



MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGISTS BOARD OF QUEENSLAND

ABN: 58 793 286 481

19th Floor, Forestry House
160 Mary Street
GPO Box 2438
BRISBANE QLD 4001
Telephone: (07) 3225 2517
Facsimile: (07) 3225 2527
Email: mrt@healthregboards.qld.gov.au

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2003

Introduction

The *Medical Radiation Technologists Registration Act 2001* and its Regulation came into effect on 12 May 2002. Since that time the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards has responded to many inquiries relating to the administration processes of registration. This newsletter will attempt to provide the reader with further information on issues relating to registration, in particular, the Supervised Practice Program.

Practicing Unregistered

It is a breach of the *Medical Radiation Technologists Registration Act 2001* to hold yourself out to be a Medical Imaging Technologist, Radiographer, Radiation Therapist or Nuclear Medicine Technologist whilst not registered. Working in the professions means that you are claiming those titles and therefore you are in breach of the Act if you are working without being registered.

The Board believes that inadequate advice is being provided by some employers to their staff on the seriousness of this matter. Practicing unregistered can occur in any of the following 4 circumstances:

- Unregistered and unqualified practice.
- Unregistered practice prior to submitting registration applications.
- Unregistered practice during the restoration period (3 month period between 1 July and 30 September each year).
- Unregistered practice post the restoration period (after September 30 each year).

The Board advises employers to check the registration status of each new employee prior to them commencing employment. Employers should then check prior to 30 June each year that all their employees have renewed their registration with the Board.

Employers have a critical role to play in this process particularly when:

- Taking on new graduates at the commencement of each year.
- Taking on employees from interstate where registration may not exist.
- When Supervised Practice Program participants move from registration with probationary conditions to general registration at the completion of the program.
- When employees return from extended annual and maternity leave.

Under the legislation the Board in the past 12 months has delayed the commencement of the supervised practice program of 3 probationary registrants due to their not registering at the start of the program. The Board is also currently considering prosecuting 6 individuals and 2 employers for breaches of these provisions of the Act. Each individual breach can carry a penalty of up to \$75,000.

If you are an employer please make yourself aware of the legislation. In some instances of these breaches of the Act the employer has either misinformed or neglected to inform the employee of the requirements under the Act.

Easy access to the register is available on the Board's website where a person's registration status can also be checked. Proof of registration is also readily available by the registrant showing a copy of their Annual Practising Certificate which is different to the receipt for monies paid.

Supervised Practice Program

In Queensland the Professional Development Year (PDY) is known as the Supervised Practice Program (SPP). It consists of 48 weeks of supervised practice in an accredited or approved centre. Initially practices across the state were advised that the SPP for Registration and the PDY for the Australian Institute of Radiography's (AIR) Statement of Accreditation would be conducted as the same program.

From the information received from the Universities regarding the possible date for the release of results and the processing of the registration, it is anticipated that the SPP could not commence until Monday 5th January, 2004. The MRTB's Assistant Registrar has indicated that the office will process these applications as soon as the relevant documentation and fees have been received. The Board will grant provisional registration to applicants on 5th January whose applications are correctly completed and received by the Office of the Board. The applications must be approved by the MRTB at its monthly meeting for the issuing of the required *General Registration with Probationary Conditions*.

All the required information has been provided to current third year students of QUT. Interstate graduates can download Application Kits from the Website: <http://www.mrtboard.qld.gov.au>

24 Week and 48 Week Report forms will be forwarded to centres at the appropriate times and these reports must be completed and forwarded to the Board within the required time frame (**28 days from the day the registrant receives a notice**).

Under the legislation the SPP **cannot and will not** commence until the graduate has applied for and been granted registration by the Board. The graduates **must always have** supervision and that on call and shift work should not commence until after the 6-month report has been successfully completed or later when the supervisor deems the graduate to be competent.

The Board must be advised of a change in Supervisors or Supervised Practice Settings not listed on the graduates Form 501A. These Supervisors must maintain current registration. Under the legislation both the graduates and the supervisors bear a legal responsibility.

Supervised Practice Program Committee

Earlier in 2003 the MRTB sought to delegate the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR), through the state Professional Accreditation and Education Committee (PAEC), and the Australian & New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine (ANZSNM) to be a prescribed entities under its regulations to conduct the SPP utilising the professional development year program which these bodies currently conduct.

The Executive Officer of the Health Practitioner Registration Boards, Mr Jim O'Dempsey, reviewed the legislative framework that the MRTB operates within and determined that there was no legislative basis for the AIR to make **decisions on behalf of the Board** relevant to the conduct of the SPP. However the Board may accept reports from the AIR.

Within Queensland the Board is the body with the legislative authority to:

- Approve professional practice settings (accredited centres).
- Approve 6 and 12 monthly reports.
- Approve supervisors and assistant supervisors.
- Determine the start and end date of a registrant's supervised practice program (independent of start or prospective end dates issued by the AIR, changes in supervisor or breaks in the program).
- Determine if a professional practice setting is a "suitable place" and if the practice can show cause as to why it should continue to be an approved practice setting in relation to non-compliance with any regulation.

Following advice from the Executive Officer the MRTB recently formed a Supervised Practice Program Committee, which is charged with the delegated authority to approve the above matters. Carolyn Astill has been employed by the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards (OHPRB) as a Special Project Officer for the period of 9

weeks from 20 October 2003 to implement this program for the Board. At this stage both organisations will duplicate the processes in conducting the SPP and PDY respectively. The Board is investigating options to streamline this process.

The Board has determined that the following will occur:

- The Committee will recognise the current advice from the AIR & ANZSNM on “Accredited & Approved Centres” however the Committee will:
 - approve future centres;
 - re-accredit & re- approve centres; and
 - conduct any reviews or audits of current or future accredited centres.
- The Committee has reviewed, approved or rejected the current 6 monthly reports
- The Committee will approve or reject the 12 monthly reports which have been distributed.
- The Committee will approve the Primary Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors for each Probationary registrant.
- The Board has received Crown Law advice on Section 12 of the regulation, which would permit it to allow reduced levels of supervision for registrants in the latter periods of the SPP to include on call and late shifts. A policy addressing this issue will be developed in 2004.

The Committee and the Board are aware that there may be some discrepancies between the legislative requirements of the SPP in Queensland and the guidelines for the PDY conducted by the AIR and the ANZSNM. The Special Project Officer has written to all accredited & approved centres drawing these issues to their attention.

Application for General Registration (end of probationary conditions)

Upon successful completion of your SPP the graduate will need to make an application to the Registration Board to have the Probationary Conditions removed from their registration. This needs to be done in writing. A form letter will be enclosed with the 48 week report form. This form letter can be completed and returned to the Office of the Board (with the 48 week report) or graduates may write their own letter requesting the removal of conditions. A fee of \$100 applies

and this must accompany the letter.

The processing of this paperwork may take the office some weeks and the removal of conditions from the Registration needs to be sanctioned by the Board at its monthly meeting. The status of anyone’s registration can be checked on Register via the Website. <http://www.mrtboard.qld.gov.au> by clicking on **Important Links: Register of Medical Imaging Technologists, Radiation Therapist or Nuclear Medicine Technologist**, choose the speciality and type in the required name. The Office of the Board will forward the new general registration certificate once the 48 week report and application for removal of conditions has been approved by the Board.

Accreditation of Centres

The Supervised Practice Program Committee has resolved to accept those practices that have been accredited and approved by the professional bodies as suitable sites for the Supervised Practice Program. These centres have been advised of this. When their current accreditation falls due the Supervised Practice Program Committee will re -accredit them independently of the professional bodies. Should their circumstances alter, in particular the staffing levels and procedures, the MRTB must be advised as the centres may be in breach of the Act in relation to fulfilling the criteria to be a suitable professional practice setting. Some centres may need to ensure that Probationary Registrant are exposed to a number of professional practice settings in order to fulfil the demonstration of competencies requirements in, for example, trauma radiography, theatre and mobile and brachytherapy.

Supervised Practice Program

The SPP will not commence until the graduate has been registered with the MRTB. Provisional registration will be issued on 5th January **providing** all correct information is supplied with the Application. Once these applications are approved by the Board General Registration with Probationary Conditions will be issued to enable the graduates to proceed with the SPP. Employers and Supervisors need to check on the graduate’s registration status. If they are not registered they cannot proceed with the SPP.

Supervisors

These must be registered and must renew their registration in June to remain on the approved supervisors list (501A Form). The Board must be advised on the appropriate form if there is a change of supervisors. The non renewal of registration by the Supervisor may cause the suspension of the Supervised Practice Program for the probationary registrant.

Returning to the Workforce

For those Radiographers, Radiation Therapists and Nuclear Medicine Technologists who wish to return to the workforce but do not fulfil the recency of practice requirements, that is, do not have the equivalent of 48 weeks experience in the last 5 years will be required to undertake a return to work program.

At this stage the Board is utilising the AIR's Resumption of Professional Practice (RPP) and successful completion of this program will allow general registration to take place with or without conditions if supervision conditions are placed on the registrant the employer will be responsible for providing adequate supervision and general registration will be granted without conditions on the provision of a satisfactory supervision report.

The ANZSNM is currently looking at developing a RPP program.

For those wishing to return to the field of mammography will be required to undertake the BreastScreen Queensland's Mammography Training Course. At the completion of the course registration will be granted with restriction to perform mammography only.

The Board would be open to reviewing any Department retraining programs that may address the return requirements for registration.

Refunds

The Board in its recent review of its policies and guidelines in relation to the legislation has reviewed its legislative basis for issuing refunds.

As per Section 60 and 61 of the *Medical Radiation Technologists Registration Regulation 2002* refunds are only permitted to be granted by the Board where the registrant surrenders their registration within 3 months of being granted or renewed their general registration.

Contact details

The Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards provides administrative and operational support for the Board.

You, as a registrant, will deal primarily with staff of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards in regard to matters pertaining to registration, practitioner impairment and complaints. However, final actions and approvals for processes involving registrants require the approval of the Board.

The Board meetings are generally held on the 1st Wednesday of each month.

If you have questions of the Board they are more than happy to consider your correspondence at these monthly meetings.



CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE BOARD

Telephone: (07) 3234 0102

Fax: (07) 3225 2527

Postal Address: PO Box 2438
Brisbane Qld 4001

Street Address: 19th Floor
Forestry House
160 Mary Street
Brisbane Qld 4001

Email: mrt@healthregboards.qld.gov.au

Website: www.mrtboard.qld.gov.au