

Fact sheet

February 2015

International criminal history checks for registered health practitioners

A new approach to international criminal history checks has taken effect as of 4 February 2015

The National Boards have implemented a new approach to check international criminal history as of 4 February 2015. This new process will be piloted for one year and then evaluated to see if it is working as intended.

The new approach introduces the requirement for an international criminal history check, to be conducted by a third party, to provide a consistent approach with the requirements for domestic criminal history checks. The aim is to strike a balance between public safety and regulatory burden for practitioners and the need to manage any potential risk to patients and the public without delaying the registration process for practitioners.

This fact sheet outlines how this approach will work and how health practitioners will be affected.

Only some groups of registered health practitioners will be affected

Most registered health practitioners will not be affected by this change.

The change will affect practitioners who:

- apply to change their registration type in Australia and whose international criminal history status has changed
- declare a change in their criminal history that occurred outside Australia, when they apply to renew their registration, or
- inform the relevant National Board that they have been:
 - charged with an offence outside Australia that is punishable by a sentence of 12 months imprisonment or more, or
 - convicted of, have pleaded guilty to or are the subject of a finding of guilt by a court for an offence, outside Australia, that is punishable by imprisonment.

Under the National Law, National Boards and AHPRA are also able to seek a criminal history check for registered health practitioners at any time (for Australia or other countries).

Practitioners will need to obtain an international criminal history check from an AHPRA approved supplier

Relevant practitioners will need to apply for a criminal history check from one of the AHPRA approved suppliers as part of the registration renewal process, when applying to change registration types (where their international criminal history status has changed) or where a practitioner gives notice to a National Board about certain events.

When a registrant declares a change in their criminal history outside Australia an international criminal history report must be received and the check completed before the decision to renew or finalise an application will be considered.

Practitioners who need to apply for a criminal history check will have to do so from one of the approved suppliers in order to complete the registration application process.

The time it takes for the supplier to conduct the check and provide a report may vary, depending on the country or countries in which the check has to be undertaken. More information about the logistics of the checks is available from the suppliers' websites, which are accessible from the AHPRA website.

In most cases, the international criminal history check will be available by the time the registration application has been assessed. It is however important that applicants allow adequate time to prepare their applications before they plan to practise. International criminal history reports will remain valid for a period of three months from date of issue.

The intention of the new approach is ensure that only practitioners who meet all requirements are registered and allowed to practice in Australia.

The approach balances the need for public protection without creating delays for applicants

National Boards have protecting the public as a key objective and regulate the registered health professions in the public interest. This means that they must ensure there are adequate checks and balances to keep the public safe.

The new approach offers an increased level of safety for the public in that it requires a check to be conducted by a third party and for the report that is produced to be provided directly to AHPRA (as well as to the practitioner). Previously, we relied on a statutory declaration.

The new approach was developed after extensive consultation

This approach was developed after three rounds of consultations. These consultations and the feedback they received are published on the [AHPRA website](#). A report on the last of these consultations is also available, which outlines the feedback received and how National Boards and AHPRA responded to develop the approach that is being piloted from 4 February 2015.

The checks will be paid for by the registered health practitioner

Practitioners will be responsible for paying for their international criminal history check. More information is available from the vendors' websites (accessible via the AHPRA website).