

Renewals for national registration – what you need to know

by Elyse Cain

Renewals for national registration are upon us once again. Since the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) was established to manage registration processes in July last year there have been many well documented difficulties with registration. The AMA (NSW) has worked hard to assist and inform our members through these difficulties.

In the coming months it will prove essential for doctors to remain up-to-date, informed and on top of the renewal process as the registration system stabilises. With this in mind, the following information comes from the AMA (NSW) direct consultations with Kym Ayscough, State Manager for NSW at AHPRA. It is the most current and reliable source of advice on registration renewals for 2011.

Schedule of communications from AHPRA

1. *Email:* If you have already provided AHPRA with your email address you will receive an email from AHPRA notifying you of your approaching renewal (known as 'registration expiry' date).
2. *Renewal notice:* About two months before your renewal date you will receive a letter from AHPRA in the mail notifying you of your approaching

renewal date (unless you have already renewed in response to emails from AHPRA).

3. *Late payment period notice:* About 10 days before the end of your one-month grace period you will receive a letter from AHPRA in the mail informing you that your registration will expire in 10 days if you do not renew.
4. *Notice of lapsed registration:* If you have not renewed your registration by the deadline at the conclusion of your one-month grace period, your registration will expire and you will receive a letter from AHPRA in the mail informing you of your lapsed registration. The date of your lapsed registration will be recorded as the day after your one-month grace period concluded.

Renewal dates

May/June

For those of you whose renewal date is in May or June it is essential you renew your registration right now if you have not already done so. Once your renewal is processed you will be a registered practitioner until 30 September 2012 and will not need to renew again in September this year. This means you will be registered for a period longer than 12 months which will also result in a higher renewal fee.

July

For those of you whose renewal date is in July you should already have received the renewal notice from AHPRA notifying you of your approaching renewal date. Once your renewal is processed, you will be a registered practitioner until 30 September 2012 and will not need to renew again in September this year. This means you will be registered for a period longer than 12 months which will also result in a higher renewal fee.

August

For those of you whose renewal date is in August you should soon receive the renewal notice from AHPRA notifying you of your approaching renewal date. Once your renewal is processed you will be a registered practitioner until 30 September 2012 and will not need to renew again in September this year. This means you will be registered for a period longer than 12 months which will also result in a higher renewal fee.

September

All other doctors with general or specialist registration will now be renewing in September 2011. For information on limited registration renewals please see opposite page. All renewals processed between May and 30 September 2011 (including renewals submitted during the one-month grace period following 30 September 2011) will be valid until 30 September 2012 when renewals will be due once again.

Understanding AHPRA's terms

Registration expiry date

Your renewal date, after which you have a one-month grace period to renew before your registration is officially lapsed.

Late payment period

The one-month grace period commencing the day after your renewal date during which you must renew if you have not already. You remain registered until the end of this period and may incur a late fee.

Lapsed registration

Your registration has officially expired. This happens the day after your one-month grace period has ended (if you have not renewed by this point). If your registration has lapsed you can no longer renew and must re-apply for registration instead.

Key Advice

Dates and deadlines

After 30 September 2011 the renewal date for all doctors in Australia with general and/or specialist registration will be 30 September of every year, regardless of birth dates. The AMA (NSW) strongly advises doctors to keep record of this date as the yearly renewal date.

All registered practitioners are eligible for a one-month grace period, commencing from their 2011 renewal date.

Example: If your renewal date is 5 August 2011 your one-month grace period will end on 4 September 2011. Therefore your absolute final deadline for renewal in 2011 would be 4 September 2011.

After 2011 all registered practitioners will be eligible for a one-month grace period to renew, commencing from 1 October and concluding on 30 October each year. As of 2012 the absolute final deadline for renewal will be 30 October each year.

Procedure

Renew your registration online as soon as you receive an email or your renewal notice from AHPRA. Using AHPRA's online services to renew your registration is quick and efficient and therefore strongly encouraged. Please note that retired doctors in the limited prescribing and referral (known as 'occasional practice') category are not eligible to renew online as their renewal applications must be individually assessed.

If your only option is to send in your renewal application via post you must allow enough time so that AHPRA receives your application before your renewal deadline.

Provide AHPRA with your email address. The majority of doctors who lapsed during the first renewal in 2010 had not provided email and mobile contact information. Providing your email address will ensure that you receive relevant notifications from AHPRA early and regularly.

It is essential to answer all the questions on the renewal application form. If you are unsure about any of the questions, contact the AMA (NSW) Medico-Legal division on 02 9439 8822 or via email at industrial@amansw.com.au for advice.

Limited Registration

Limited registration includes: for postgraduate training or supervised practice; for area of need; for teaching or research, and; in the public interest (including limited prescribing and referral known as 'limited occasional practice').

For doctors with limited registration, renewal dates are specific to the individual and differ from general/specialist renewal dates. Limited registration will generally be for 12 months from the date of the registration or renewal approval however this may vary case by case. Therefore we advise limited registrants to check the online register to confirm their registration expiry date.

Please note that limited registration may not be renewed more than three times but a new application for registration may be made. Further information for limited and retired registrants will be provided in the coming months.