the Recency of practice registration standard. If you do not have recent practice (in the last three years) you will likely need to return to practice in a supervised capacity and may need to complete re-training. If you have not practised in a long time, you may not be able to be registered. Each case is considered on its individual merits.

There will also be a registration fee to be paid. As you are already on the register you will not need to re-submit qualifications and other documents when you apply to return to practising registration.

If you do not hold any registration and wish to apply for practising registration you will need to submit a new full application, including your qualifications, practice history, criminal history checks and other documents. If you do not have recent practice (in the last three years) you will likely need to return to practice in a supervised capacity and may need to complete re-training. If you have not practised in a long time, you may not be able to be registered. Each case is considered on its individual merits.

There will also be an application and registration fee to be paid.

Emergencies

The Board recognises that unregistered practitioners may find themselves in a situation when it is appropriate for them to assist in an emergency. In these circumstances, the Board recognises that the practitioner will, and should, provide the best care that they can. The Board would not have any grounds to take action against someone for providing medical assistance in an emergency unless they were claiming (holding out) that they were registered.

Need help?

If you'd like help deciding if you need to be registered, you can consult your employer, professional indemnity insurer or other legal adviser.

More detail

There is more information about practising and non-practising registration in the Board's *Additional information: Medical practitioners – Who needs practising registration?* and in FAQs on non-practising registration published on the Board's [FAQs and fact sheets webpage](#).