



Chiropractic
Dental
Medical
Nursing and Midwifery
Optometry

Osteopathy
Pharmacy
Physiotherapy
Podiatry
Psychology

FAQs: Specialist Registration

What is specialist registration?

Specialist registration may be granted if you meet the eligibility and qualifications requirements set out in sections 57 and 58 of the National Law, and any registration standards issued by your National Board.

The Ministerial Council approved the 'recognised specialties' for which specialist registration may be granted under the National Law, and approved the specialist titles for each recognised specialty.

From 1 July 2010 specialist registration may be granted to practitioners in:

- Dentistry (13 recognised specialties: Dento-maxillofacial radiology, Endodontics, Oral and maxillofacial surgery, Oral medicine, Oral pathology, Oral surgery, Orthodontics, Paediatric dentistry, Periodontics, Prosthodontics, Public health dentistry (Community dentistry), Special needs dentistry, Forensic odontology)
- Medicine (23 recognised specialties: See Appendix One)
- Podiatry (1 recognised specialty: Podiatric surgery)

The lists of recognised specialties and approved specialist titles for these professions can be accessed on each Board website.

You may be eligible for and hold both general registration and specialist registration at the same time. If you qualified overseas and do not hold an approved undergraduate or entry level qualification, you may hold specialist registration only and be limited to practising only in your specialty.

Specialist registration operates in a similar way to endorsement. It is used to identify on the public register practitioners who have specialist qualifications recognised by the relevant National Board, in addition to their base qualifications for registration.

If I hold specialist registration, what professional titles can I use?

The Ministerial Council has approved the recognised specialties that will apply under the national scheme. It has also approved the specialist titles associated with each of these specialties. A practitioner who holds specialist registration in a recognised specialty is not limited to using only the specialist title approved by the Ministerial Council. A registered specialist may use any other title of their choice, as long as they do not present themselves as

holding a type of registration (including specialist registration) that they do not hold.

Can I call myself a 'specialist' if I do not hold specialist registration?

When there is no specialist registration available to a health profession under the National Scheme, registered practitioners must take care in their use of professional titles. This will avoid misleading the public into believing that you are a specialist practitioner when you are not. Using the title 'specialist' when you are not registered by your National Board as a specialist has the potential to mislead members of the public about your registration status.

What is the difference between specialist registration and endorsement for area of practice?

Specialist registration and endorsement for areas of practice are both mechanisms available under the National Law. They both identify on a public register one or more sub-groups or classes within a health profession whose members have specific characteristics that are different from the rest of the profession.

The difference between them is primarily one of terminology. There are offences under the National Law that prohibit both:

- unauthorised persons from advertising themselves as holding endorsement of registration in an area of practice and
- persons from advertising themselves as specialists when they are not

What is the role of the Ministerial Council in specialist recognition or area of practice endorsement?

Under the National Law, a National Board does not have the statutory power to grant any practitioner specialist registration or an endorsement of registration unless the Ministerial Council (made up of all State, Territory and Commonwealth Health Ministers) approves this function. See sections 13 and 14 of the National Law.

The Ministerial Council has statutory powers and responsibilities under the National Law to recognise specialties, and approve of area of practice endorsements (sections 13 and 15 of the National Law). The Ministerial Council makes its decision based on the recommendation of the National Boards in the professions for which specialist registration and area of practice endorsements operate. The Ministerial Council also approves the specialties and areas of practice endorsements that will apply.

Ministers and Governments aim to ensure that the National Law operates in the public interest, and that mechanisms such as specialist registration and area of practice endorsement are applied only when a net public benefit can be demonstrated. They are concerned that there is potential for these mechanisms to lead to an increasingly stratified and inflexible workforce, by reducing the availability of staff with general skills able to work across a wide variety of practice areas. Unintended consequences can occur when more practitioners in a profession choose to work within narrow scopes of practice

and when those with general skills but without additional qualifications can be, over time, excluded from these areas of practice.

These pressures can result in reduced access to services for consumers generally, and increase the overall cost of services to the community as specialist practitioners are more in demand and may charge more for their services. While members of the profession have an interest to see the highest possible quality of services delivered to the community, governments aim to make sure that the system as a whole operates to deliver services of an acceptable quality to as large a number of people as possible.

Generally, area of practice endorsements are used to identify health practitioners who are authorised under Commonwealth or State legislation to do things that they would otherwise not be authorised to do. For example, by providing specified services that covered by government or non-government insurance arrangements. The endorsement mechanism is intended to be used to extend the scopes of practice of endorsed practitioners when legal barriers currently apply. It is not intended to restrict the scopes of practice of practitioners who do not hold an endorsement.

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Appendix One:

List of specialties, fields of specialty practice, and related specialist titles for medicine

Proposed specialty	Proposed fields of specialty practice	Proposed specialist titles
Addiction medicine	—	Specialist in addiction medicine
Anaesthesia	—	Specialist anaesthetist
Dermatology	—	Specialist dermatologist
Emergency medicine	—	Specialist emergency physician
General practice	—	Specialist general practitioner
Intensive care medicine	—	Specialist intensive care physician
Medical administration	—	Specialist medical administrator
Obstetrics and gynaecology		Specialist obstetrician and gynaecologist
	Gynaecological oncology	Specialist gynaecological oncologist
	Maternal–fetal medicine	Specialist in maternal–fetal medicine
	Obstetrics and gynaecological ultrasound	Specialist in obstetrics and gynaecological ultrasound
	Reproductive endocrinology and infertility	Specialist in reproductive endocrinology and infertility
	Urogynaecology	Specialist urogynaecologist
Occupational and environmental medicine	—	Specialist occupational and environmental physician
Ophthalmology	—	Specialist ophthalmologist
Paediatrics and child health		Specialist paediatrician
	Clinical genetics	Specialist paediatric clinical geneticist
	Community child health	Specialist in community child health
	General paediatrics	Specialist general paediatrician
	Neonatal and perinatal medicine	Specialist neonatologist
	Paediatric cardiology	Specialist paediatric cardiologist
	Paediatric clinical pharmacology	Specialist paediatric clinical pharmacologist
	Paediatric emergency medicine	Specialist paediatric emergency physician
	Paediatric endocrinology	Specialist paediatric endocrinologist
	Paediatric gastroenterology and hepatology	Specialist paediatric gastroenterologist and hepatologist
	Paediatric haematology	Specialist paediatric haematologist
	Paediatric immunology and allergy	Specialist paediatric immunologist and allergist
	Paediatric infectious diseases	Specialist paediatric infectious diseases physician

	Paediatric intensive care medicine	Specialist paediatric intensive care physician
	Paediatric medical oncology	Specialist paediatric medical oncologist
	Paediatric nephrology	Specialist paediatric nephrologist
	Paediatric neurology	Specialist paediatric neurologist
	Paediatric nuclear medicine	Specialist paediatric nuclear medicine physician
	Paediatric palliative medicine	Specialist paediatric palliative medicine physician
	Paediatric rehabilitation medicine	Specialist paediatric rehabilitation physician
	Paediatric respiratory and sleep medicine	Specialist paediatric respiratory and sleep medicine physician
	Paediatric rheumatology	Specialist paediatric rheumatologist
Pain medicine	—	Specialist pain medicine physician
Palliative medicine		Specialist palliative medicine physician
Pathology		Specialist pathologist
	General pathology	Specialist general pathologist
	Anatomical pathology (including cytopathology)	Specialist anatomical pathologist
	Chemical pathology	Specialist chemical pathologist
	Haematology	Specialist haematologist
	Immunology	Specialist immunologist
	Microbiology	Specialist microbiologist
	Forensic pathology	Specialist forensic pathologist
Physician		Specialist physician
	Cardiology	Specialist cardiologist
	Clinical genetics	Specialist clinical geneticist
	Clinical pharmacology	Specialist clinical pharmacologist
	Endocrinology	Specialist endocrinologist
	Gastroenterology and hepatology	Specialist gastroenterologist and hepatologist
	General medicine	Specialist general physician
	Geriatric medicine	Specialist geriatrician
	Haematology	Specialist haematologist
	Immunology and allergy	Specialist immunologist and allergist
	Infectious diseases	Specialist infectious diseases physician
	Medical oncology	Specialist medical oncologist
	Nephrology	Specialist nephrologist
	Neurology	Specialist neurologist
	Nuclear medicine	Specialist nuclear medicine physician
	Respiratory and sleep medicine	Specialist respiratory and sleep medicine

		physician
	Rheumatology	Specialist rheumatologist
Psychiatry	—	Specialist psychiatrist
Public health medicine	—	Specialist public health physician
Radiation oncology	—	Specialist radiation oncologist
Radiology	Diagnostic radiology	Specialist radiologist
	Diagnostic ultrasound	Specialist radiologist
	Nuclear medicine	Specialist in nuclear medicine
Rehabilitation medicine	—	Specialist rehabilitation physician
Sexual health medicine	—	Specialist sexual health physician
Sport and exercise medicine	—	Specialist sport and exercise physician
Surgery		Specialist surgeon
	Cardio-thoracic surgery	Specialist cardio-thoracic surgeon
	General surgery	Specialist general surgeon
	Neurosurgery	Specialist neurosurgeon
	Orthopaedic surgery	Specialist orthopaedic surgeon
	Otolaryngology – head and neck surgery	Specialist otolaryngologist - head and neck surgeon
	Oral and maxillofacial surgery	Specialist oral and maxillofacial surgeon
	Paediatric surgery	Specialist paediatric surgeon
	Plastic surgery	Specialist plastic surgeon
	Urology	Specialist urologist
	Vascular surgery	Specialist vascular surgeon

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