



Pharmacy Board
Ahpra

Intern pharmacist and preceptor guide

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Welcome

This guide has been developed for intern pharmacists (interns) undertaking a period of supervised practice (internship) and for preceptors and supervising pharmacists working with interns. This guide should be read in conjunction with other information published on the [Board's website](#).

Interns are pharmacists holding provisional registration who are required to complete a period of supervised practice (internship) during their provisional registration to be eligible to apply for general registration. Interns include graduates from a Board approved program of study as well as overseas qualified pharmacists who have passed the Australian Pharmacy Council Knowledge Assessment of Pharmaceutical Sciences (KAPS) examination.

Pharmacists holding limited or general registration and who are required to complete a period of supervised practice may also find this guide useful.

Intern Pharmacist

Dear Intern Pharmacist

Welcome to the profession!

Congratulations on starting the next step on your path

way to meeting the requirements for general registration as a pharmacist. By now you may have begun your internship and over the coming months will be learning how to put into practice the knowledge you gained during your time at university.

During your internship period, you may come across situations where you may need some additional help or information. We suggest you keep this guide as a handy resource to refer to during this time.

The [Pharmacy Board of Australia's website](#) has lots of useful information, particularly on the [Internships page](#). Here you will find resources such as application forms, guides, FAQs and training plans.

Preceptor

Dear Preceptor

Thank you for taking on this important role! The role of a preceptor is a significant but very rewarding professional responsibility. The role requires strong mentorship, one-to-one communication, interpersonal and teaching skills. Even an experienced preceptor must continue to improve his or her skills.

The role of preceptor is a vital part of an intern's development. We thank all pharmacists who take on this important role in contributing to the development of future pharmacists. This guide provides information on the requirements of the intern year as well as guidance on your role as preceptor, as well as tips for undertaking assessment and providing feedback to your intern.

Introduction

The internship is the period in which the knowledge gained during academic studies is applied to pharmacy practice under the supervision of a pharmacist. During this time, the intern should further develop a mature and responsible attitude towards the practice of pharmacy, including dealing with the public and their colleagues in the healthcare team.

The roles and responsibilities of the Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board), the preceptor and the intern are linked closely.

The Board must at all times give consideration to public safety in its administration of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). This includes the supervised practice of interns.

Interns and preceptors must be aware of all legal and Board requirements for both provisional and subsequent general registration.

This includes the requirement for the intern to hold provisional registration with the Board, and have the supervised practice (preceptor and premises) approved by the Board prior to starting supervised practice hours (refer to the section *Supervised practice* in this guide).

The Board

What is the Board and what do we do?

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) regulates the pharmacy profession in order to protect the public. As a registered pharmacist you must meet the registration standards, codes and guidelines developed by the Board.

Interns: Now is the time to familiarise yourself with the Board's guidelines and other important documents. Take a look at the [Quick reference guide to Pharmacy Board guidelines](#) for an overview of specific Board guidance. Read the [Professional practice standards](#) published by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and/or the [Standards of practice](#) published by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) to help you understand the expected standards of professional behaviour of pharmacists.

Take a look at our diagram of the different [pharmacy regulators and stakeholders in Australia](#) to find out more about the Board's role as well as that of other stakeholders.

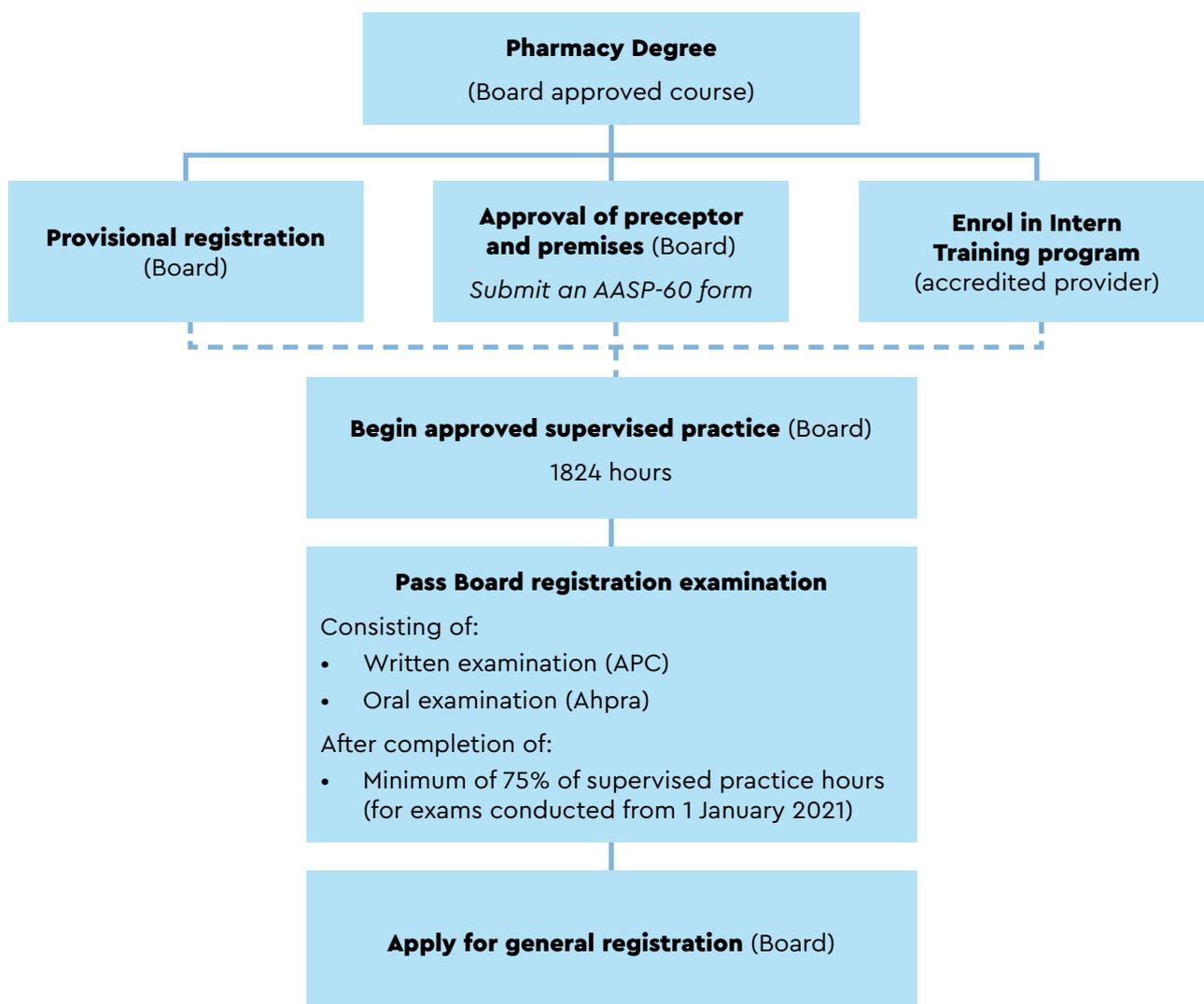
As a registered pharmacist you have obligations you are required to meet. Have a look at this infographic, [Obligations of a registered pharmacist](#), to understand what you must do as a registered pharmacist.

Professional conduct

Interns must always act in accordance with all relevant legislation and the Board's *Code of conduct for pharmacists* which is available on the Board's website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Codes, guidelines and policies*. This code should be used to support the intern (and all pharmacists) in the challenging task of providing good healthcare and fulfilling their professional roles. It also provides a framework to help guide professional judgement.

Registration requirements

The following diagram outlines the pathway to general registration for pharmacy interns.



Registration standards

Before applying for provisional registration, graduates are required to meet the Board's registration standards including those on:

- professional indemnity insurance arrangements
- criminal history, and
- English language skills.

Before applying for general registration, interns are required to meet the Board's registration standards including those on:

- supervised practice arrangements
- examinations for eligibility for general registration
- professional indemnity insurance arrangements
- criminal history, and
- continuing professional development.

These are available on the Board's website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration standards*.

Professional indemnity insurance requirements

Interns with provisional registration are required to maintain the approved level of individual professional indemnity insurance (PII) cover while practising and in accordance with the terms and conditions set under the Board's registration standard.

Interns may take out their own insurance cover or may be covered by insurance provided through employment arrangements. In the latter case, interns must confirm with their employer that they are covered by the employer's insurance policy. However, this will not cover practice that is outside of the workplace and/or the employment arrangements.

Criminal history check

In deciding whether a health practitioner's criminal history is relevant to the practice of his or her profession, the Board will consider the 10 factors set out in the Board's registration standard on criminal history.

English language requirements

Applicants for provisional registration are required to meet the Board's *Registration standard: English language skills* to demonstrate that their English language skills are sufficient to enable them to practise safely and effectively.

There are four pathways that can be used to demonstrate English language competence, which are outlined in the Board's registration standard.

If an applicant for provisional registration completed all of their education in Australia, the most appropriate pathway would be the combined secondary and tertiary education pathway. This pathway requires that at least two years of secondary education, as well as the qualification relied upon for registration, were taught and assessed in English in a recognised country (such as Australia).

For further information on the different pathways and their evidence requirements, refer to the evidence guide and FAQs on the English language skills page on the Ahpra website at www.ahpra.gov.au under *Registration, Registration standards* and *English language skills*.

Preceptor: A job description

Approved preceptor

An **approved preceptor** is a pharmacist who has been approved by the Board to supervise the training of a provisionally registered intern, or other person undertaking approved supervised practice in accordance with the requirements specified in the Board's *Registration standard: Recency of practice*, for a defined period at specified pharmacy premises.

The approved preceptor is responsible for the overall supervision and development of the intern. On a day-to-day basis, the approved preceptor may personally supervise the intern at the approved site, or may delegate the supervision to another suitably-qualified pharmacist at the site.

The preceptor should be present at the approved training site on a regular basis. Pharmacists who do not regularly practise at the site are advised not to apply for approval as a preceptor. This role is best undertaken by pharmacists who can meet the preceptor requirements outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* and deliver the onsite training program in accordance with this guide.

Pharmacists seeking approval to conduct supervised practice are advised to undertake a preceptor training program as part of their preparation for the role. This training may be included as part of their continuing professional development obligations under the Board's *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*. Further information on training options is available from the Intern training program (ITP) providers and continuing professional development (CPD) providers. A list of currently accredited ITP providers is available on the APC website.

As outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*, to be approved as preceptor a pharmacist must:

- hold general registration
- have held general registration and practised as a pharmacist in Australia for a minimum of 12 months in the area of practice where the supervised practice is to be conducted (e.g. hospital or community pharmacy practice), unless the pharmacist has been registered for a shorter period and is approved by the Board to act as preceptor
- be practising in pharmacy premises (i.e. community pharmacy or hospital pharmacy department), or in other premises suitable for conducting supervised practice as determined by the Board on a case-by-case basis (e.g. a pharmaceutical company or pharmacy teaching institution)
- not have conditions placed on their general registration that would affect their ability to conduct the supervised practice of the intern, and
- have suitable relevant training or experience to act in this role.

To apply for approval of a preceptor and premises, an application for approval of supervised practice must be made by final year pharmacy students and pharmacy graduates. The application must be lodged and approved by the Board **before any approved supervised practice can take place**. Further information on the application process is available in the section *Supervised practice* in this guide.

Role of the preceptor

The preceptor plays a vital role in the development of the intern. Now that the intern has gained the academic knowledge through university studies, the preceptor has the responsibility to guide them through the experiential education program that is essential for them to become a competent pharmacist.

Tell me and I forget,
teach me and I may remember,
involve me and I learn.

Chinese proverb

The preceptor assumes the role of teacher during the practical training period. Most preceptors have trained as practitioners, not as teachers, and having to teach in the uncontrolled environment of the clinical practice setting adds complexity to the task. As part of a preceptor's continuing professional development, preceptor training can help preceptors to feel more prepared and confident in this role (also refer to the section *Approved preceptor* in this guide).

Unlike a classroom situation where the learning environment can be manipulated to structure the learning process, the clinical practice is without artificial controls and can be very challenging for

the intern. In this unfamiliar environment, the intern looks to the preceptor to provide guidance. It is important to set clear expectations and boundaries at the beginning of the training and revisit these as the intern gains experience and confidence and develops the necessary skills. Time and effort invested in orientation and practical education results in a faster integration and greater contribution by the intern to their workplace.

The supervised practice period is intended to be one of professional and personal maturation, leading to a level of competence that will allow independent professional practice after gaining general registration. *It is important that the preceptor regularly assesses and provides feedback on the knowledge, skills and performance of the intern throughout the training period so that experience can be gained and any difficulties identified and remediated in a timely manner.*

The importance of interns receiving similar basic experiences during their training has been recognised. For this reason, the National competency standards framework for pharmacists in Australia 2016 underpin the intern training program (refer to the section *Intern training program (ITP)* in this guide for further information on intern training programs).

Modern medicine is advancing so rapidly that continuing professional development is essential to maintain knowledge for competent practice. Lifelong learning is a cornerstone to keeping up to date with advances in contemporary practice. It is therefore important that the preceptor is a good role model of how to maintain a program of professional development. Leading the intern by practical example, thus becoming guide and mentor, is an obligation of the preceptor.

Training future pharmacists is a responsibility of the entire profession in order to maintain a standard of quality health care. The preceptor, as teacher/instructor of the intern during the supervised practice period, has considerable responsibilities to the profession, the Board and the public. The challenge of teaching in a clinical setting should be a rewarding and stimulating experience for the preceptor and the intern alike.

Preceptors: Before taking on the role of a preceptor consider the impact an intern may have on your workload. Be aware of the additional responsibility that the role of the preceptor brings and that having an intern can significantly increase your workload. You may need to ensure you have the support of your employer/department and other staff in the workplace. Consider if you will need additional support to be able to spend enough time with your intern while providing patient care.

The following list emphasises the responsibilities inherent in accepting the role of preceptor.

The preceptor should:

- serve as a role model and mentor, instilling professional values and attitudes
- serve as a learning resource for the intern; interns should also be taking responsibility in driving their learning
- interview the intern to assess his or her knowledge and experience at the beginning of the training period, and identify and discuss strengths and weaknesses with the intern (refer to the section *Guidelines for conducting formative assessment* in this guide)
- provide an orientation into the workplace for the intern
- develop a training plan with the intern (refer to the section *Training plan* in this guide)
- meet on a regular basis to discuss issues, review progress, and discuss learning topics in the training plan
- attempt to expose the intern to the full range of professional services (consider rotations to other sites that may offer different services)
- stimulate and challenge the intern to think and learn for themselves and to justify evidence-based decisions, and
- provide positive and developmental feedback during the learning process.

The learning process

The preceptor has a particular responsibility for initiating and maintaining a suitable learning environment, providing appropriate activities and opportunities to learn and making relevant resources available.

Teaching with competence and effectiveness in the experiential learning environment involves a complex interaction between skilled practice, disciplinary knowledge, understanding of teaching and learning processes, appropriate attitudes and values and critical self-reflection. As teaching takes place in unpredictable, fluid, non-routine and novel situations, it involves a constant process of problem solving and decision making.

It is important to realise that what is taught is not necessarily the same as what the intern learns. The 'teaching' process is an interaction between the teacher (preceptor), the learner (intern), the subject and the context.

The intern brings his or her own attributes, motivation and experience to the supervised practice period which may not 'match' with the preceptor's values, approach to learning, and experience of learning or teaching. As the preceptor is in a position of power relative to the intern pharmacist, it is the preceptor's responsibility to adapt his or her teaching style to one most suited to the learning style of the intern.

There are many published resources providing information on learning styles. The following links may assist:

<https://crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsts>

https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/Learning_Styles_Handout.pdf

<http://pharmacy.utah.edu/pharmacotherapy/adjunct/pdf/LearningStylesPresentationZA.pdf>

Benefits of being a preceptor

The benefits of being a preceptor include:

- supporting the profession – the future of pharmacy
- diversifying skills
- strengthening pharmacy practice
- maintaining knowledge, and
- the potential for future recruitment of a newly qualified pharmacist.

Intern: A job description

Role of the intern

Interns should undertake supervised practice with a positive attitude and a commitment to learn from the practice environment, the practical experience of the preceptor and other professional colleagues. This interaction should provide mutual professional benefits to all parties.

Interns should be prepared to assume specific areas of responsibility within the workplace. As they become more experienced and confident in these areas, they should always bear in mind that the final legal responsibility lies with the supervising pharmacist. At the completion of the approved supervised practice period, the intern should demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Board, a level of professional competence in pharmacy practice that meets the requirements to apply for general registration in order to practise unsupervised and with the associated legal responsibility of a pharmacist.

Interns: Your preceptor will be a learning resource for you, however you will also need to take responsibility for driving your learning. Why not start a journal/notebook to record new things, things learned, items to follow up such as questions to research or activities to add to your training plan? This can then be used as a revision tool or to note points for discussion with your preceptor.

Time management for interns

Pharmacists use their time management skills regularly to deal with the many tasks that are presented to them daily. Time management is an essential skill and it is important that this should be further developed early on in the intern year. To help improve time management skills:

- prioritise tasks in order of importance
- deal with interruptions and distractions
 - interruptions are a normal part of work life and the key to dealing with them is to analyse and assess the urgency of the interruption
 - you can then decide whether to deal with it now or when you have completed your current task
- avoid procrastinating
- recognise what is causing you to avoid completing or starting the task
 - motivate yourself to overcome procrastination by visualising the result of the task rather than the task itself
 - if the task at hand is big, divide it up into smaller "bite-size" tasks
- organise yourself, and
- identify and make good use of the resources and staff around you.

Interns: Effective time management will reduce your stress levels, help you prepare for examinations and ultimately be successful in your career as a pharmacist. The publication *Managing stress in pharmacy: creating a healthier working environment in pharmacy by managing workplace stress* on the [Pharmacists' Support Service website](#) can provide helpful advice.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

Interns holding provisional registration must plan and undertake continuing professional development (CPD) as described in the Board's *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*.

CPD is the means by which members of the profession continue to maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives.

During a 12-month internship period and while undertaking an intern training program, interns are required to plan and complete a minimum of 40 CPD credits. Every intern should develop a CPD plan which helps them identify and undertake activities to meet their professional development needs. A CPD plan should include a broad range of activities relevant to a pharmacist's role or scope of practice. A detailed, verifiable record of activities undertaken should be kept. This record should include a reflection on how the activity has impacted practice.

Interns should review the Board's CPD standard (at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration standards*), CPD guidelines (at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Codes, guidelines and policies*) and FAQs on continuing professional development for pharmacists and pharmacy interns (at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Codes, guidelines and policies and FAQs and fact sheets*). The FAQs provide guidance to interns on which activities from the ITP can be included as CPD.

Failure to meet the Board's CPD requirements may constitute behaviour for which health, conduct or performance action may be taken.

Interns: By now you may have a CPD plan in place and started to record CPD points. If you don't have a plan yet, visit the [Board's website](#) for useful information such as a recorded CPD webinar, a template for planning and recording your CPD and a FAQs document. The PSA website also has several [Board-funded implementation tools](#) to help you meet the requirements of the Board's CPD standard and guidelines. CPD and ITP providers will also be able to help you plan, complete and submit your CPD.

What else?

I have workplace concerns, who can I talk to?

If you are unsure whether or how to raise a concern, confidential advice can be sought from member organisations such as PSA, PGA, SHPA, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PGA), indemnity insurers or the Pharmacists Support Services (PSS).

The Fair Work Ombudsman can provide you with information and advice about your workplace rights and obligations.

Looking after yourself

Try to maintain a good work-life balance. Practise self-care (get sufficient sleep, exercise regularly, eat a balanced diet, have other interests or hobbies outside of work), in order to keep yourself fresh, motivated and ready to take on challenges of the intern year.

A successful learning experience for the intern and preceptor

Training plan

After orientation into the workplace, each intern should organise a time to develop a training plan with the preceptor which addresses contemporary pharmacy practice and indicates the competencies to be addressed each month.

A training plan is a map of the list of topics to be covered by the preceptor (or other pharmacist, as arranged by the preceptor) with the intern throughout the year. This should be planned and run in conjunction with the ITP to avoid overlaps and maximise learning outcomes. The plan should be kept on-site and used to track progress of topics covered and referred to regularly. There is flexibility in the order in which topics can be covered, as long as topics are completed. Topics may also be covered during day-to-day workplace experiences (such as primary health care requests from patients, dispensing and counselling new medications, handling medication queries); however, this should be supplemented with further research and discussion if this is to be incorporated as part of the training plan.

Interns:

My preceptor does not have a training plan in place. What can I do?

The Board has provided sample intern training plans for community pharmacy and hospital pharmacy on the [Internships page](#) that can be used as a guide in the preparation of your training plan. Why not download the plan to discuss with your preceptor?

Meetings

As a general guideline, meetings should be held weekly and run uninterrupted for one hour. The meeting is not the sole resource of learning for an intern. It is not possible to cover every topic relevant to pharmacy in these sessions. Therefore, the intern is also expected to incorporate learning from day-to-day workplace experiences, intern training program activities, and CPD.

In preparation for these meetings, interns are encouraged to undertake reading on the scheduled topics in the training plan and demonstrate knowledge gained on these topics to the preceptor. Role-plays, quizzes, discussions and reflections drawing from pharmacy practice scenarios are examples of useful learning tools for the intern.

If the preceptor conducting the weekly meetings is on annual leave, topics are to be set in advance for the intern to research during the preceptor's absence, or another pharmacist can be elected by the preceptor to assist with meetings.

Providing practice exposure

If interns are to learn and retain the knowledge, concepts and skills acquired at university, they must have the opportunity to apply these in practice and establish the required attitudes and behaviours. The preceptor should attempt to provide the intern with experience in the full range of professional services. Where this is not possible, other avenues that provide the intern with this experience will need to be identified.

Performing a task successfully is only the first step; interns should also be able to transfer and apply what they have learned from one specific task to other similar tasks or situations. Therefore, **preceptors need to arrange a variety of tasks in which interns can gain competence by practising their learning, and applying it in different ways.**

Interns are encouraged to have an inquisitive nature and to research information rather than expecting to be told the answer. Self-reflection on work experiences is essential to develop and refine skills.

Guide for preceptors in providing practice experience for interns

The following principles guide preceptors to create an environment where interns become competent by applying their learning to a variety of situations.

- Specific activities assigned to the intern pharmacist should require demonstration of learned skills and decision-making.
- Interns should have active roles as they cannot learn professional skills by observation only.
- Interns should be given an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills as soon as possible after new material has been presented and to repeat the task soon afterwards.
- Learning tasks should be sufficiently difficult to be challenging, but not discouraging.
- At the conclusion of a learning task, the intern pharmacist should be assisted to understand their experience through discussion and constructive feedback on ways to improve their performance.
- Interns should use a journal to note new things, things learned, or things to follow up such as questions to research, and use this as a revision tool or to note points for discussion with the preceptor.
- Interns should be encouraged to have an inquisitive nature and research things rather than expecting to be told the answer.
- Interns should be encouraged to review how they perform tasks or experiences to develop and refine their skills.

Formal assessment and feedback

The preceptor and intern should regularly hold formative (or ongoing) assessment and feedback sessions throughout the intern year. These sessions may help to modify teaching and learning activities so the intern can achieve better learning outcomes. They provide an opportunity to discuss the intern's performance, provide constructive feedback on strengths and opportunities for improvement, and to review the intern's training plan and training needs. Formative assessment and feedback sessions may be a requirement set by the intern's ITP.

Formative assessment and feedback sessions as part of the intern training year should be regarded as a separate process from staff appraisal activities which pharmacies may have in place for their employees.

The expectations/objectives of the intern year should be confirmed early in the supervised practice year with the intern. The main goal with each review is that the intern's professional practice is improving as the year progresses. Early in the intern year, the preceptor and intern should discuss and agree on the approach that will be used in undertaking formative assessment and feedback. Assessments should be scheduled in the intern's calendar, so that they are not completed 'last minute' or as a 'surprise' to the intern.

It is important that formative assessment and feedback sessions are completed at the times scheduled by the ITP, discussed with the intern and forwarded immediately to the ITP coordinator. This process is a valuable opportunity for the preceptor and intern to review the progress of training together and for the ITP coordinator to become aware of any problems and identify where help may be needed. Feedback should be objective and constructive and obtained from both the preceptor and the intern.

Undertaking formative assessment and feedback for an intern with whom one works closely can be difficult. Preceptors need to be aware of the following pitfalls of appraising someone they work closely with:

- the **generosity** pitfall of being too kind-hearted and rating too highly
- the **halo** effect where one dominant characteristic affects the rating of other characteristics, and
- **ambiguity of terms** where words such as 'average' or 'fair' mean different things to different people. Always strive to refer to specific behaviour rather than abstractions when providing feedback. Seek to clarify with additional comments or examples where possible.

For the majority of interns, summative assessment and constructive feedback results in very positive recognition and encouragement of their progress and they are usually aware of and willing to improve any deficiencies. Less than optimal ratings are of assistance to the preceptor, the intern and the ITP coordinator to identify problems and methods to address these.

Guidelines for conducting formative assessment

For formative assessment and feedback sessions to work effectively, preceptors should prepare both themselves and the intern for an interview. Both the preceptor and the intern should understand the purpose of the interview.

The intern should be asked to think about the exercise and to prepare any comments or questions.

In preparing for an interview, preceptors need to:

- arrange a reasonable time where there is adequate privacy and when interruption is unlikely
- review the ITP requirements for the appropriate time of year
- be aware of the activities the intern has been undertaking and obtain reports from any other pharmacists involved in their training and supervision
- prepare any information the preceptor feels should be given at that stage in the intern year
- prepare several questions and/or discussion points that address previous experiences and performance
- be constructive in providing feedback on performance by praising strengths and noting deficiencies in non-emotive terms and help the intern identify any problems and how they could improve their performance
- in providing negative feedback, focus on specific behaviour rather than generalities, and
- encourage the intern to do most of the talking – the preceptor should avoid dominating the interview.

Preceptors may encounter situations in which the intern becomes emotional or argumentative during an interview. It is important to allow the intern full opportunity to express their views and provide feedback on their training experience. The preceptor should encourage the intern to recognise their positive accomplishments and provide constructive and reasonable feedback.

Providing formative assessment and feedback may also be difficult when there is no reaction at all from the intern, or when the intern agrees too readily with the preceptor. Preceptors should try to draw out the opinions of the intern. Be sure to ask open-ended questions to ensure the intern has clearly understood the feedback.

Motivating the intern pharmacist

Flexibility on the preceptor's part is of paramount importance. It is likely that interns in a professional program such as pharmacy are motivated to learn. At university they are motivated to learn the required knowledge and in practical training, they are motivated to apply this knowledge when undertaking relevant tasks.

Sources of motivation include:

- interest
- curiosity
- desire to achieve, and
- personal development.

A desire to emulate the preceptor shows the importance of role modelling as a means of motivating the intern. Conditions for motivation may include:

- attention
- stimulation
- relevance
- confidence, and
- satisfaction.

Varying the tasks, limiting the time spent on any task and changing the pace of completing an assigned task will help to maintain *attention* and provide *stimulation*.

Preceptors should regularly help the intern see how new ideas or tasks *relate* to their future responsibilities and help these new ideas or tasks take on personal significance.

Developing *confidence* may be accomplished by giving specific assignments and providing constructive feedback. Confidence will result when interns complete specific assignments successfully.

To help achieve *satisfaction*, the preceptor must describe expectations at the beginning of a task so that the intern knows when a task has been completed successfully. Reinforcement of a job well done confirms the self-satisfaction.

At every opportunity, preceptors should provide encouragement to build initiative and developmental feedback to increase self-esteem.

Performance issues

Problems arising from the performance of an intern or preceptor must be addressed in a timely manner. If a review and explicit discussion of goals and expectations between the preceptor and intern does not result in improvement in performance, the preceptor and/or intern may request the advice of the ITP coordinator.

In the event that intervention by the ITP coordinator is unsuccessful, the concerns should be directed to the Clinical Advisor (Pharmacy) (or other relevant officer) in the state or territory Ahpra office. If deemed appropriate, Ahpra may refer the case to the Board for consideration.

Supervised practice

Steps required before supervised practice can begin

Interns are required to hold provisional registration and have their supervised practice arrangements approved by the Board **before** starting supervised practice and enrolling in an Intern training program (ITP). **Any supervised practice that is undertaken prior to this approval will not count towards the supervised practice hours required by the Board for general registration.**

The required steps before starting supervised practice include:

1. lodgement of a complete application for:
 - a. provisional registration **and**
 - b. approval of supervised practice, **and**
2. granting of provisional registration by the Board, **and**
3. approval of the supervised practice arrangements by the Board.

Graduates of an Australian approved program of study can apply for provisional registration online via the Ahpra website at www.ahpra.gov.au under *Registration* and graduate applications. An *Application for approval of supervised practice* (AASP-60) should also be submitted, to have both the preceptor and premises approved by the Board (refer to section *Registration standards* in this guide).

Graduates from New Zealand or other overseas countries should submit a hard-copy *Application for provisional registration and supervised practice* (APRO-60). This application is also available at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration* and *forms*, includes the application for approval of supervised practice and requires applicants to provide evidence that they meet the Board's *Registration standard: English language skills*.

Before undertaking any supervised practice, an intern must check the public register of practitioners at www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registers-of-Practitioners.aspx, to confirm that they hold provisional registration and that their supervised practice details are recorded in the notations field on the register.

Although Ahpra aims to process applications for provisional registration and approval of supervised practice in a timely manner, registration and approval is dependent on graduate course results, start dates for supervised practice and submission of complete applications. **Applications that do not provide all of the requisite information and documentation may be delayed unnecessarily.** Preceptors and/or employers should be mindful of this when planning rosters around the time that the intern is expected to begin their supervised practice.

Interns: If you have had your supervised practice approved by the Board then you will already be recording your supervised practice hours. If you have not yet had your supervised practice approved, make sure you do, otherwise your hours will not count towards the 1,824 hours of supervised practice required for general registration. These records will need to be submitted when you apply for general registration.

Supervised practice hours

For the purpose of section 52(1)(b)(i) of the National Law, to apply for initial general registration as a pharmacist, an intern holding provisional registration is required to undertake a period of 1,824 hours of approved supervised practice as outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*.

Details of the Board's requirements for supervised practice, including the minimum and maximum number of hours in a period of four consecutive calendar weeks that can count towards supervised practice hours, are also outlined in the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*. This standard is available at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration standards*. Further information is also available in the Board's FAQs for pharmacy interns and preceptors, available at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Codes, guidelines and policies* and *FAQs and fact sheets*.

This standard requires supervised practice to be undertaken under the direct supervision of a pharmacist holding general registration. As such, hours not worked (for example, due to illness, holiday leave or a public holiday), and hours worked at premises that are not part of the approved preceptor's supervised practice program (for example, part-time work at another pharmacy on evenings or weekends, unless those arrangements independently meet the minimum requirements of the standard and have been approved by the Board), cannot count towards supervised practice hours.

Attendance at the training days of accredited ITPs can count towards the supervised practice hours.

The Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* applies to individuals who hold provisional or limited registration. Hours undertaken **before** an individual is granted provisional or limited registration (e.g. when an individual holds student registration) **cannot** be counted towards supervised practice hours. Therefore, clinical placement hours completed during an approved pharmacy program cannot be counted.

Recording supervised practice hours

Interns are required to keep a record of supervised practice hours undertaken. These records should be completed on a weekly basis. On completion of the approved period of supervised practice the preceptor must sign the statutory declaration. The *Statutory declaration form: Weekly record of supervised practice hours* (SPWR-60) is available on the Board's website at www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration and forms*.

A total of 1,824 hours of supervised practice must be undertaken by graduates of Australian or New Zealand pharmacy courses approved by the Board. In the case of graduates of pharmacy courses conducted by an overseas provider, the period of supervised practice will also be 1,824 hours, unless otherwise advised in writing by the Board. All supervised practice hours must be undertaken in accordance with the Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* and this guide.

Approval of premises for the purpose of supervised practice

The Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* states that at least 50 per cent of an intern's required supervised practice hours must be undertaken in a community pharmacy or a hospital pharmacy department, unless otherwise approved by the Board. This is because most community pharmacies and hospital pharmacy departments provide broad practice experience which is necessary to ensure that interns are able to meet the competencies necessary for entry level practice and be eligible for general registration.

Most interns make one application to complete their internship at one location, which can include rotations to other practice site settings that the approved preceptor has incorporated into the intern's training program. Alternatively, some interns make more than one application in order to gain exposure to multiple practice settings with different approved preceptors and independently delivered training programs. The Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* enables either approach.

Some pharmacy practice sites may offer limited pharmacy services and may not be ideal as the main training site during the internship period, for example, a community pharmacy that is not approved to supply medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. If seeking approval to undertake training at a training site that offers a limited range of pharmacy services, an intern will be requested to provide additional information about the proposed training program and demonstrate that upon completion of the full supervised practice period for general registration, they will have had broad practice exposure to adequately prepare for future practice. The Board or its delegate will assess the application and proposed training program and decide whether to approve the application.

Approval of premises other than a community pharmacy or a hospital pharmacy department

According to the Board's Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements, the Board may approve premises other than a community pharmacy or a hospital pharmacy department. Examples may include but are not limited to a compounding facility or pharmaceutical company. When applying for approval of alternative types of training sites, such applications should be supported by evidence that a structured training program has been developed and will be delivered by a preceptor pharmacist that will enable the intern to achieve the required learning outcomes.

Application for approval of premises other than a community pharmacy or hospital pharmacy department

An intern who is considering alternative premises should include in the application for approval of supervised practice details of:

- a. the measures that will be in place to ensure that the required learning outcomes will be achieved and the relevant competency standards addressed, and
- b. a training plan that ensures sufficient practice exposure to the different areas of pharmacy practice can be achieved through the proposed arrangements.

The above information will be considered by the Board or its delegate on a case-by-case basis, and the intern and preceptor subsequently advised of the outcome with reasons supporting the Board's decision. Applicants should allow sufficient time to enable review and consideration of their application.

Supervision ratios

The Board's *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements* states that an intern may only undertake supervised practice in premises where the total number of interns does not exceed the total number of supervising pharmacists at any time. A supervising pharmacist may be the approved preceptor, or another pharmacist who has been delegated the responsibility for supervision of an intern by the approved preceptor.

This requirement is to ensure that a supervising pharmacist is not routinely required to supervise multiple interns, which could affect their ability to meet their legal and professional responsibilities, the quality of service delivered to the public and the learning outcomes for the interns.

Often the Board approves a pharmacist as a preceptor to more than one intern in pharmacy premises such as hospital pharmacy departments and large community pharmacies. However, the support of a sufficient number of other pharmacists in the day-to-day supervision of all interns at the training site is important to ensure that the above risks are mitigated.

From time to time, the work schedule of a supervising pharmacist may involve the direct supervision of more than one intern in a particular aspect of practice, for example a hospital pharmacist supervising more than one pharmacy intern on a particular ward rotation. Under such circumstances, the preceptor and supervising pharmacist should ensure that the supervision arrangements do not compromise patient safety or the quality of learning outcomes of the interns.

Ensuring the total number of interns undertaking supervised practice at the premises does not exceed the total number of supervising pharmacists at any one time is likely to facilitate achieving the required outcomes.

Exceptional circumstances

According to the Board's Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements, in exceptional circumstances the Board may approve other supervision ratios where there is evidence that the required learning outcomes can be achieved and public safety is not compromised.

Application for alternative supervision ratios

A preceptor who is considering an alternative supervision ratio should:

1. undertake a risk assessment before deciding whether to make a request to the Board for approval of the proposed arrangements, and
2. include in the application for approval of supervised practice details of:
 - a. how the legal and professional responsibilities of all supervising pharmacists including adequate supervision of all staff (interns and non-pharmacist staff at the premises) will be met
 - b. the measures that will be in place to ensure that safety of the public is not compromised by the proposed arrangements
 - c. the measures that will be in place to ensure that the required learning outcomes will be achieved for each intern at the premises, including details of the work schedule and training plan of each intern that ensure that sufficient practice exposure to the different areas of pharmacy practice can be achieved through the proposed arrangements, and
 - d. details of how the proposed preceptor is prepared for their role.

The above information will be considered by the Board or its delegate on a case-by-case basis, and the intern and preceptor subsequently advised of the outcome with reasons supporting the Board's decision. Applicants should allow enough time to enable review and consideration.

Interns:

I am changing my preceptor and/or practice site, what do I need to do?

You must submit a new Application for approval of supervised practice (AASP-60). Once approved, you must also start recording your supervised practice hours under your new preceptor on a new Statutory declaration of weekly record of supervised practice hours for pharmacy interns and pharmacists holding general or limited registration (SPWR-60). Don't forget to get your last weekly record of hours signed off by your initial preceptor before you start with your new preceptor.

What if I want to do my supervised practice at multiple sites?

If you are undertaking your supervised practice at multiple training sites, the training must be coordinated by the approved preceptor. Rotations (of more than 180 hours) that are to be part of the training program under the direction of the approved preceptor must be included in the application for approval of supervised practice and recorded on the Declaration form: Weekly record of supervised practice hours (SPWR-60). If your rotation to an additional site is 180 hours or less you do not need the Board's approval for the hours to count towards your 1,824 supervised practice hours.

Intern training program (ITP)

For the purpose of meeting the requirements of section 52(1)(b)(i) of the National Law (Eligibility for general registration), as stated in the *Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements*, the Board requires interns to successfully complete an accredited intern training program (ITP) during their supervised practice period.

The ITP is competency-based training where the intern builds on academic knowledge with practical experience gained at the supervised practice site to progress from student to competent pharmacist. ITPs are based on the knowledge, skills and attributes of pharmacists as described by the *National competency standards framework for pharmacists in Australia 2016*. To satisfactorily complete the ITP, interns are required to provide valid and reliable evidence of entry-level competence in each of the five domains of the framework. The standards applicable to entry-level pharmacists are highlighted in *The Competency Standards* of the framework through the use of shading.

ITPs are structured to gather this evidence by a number of methods which may include:

- a portfolio
- preceptor assessments
- online multiple-choice questions
- training days
- tutorials
- discussion papers, and
- continuing professional development record/s.

The intern should:

- adopt a positive approach to this period of learning
- aim to become a competent pharmacist by the end of the ITP
- be aware that knowledge not complemented by practical experience can be a liability
- be aware that, aside from daily activities of the work situation, time should be set aside to consider and study assignments outside working hours
- seek to acquire knowledge and skills actively by observation, reading, listening and questioning others
- comply with the profession's standards and guidelines, as set down by professional associations and the Board
- ensure culturally safe and respectful practice (please refer to the [Ahpra website](#) for the definition of cultural safety for the National Scheme and the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and cultural safety strategy 2020–2025](#))
- recognise that success at the end of the training period is determined largely by the amount of effort invested, and
- consciously develop high personal standards of professionalism
- ensure all ITP requirements e.g. assignments, portfolios have been completed.

On satisfactory completion of the components of an approved ITP, the intern will be issued with a certificate of completion, or evidence will be provided directly from the ITP provider to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra), which supports the Board. Evidence of completion is required as part of an application for general registration.

It is the responsibility of the intern to enrol in an ITP that best suits their needs. An approved supervised practice position must be secured before enrolling in an ITP. A list of accredited intern training program providers is available at www.pharmacycouncil.org.au.

Assessment of extemporaneously prepared (compounded) medicines

The Board requires that interns are assessed on their ability to prepare extemporaneous products (compound) in the supervised practice site as part of the ITP. During their internship, interns will be required to extemporaneously prepare six products. This will be assessed by the preceptor (or their designate) and the required paperwork is then provided to the ITP coordinator so that this component of the ITP can be met. The required paperwork includes:

- an instruction letter for preceptors outlining the assessment process
- an extemporaneous dispensing procedures document to guide interns and preceptors
- a standard report form for each product assessed, and
- a statutory declaration to be completed by the preceptor on completion of the assessment.

The above documents are available on the Board's website www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration* and *Internships*.

For each product, interns must complete a report form to submit to their ITP along with a statutory declaration completed by their preceptor. These forms are available on the [Board's website](#). The Board's [Guidelines on compounding of medicines](#) and published practice standards help ensure that any products that interns compound will be safe and effective.

Other requirements

To meet the requirements of the intern training program and receive a completion certificate, interns will need to:

- hold valid Australian First Aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificates
- complete and submit the required evidence of completion of the extemporaneous dispensing activity, and
- demonstrate satisfactory performance during the intern training program.

Remember, without an ITP completion certificate an intern will be unable to apply for general registration.

Examinations

The Board's *Registration standard: Examinations for eligibility for general registration* outlines that interns are required to successfully complete a registration examination conducted by or on behalf of the Board.

Currently the registration examination includes two examinations: a written and an oral examination. Candidates may apply to sit either or both examinations during the same examination period.

Successful completion of the registration examination requires candidates to pass both the oral and written examinations within an 18 month period.

Written examination

The written examination is conducted by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) on behalf of the Board. As of 1 January 2021, interns may attempt this examination after having completed a minimum of **75 per cent** of their supervised practice hours. If a candidate fails to pass the written examination, he or she may re-sit the examination at one of the subsequent scheduled sessions.

This examination is used as an assessment of the ability to apply knowledge gained in the undergraduate course and during supervised practice to practice situations. It covers six content areas based on the *National competency standards framework for pharmacists in Australia 2016*.

The written examination candidate guide contains information on the application process, examination calendar, format, rules, appeals process and sample questions and is available at www.pharmacycouncil.org.au.

Oral examination

The oral examination is conducted by Ahpra on behalf of the Board. Information on this examination is included in the *Pharmacy oral examination (practice) candidate guide* published on the Board's website www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration and Internships*.

Oral examinations are held in each jurisdiction according to the Schedule of oral examinations, which can also be viewed at the Board's website www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration and Internships* and *Schedule of oral examinations*. An *Application to be a candidate for an oral examination for pharmacy interns* must be lodged by the published closing date for that examination period. This form is available on the Board's website www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration and Forms*.

Interns must undertake the oral examination in the jurisdiction where they have undertaken their supervised practice.

Interns:

How do I prepare for the oral exam?

Some practical tips for preparing for the oral exam include:

- quizzing yourself on medications you are about to dispense
- role-playing primary health care scenarios
- time keeping (practising questions under examination conditions), and
- handling prescription problems (or observing others handling prescription problems).

The *Pharmacy oral examination (practice) candidate guide* on the *Internships* page has further tips to help you prepare for the oral exam and demonstrate your competency to practise as a pharmacist. Don't forget that your preceptor and ITP will also be able to help you prepare.

Applying for general registration

Applications for general registration under the National Law are to be submitted to the Board.

If an intern currently holds provisional registration and has completed all of the requirements to be eligible for general registration, they can apply for general registration via the Ahpra [Online services](#) portal.

If an intern no longer holds provisional registration, an *Application for general registration as a pharmacist* (AGEN-60) is available on the Board's website www.pharmacyboard.gov.au under *Registration and Forms*.

NOTE: Ahpra, which supports the Board, aims to process applications as soon as possible. Processing times are published by Ahpra on its website. Applications that do not provide all of the requisite information and documentation may be delayed unnecessarily. Preceptors and/or employers should be mindful of this when planning rosters around the time the intern applies for general registration.

General enquiries and more information

The following is a general guide to the first point of contact for particular enquiries:

- ITP providers – ITP course outlines, training date information, ITP requirements, intern training issues
- Ahpra – registration enquiries, the oral examination, intern training issues which are unable to be resolved with the ITP provider
- The Pharmacy Board of Australia – matters requiring referral from Ahpra
- APC – the written examination

Matters which are **not** regulated by Ahpra and/or the Board:

- pay disputes
- industrial relations
- legal matters

For other aspects of pharmacy practice that are the function of other regulators refer to the information on the *Other regulators* webpage on the Board's website.

Abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviations

Ahpra	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
APC	Australian Pharmacy Council
Board	Pharmacy Board of Australia
CPD	Continuing professional development
ITP	Intern training program
PGA	Pharmacy Guild of Australia
PPA	Professional Pharmacists Australia
PSA	Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
PSS	Pharmacists Support Services
SHPA	Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

Definitions

National Law	The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.
Accredited intern training program	A program of work integrated learning conducted by intern training providers and accredited by the accreditation authority and approved by the Board.
Approved pharmacy program	A program of study approved by the Board under section 49 of the National Law.
Approved preceptor	A pharmacist responsible for the overall supervision and training of a pharmacist undertaking supervised practice as part of the process leading to general registration, or during supervised practice undertaken in accordance with the requirements specified in the Board's recency of practice standard.
Internship	The period during which a pharmacist undertakes a period of supervised practice under the supervision of a preceptor, in order to meet the requirements for initial general registration in Australia.
Pharmacy intern	A person registered with the Board who has completed the educational requirements determined by the Board to enable them to undertake a period of supervised practice required for initial general registration in Australia pursuant to clause 52(1)(b)(i) of the National Law.
Supervising pharmacist	For the purpose of this guide, is a pharmacist holding general registration who is responsible for the day-to-day direct supervision of a pharmacist in the provision of pharmacy services during supervised practice that has been approved by the Board. The supervising pharmacist may be the approved preceptor, or another pharmacist who has been delegated this responsibility by the approved preceptor.
Supervised practice	Practising under the direct supervision of a pharmacist who holds general registration (the preceptor or another supervising pharmacist), while pharmacy services are provided in pharmacy premises or in other premises and circumstances determined by the Board. Supervised practice includes internship.

Appendix A: Forms

The following forms, which may be required before and during the intern year, are available on the [Forms](#) page or the [Internships](#) page on the [Pharmacy Board of Australia website](#).

Applicants and registrants can submit their applications, forms and supporting documents online. The [online upload webpage](#) of the Ahpra website provides further information on uploading forms and documents to Ahpra.

Applications for provisional registration and approval of supervised practice

Final-year students of an approved pharmacy program of study in Australia can apply:

- for provisional registration by submitting an online application, and
- to have the supervised practice approved by submitting a completed *Application for approval of supervised practice – AASP-60*.

Applicants who graduated from New Zealand or another overseas country should submit an *Application for provisional registration and supervised practice – APRO-60*.

An *Application for approval of supervised practice – AASP-60*, also needs to be submitted if changing preceptor or supervised practice site or adding an additional supervised practice site.

Weekly record of supervised practice hours

Interns should use the *Statutory declaration of weekly record of supervised practice hours for pharmacy interns and pharmacists holding general or limited registration – SPWR-60* to keep a record of their supervised practice hours required for general registration.

Application to be a candidate for an oral examination (practice)

In order to sit the oral examination (practice) interns must lodge an *Application for a pharmacy intern to be a candidate for an oral examination (practice) – APOE-60* by the closing date for that examination period.

Form	When to use the form
Application for approval of supervised practice – AASP-60	You need to submit this form to Ahpra when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• applying for provisional registration online – to have your preceptor and place of supervised practice approved• changing your preceptor• changing your supervised practice site• adding an additional supervised practice site
Statutory declaration of weekly record of supervised practice hours for pharmacy interns and pharmacists holding general or limited registration – SPWR-60	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• record your supervised practice hours• submit this form to Ahpra when applying for general registration
Application for a pharmacy intern to be a candidate for an oral examination (practice) – APOE-60	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• apply to sit the oral examination (practice)
Application for provisional registration and supervised practice – APRO-60	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• you have graduated from New Zealand or another overseas country

Appendix B: Resources

Where to go	What you will find
Pharmacy Board of Australia website www.pharmacyboard.gov.au	Home page of the Pharmacy Board of Australia
Pharmacy Board internships www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Registration/Internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacy oral examination (practice) candidate guide • Intern pharmacist and preceptor guide • FAQs for pharmacy interns and preceptors • Sample training plans • Documents for the preparation of extemporaneous products
Pharmacy Board Registration standards www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards	The requirements that all applicants, students and pharmacists must meet to be registered
Pharmacy Board Codes, guidelines and policies www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines	Quick reference guide to Pharmacy Board guidelines Code of conduct Guidelines relevant to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compounding • CPD • dispensing • practice specific issues • proprietor pharmacists • dose administration aids and staged supply • mandatory notifications • advertising
Pharmacy Board FAQs and fact sheets www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines/FAQ/CPD-FAQ	FAQs relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compounding • CPD (including a CPD plan/record template) • registration renewal • advertising • English language skills
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) website www.psa.org.au/practice-support-industry/professional-practice-standards/	Professional practice standards
PSA implementation tools www.psa.org.au/implementation-tools/	Board-funded CPD implementation tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary guide • Implementation guide • Self-assessment tool • Learning plan tool • Case studies

<p>National competency standards framework</p> <p>www.psa.org.au/practice-support-industry/national-competency-standards/</p>	<p>2016 National competency standards framework</p>
<p>The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) website</p> <p>www.shpa.org.au/standards-of-practice</p>	<p>Standards of practice</p>
<p>Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) website</p> <p>www.pharmacycouncil.org.au/our-services/examinations/</p>	<p>Australian intern written examination information</p> <p>Exam dates and places</p> <p>Exam resources (online tutorial, practice papers, Guide for the intern written exam)</p>