

## Health professionals registration: Medical officers, nurses, midwives, health practitioners and other health professionals

**Policy Number:** B14 (QH-POL-147)

**Publication date:** February 2021

**Purpose:** To outline the requirements relating to mandatory professional registration and memberships.

**Application:** This policy applies to all health professionals employed or contracted to work for Queensland Health in roles when professional registration, or eligibility for membership of a professional organisation, is a mandatory requirement of the position.

This policy does not apply to employees of Queensland Ambulance Service. Instead, Queensland Ambulance Service employees are to refer to their local policy/procedure.

**Delegation:** The 'delegate' is as listed in the relevant Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual or Hospital and Health Services Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

### Legislative or other authority:

- *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*
- *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Queensland)*
- *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Regulation 2018*
- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Public Service Act 2008*

### Related policy or documents:

- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service
- [National Code of Conduct for healthcare workers in Queensland](#)
- PSC Directive 14/20: Discipline
- PSC Directive 15/20: Positive performance management
- PSC Directive 16/20: Suspension
- Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1 (QH-POL-212)
- Discipline HR Policy E10 (QH-POL-124)
- Suspension of Employees HR Policy E14 (QH-POL-400)



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**1 Requirement to hold registration/membership**

Professional registration/membership is the minimum mandatory condition of employment within Queensland Health for health professional positions where registration is required through a national health practitioner board to legally practice the profession.

A health professional **must** hold a level of registration that enables them to:

- commence employment with Queensland Health
- continue to meet the inherent requirements of employment in their role with Queensland Health
- perform the full duties and responsibilities of their substantive role and
- legally practice their profession in their substantive role in accordance with the national law.

For a full list of occupations required to hold registration, refer to [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency](#).

For unregulated/self-regulated health professions, a health professional **must** be eligible for membership of the professional organisation relevant for the employee's health profession as required for the profession to enable them to:

- commence employment with Queensland Health
- continue to meet the inherent requirements of employment in their role with Queensland Health
- perform the full duties and responsibilities of their substantive role.

## 2 Practice while registration is being renewed

Section 107(2) of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Queensland)* provides that an application for renewal of the health professional's registration must be made not later than one month after the practitioner's period of registration ends.

Health professionals are able to practice while their registration renewal application is being processed, even if the renewal process extends past their registration expiry date. Health professionals remain registered for one month after their registration expiry date and can continue to practice during this time unless they no longer appear on the Register of Practitioners.

## 3 Submissions about proposed refusal or imposition of condition

Under Section 111 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Queensland)*, a health professional has the opportunity to make a submission to their National Board within 30 days if the Board is proposing to either refuse to renew their registration, or to renew their registration subject to a new condition. While this process is occurring, the practitioner remains registered and able to continue practicing their profession.

## 4 Responsibilities of health professionals

It is the responsibility of the individual health professional to ensure they hold and maintain current registration from the appropriate registration board or remain eligible for membership of the relevant professional organisation, throughout their employment with Queensland Health. Health professionals are to practice within their training and capabilities and within any conditions of practice that may have been placed upon them by their relevant national health practitioner registration board, or any undertakings given by the health professional.

An employee engaged in a role with Queensland Health where registration or eligibility for membership of the relevant professional organisation is a mandatory requirement of the role, is responsible for ensuring their registration or eligibility for membership of the professional organisation continues during periods of extended leave, including:

- leave with and/or without pay (e.g. parental leave)
- secondments
- acting or higher duties arrangements
- extended breaks between casual engagements.

A registered health professional **must** immediately advise their manager/clinician manager when the status of their professional registration with the registration board or eligibility for membership of the professional organisation changes.

A change to the status of the health professional's registration includes, but is not limited to:

- suspension
- conditions
- restrictions
- undertakings
- notations
- reprimands
- cautions.

Health professionals making submissions to their National Board regarding a proposed refusal or imposition of condition upon registration renewal are to keep their managers/clinician managers informed throughout the process.

## 5 Role of managers/clinician managers

Managers/clinician managers are responsible for verifying the registration or eligibility for membership of the relevant professional organisation of each health professional in their area of work (including for contracted/agency staff).

A local manager/clinician manager may obtain proof of current health practitioner registration at any time by viewing the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) Register of Practitioners.

**Prior to** an employee commencing duties as a health professional, either as a new appointment, through a transfer, secondment, or returning after a period of extended leave, the manager/clinician manager **must** verify that the employee's registration is current, and the registration is appropriate for the role to be performed (refer Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1).

It is recommended that the manager/clinician manager re-check the registration status of new employees on their first day of work prior to the employee commencing clinical duties as a health professional.

Managers/clinician managers are to ensure rostering or work directives do not place health professionals, especially junior health professionals, in situations that may result in them practicing outside the scope of their training and capabilities or outside any conditions of practice that may have been placed upon them by their relevant national health practitioner board or any undertakings given by the health professional.

When managers/clinician managers are advised that the status of a health professional's registration/eligibility for professional organisation membership (membership eligibility) has changed, for example through suspension, conditions, restrictions or undertakings, they are to:

- obtain specific details of the altered registration/membership eligibility
- carefully consider the implications of the altered registration on service delivery/membership eligibility
- take appropriate interim action to ensure the health professional does not practice outside any conditions of practice that may have been placed upon them by their relevant national health practitioner board
- consider whether the employee can continue to work in their substantive position or whether further action is required
- consult their local HR unit for advice.

Managers/clinician managers are to monitor the progress of health professionals' submissions regarding proposed refusal or imposition of condition upon registration renewal and provide any appropriate support in these situations.

Managers are to also refer to Attachment One of this policy in reference to their responsibilities in the registration audit process.

## Definitions:

Health professionals who are required to be registered	<p>Health professionals include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• medical and dental practitioners, including employees and those under a procurement contract such as visiting medical officers, visiting general dental practitioners, visiting oral surgeons and other visiting dental specialists</li> <li>• enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners</li> <li>• health practitioners, including medical radiation technologists, occupational therapists, optometrists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists and psychologists</li> <li>• paramedicine (paramedics)*</li> </ul> <p>* Paramedics are required to be registered from 1 December 2018.</p>
Professional organisation	<p>For the purposes of this policy, professional organisation refers to the relevant society or association, however so named, for the occupational group which sets the benchmarks for professional education and practice.</p>
Verify	<p>For registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• viewing the health professional's registration details on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) public access online register (i.e. the minimum mandatory verification); and</li> <li>• checking the details contained within, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- confirming the health professional is registered on the AHPRA Register of practitioners (also known as the public register)</li> <li>- ensuring the name on the public register is the same as other documentation in the possession of Queensland Health</li> <li>- confirming that the registration is current and appropriate for the position and/or roles to be performed</li> <li>- identifying any endorsements and/or limitations placed on the health professional's right to practice.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>For membership eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring the health professional has attained the required qualification standards or other pre-requisites required for membership eligibility of the relevant professional organisation</li> <li>• where the health professional is a member of the professional organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sighting the original or a certified copy of a health professional's professional organisation membership card/letter/certificate;</li> <li>- ensuring the name on the membership document is the same as other documentation in possession of Queensland Health.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## History:

February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy formatted as part of the HR Policy review</li> <li>• Policy amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- update naming conventions</li> <li>- remove reference to registration/membership section (previous section 1) as reference to registration and membership has been clarified throughout policy</li> <li>- clarify requirement to ensure health professionals practice within scope of their training, capabilities and any conditions</li> <li>- clarify positions requiring registration and membership (section 1)</li> <li>- expand change of health professional's registration status examples (section 4)</li> <li>- include definition for professional organisation (Definitions)</li> <li>- re-title Attachment One from 'Application' to 'Procedures for the verification, audit and management action regarding health professionals registration'</li> <li>- clarify action required for health professionals no longer eligible for membership (section 6 Attachment One).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- formatted as part of the HR Policy review</li> <li>- amended to update naming conventions</li> <li>- extended application across Queensland Health</li> <li>- amended to include reference to professional memberships</li> <li>- updated the verification and escalation processes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
October 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy formatted as part of the HR Policy Simplification project.</li> <li>• Policy amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- update references and naming conventions</li> <li>- update processes related to the <i>Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009</i></li> <li>- update the verification and escalation processes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
November 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended to include responsibilities of medical superintendents in section 7.1.</li> </ul>
July 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended to reflect <i>Public Service Act 2008</i>.</li> </ul>
June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy amended in response to feedback from stakeholders throughout Queensland Health.</li> </ul>
November 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New policy approved by Executive Management Team.</li> </ul>
Previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRM 1.17 Health Professionals Registration – Medical Officers, Nurses and other Health Professionals.</li> </ul>

## Attachment One – Procedures for the verification, audit and management action regarding health professionals registration

The following information is provided as the minimum mandatory standard practice, procedure or process to enable satisfactory compliance with this Queensland Health HR policy.

Local guidelines/procedures may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. Any local guidelines/procedures must be consistent with this policy and standard practice and ensure employee entitlements continue to be met.

### 1 Recruitment, selection and placement

For all health professional positions in Queensland Health where professional registration is required to legally practice in that profession, the requirement of registration must be a mandatory requirement in the role description, the procurement contract and/or the agency arrangement. When required, the role description is to identify whether specialist registration is a mandated requirement for appointment.

Recruitment and selection exercises are to include processes that verify a candidate's registration or eligibility for membership of a professional organisation, prior to appointment. For information on these processes refer to the definitions section of this policy and the Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1.

With respect to transfers and secondments, the primary responsibility for verifying and ensuring the appropriateness of the registration/professional organisation membership eligibility (membership eligibility) of health professionals transferred or seconded from one facility to another rests with the receiving facility.

### 2 Changes to registration

When Queensland Health receives information that the status of a health professional's registration/membership eligibility has changed, including but not limited to suspension, conditions, restrictions or undertakings, the manager/clinician manager must consider the nature of the change and determine whether any restrictions on the employee's registration/membership eligibility can be reasonably accommodated within the work area.

The manager/clinician manager may liaise with the health professional's case manager at the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) or Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to identify the specific restrictions imposed and seek advice regarding how the employer may accommodate any restrictions. When a health professional's registration details have been suppressed, i.e. not included on the public register, therefore preventing verification, AHPRA may require the health professional's consent before information can be released to Queensland Health.

In situations where the restrictions of a health professional's registration/membership eligibility are not able to be accommodated, the manager/clinician manager is to contact their local HR Unit to discuss the options available for managing the health professional's ongoing employment.

Where an employee has changed their registration status to non-practicing, e.g. whilst on parental leave or long-term sick leave, managers are to ensure employees returning from a period of long-term leave update their registration status from non-practising to the appropriate registration category. Should an employee on a non-practicing registration return to work on an ad hoc basis, e.g. keeping in

touch day, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure they do not contravene any registration requirements in accordance with the relevant registration Board.

### 3 Reporting and audit

Business Reporting, Statewide Operations, Payroll Portfolio undertake various reporting initiatives to ensure all health professionals within Queensland Health are currently registered with AHPRA. These include:

- undertaking daily validation checks to ensure all health professionals within Queensland Health who require professional registration are listed as registered on the public access online register
- issuing fortnightly reports detailing medical officers with registration expiry dates within six weeks
- issuing weekly reports for nursing, midwifery, health practitioners and dental officers with registration expiry dates within two to six weeks and daily reports for employees whose registration expiry date is within one week
- escalating the names of health professionals who remain unregistered to the nominated local Queensland Health contact for initial follow-up and response. Where a response is not received within the designated timeframe, the matter will be further escalated to the relevant chief executive.

Managers/clinician managers must also implement strategies to monitor the registration status of health professionals, for example, by referring to publicly available information from practitioner registration boards.

An internal audit program may be implemented that incorporates checks on registration, including checks on compliance with any conditions placed on registration.

### 4 Action on receipt of audit report

This information is in addition to the requirements outlined in section 5 of the policy.

When registration has not been renewed at least two weeks prior to the expiry date of the health professional's registration, the manager/clinician manager should remind the health professional of their obligation to renew their registration and advise of the consequences of non-renewal. This reminder can be provided verbally or in writing. Refer to Attachment Two for an example letter.

If the health professional does not appear on the public register for their profession, the health professional must not practice their profession in a Queensland Health facility. The manager/clinician manager must take appropriate action to ensure the health professional does not practice without current registration.

Managers/clinician managers must advise their local HR Unit of health professionals who do not have current registration.

### 5 Health professionals on leave or not contactable

When a health professional has not renewed their registration and the health professional is on extended leave and/or cannot be contacted, the manager/clinician manager is to consult with their local HR Unit regarding an appropriate course of action.



The delegate must determine the appropriate action to be taken on a case-by-case basis, depending on the particular circumstances. The manager/clinician manager must also ensure the health professional does not return to work and undertake practice within their profession while they do not have current registration.

## 6 Action for health professionals who are unregistered/ineligible for membership

When the health professional does not hold current registration or eligibility for membership, they are unable to perform their substantive role and the manager/clinician manager is required to direct the health professional not to undertake practice within their profession and not to attend the workplace until the matter is resolved.

The health professional must be asked to provide reasons why they do not hold appropriate registration to enable them to legally practice in their position and perform the full duties of their substantive role. Consideration is to be given to the reasons provided and consultation is to occur with the local HR Unit to determine an appropriate course of action.

For the self-regulated professions, health professionals who are no longer eligible for membership of the relevant professional organisation must provide reasons as to why this has eventuated and provide a plan as to how they will address the reasons for ineligibility.

If a health professional makes an application for leave to cover the period between expiry of registration and its renewal, or restoration of membership eligibility, the delegate is to consider the request on a case-by-case basis.

Advice and assistance should be sought from the local HR Unit throughout this process and actions taken must be in accordance with the relevant Human Resource delegations manual.

## 7 Alternative employment

The delegate may give consideration to allow an unregistered health professional, a health professional with registration conditions, or a health professional ineligible for membership to temporarily work in an alternative role while they do not hold registration/membership eligibility.

In determining whether this is appropriate, consideration may be given to factors/issues including, but not limited to:

- the nature of the change to the status of the health professional's registration/membership eligibility
- the reason/s why the health professional does not hold registration/membership eligibility or has a changed registration/membership eligibility status
- the length of time before the health professional will be able to renew or restore their registration/membership eligibility.

## 8 Renewal of registration

If the health professional's registration/membership eligibility is renewed without condition, and the registration/membership eligibility has been verified, the manager/clinician manager will arrange for the health professional to resume duty with the approval of the appropriate delegate.

## 9 Contractors/agency staff

The procurement contract with an external service provider is to state that the external service provider has responsibility for verification of the registration/membership eligibility of independent contractors, agency staff and other non-employees who are contracted to work as a health professional.

Health professionals who are not Queensland Health employees must provide evidence of current registration/membership eligibility if requested.

When an independent contractor or agency staff member is not able to provide evidence of current registration/membership eligibility, the health professional is to be directed to immediately cease all duties under the contract and leave Queensland Health premises. The external service provider is to be immediately notified.

## Attachment Two – Sample letter advising of obligation to renew health professional registration

(this letter should be adapted to suit the particular circumstances of the health professional)

Employee Name  
Employee Address

Dear Mr/Ms/Dr <Last name>

I refer to your employment as a <position> with the <HHS/Department division>.

It is a mandatory requirement of your position that you maintain current professional registration with the appropriate registration body at a sufficient level to enable you to legally practice in your position and perform the full duties of your substantive role.

Records show your <registration> is due to expire on <date> and you have not as yet renewed your registration.

You are reminded it is your responsibility to hold and maintain current registration and to produce evidence that you are registered if requested by your employer. If you do not continue to maintain current registration you may not be able to perform the duties of your position.

Should you not apply to renew your registration within one month of the registration expiry date you may not be able to attend work and, as a result, may not be paid.

Any application for authorised leave during a period when you are not registered is at the discretion of the appropriate delegate.

The Employee Assistance Program provides free, confidential and professional counselling for a wide variety of personal and work-related issues that may adversely affect an employee. Accessing the service is voluntary through a self-referral system. Further information, including contact details, can be accessed on QHEPS at: <https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hr/staff-health-wellbeing/counselling-support>.

Should you have any queries in relation to the information contained in this letter please contact <name, position> on telephone <number>.

Yours sincerely

Delegate  
Date