



Information sheet for an initial Medicare provider number for a medical practitioner application

Access to Medicare benefits

A provider number uniquely identifies the health professional and the location from which a service is rendered, and allows participation in the Medicare program. You must apply for a provider number for each location required.

You cannot transfer a provider number for one address to another address as this has an adverse impact on Medicare claims and prescriptions issued from the previous address.

For Medicare claiming purposes, the Health Insurance Regulations provide that a valid account/receipt must contain the medical practitioner's name and either:

- the address of the place of practice from which the service was provided; or
- the provider number for the place of practice where the service was provided.

Payment of claims could be delayed or disallowed where it is not possible from account details to identify the service as one which qualifies for Medicare benefits, or that the person who provided the service is a registered medical practitioner at the place of practice.

Many medical practitioners have restricted access to Medicare benefits and you should not presume that the allocation of a provider number means you can attract Medicare benefits for your professional services or that an extension to your eligibility is automatically granted. Some Medicare provider numbers will only be valid for referring or requesting services for your patients.

Medical practitioners with time and location specific Medicare billing eligibility should take note of the expiry dates as Medicare Australia does not send reminder notices. You can access your record on our Provider Directory System through our website to check the end dates on your locations.

Eligibility

Eligibility to access Medicare benefits is determined by the *Health Insurance Act 1973* and related Regulations. In particular, the requirements of sections 19AA and 19AB of the Health Insurance Act must be satisfied before access to Medicare benefits can be granted. The Health Insurance Act can be found at www.comlaw.gov.au.

More information about a medical practitioner's Medicare eligibility can be found on the Department of Health and Ageing's website at www.health.gov.au.

Claims for Medicare benefits should only be made while working in a private capacity and where no other government funding is received for your professional services.

Other organisations such as the Department of Health and Ageing, Rural Workforce Agencies, General Practice Education and Training Limited, specialist medical colleges, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine may be involved in approving your access to Medicare benefits.

We will notify you of your provider number for the location and your Medicare billing eligibility.

Australian citizen / permanent resident— section 19AA of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*

From 1 November 1996 all Australian medical graduates and overseas trained doctors who are or who become Australian citizens or permanent residents must obtain a recognised post-graduate qualification or be undertaking an approved program placement and registered in that program by Medicare Australia under section 3GA of the Health Insurance Act before they can provide a service that attracts a Medicare benefit.

Obtaining a recognised post-graduate qualification means that Medicare Australia has recognised you as a

- specialist, or
- consultant physician, or
- general practitioner (defined in the Health Insurance Act as a medical practitioner who is a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners or included on the Vocational Register).

Information about recognition as a consultant physician or specialist is available on our website.

If you are an overseas trained doctor or former overseas medical student you may also need a section 19AB exemption, in addition to being in an approved program placement, to attract Medicare benefits. See below for details on section 19AB of the Health Insurance Act.

Approved 3GA programs

If you are in an approved program under section 3GA of the Health Insurance Act you must complete an application form for a provider number for the location at which your placement has been approved. The relevant organisation must also advise Medicare Australia of your approved placement.

Medicare Australia cannot register an approved 3GA program placement from a date earlier than the date the placement advice is received.

Approved programs and the organisations that can approve a placement are:

- Approved Medical Deputising Service
- Temporary Resident Other Medical Practitioners program
- Approved Private Emergency Department program
- Metropolitan Workforce Support program
- Special Approved Placements program
- Approved Placements for Sports Physicians program

Enquiries about these programs can be made by calling the Department of Health and Ageing's Information line on (02) 6289 5903 (8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

- Rural Locum Relief Program—Rural Workforce Agencies in each State and Territory

For enquires about Rural Locum Relief please call:

NSW Rural Doctors Network	(02) 4929 1811
Rural Workforce Agency Victoria	(03) 9349 4899
Health Workforce Queensland	(07) 3105 7800
Rural Doctors Workforce Agency South Australia	(08) 8357 7444
Western Australian Centre for Remote and Rural Medicine	(08) 6488 8700

Tasmania General Practice Division (03) 6334 2355
General Practice and Primary
Healthcare NT (08) 8982 1050

- General practice training placements—General Practice Education and Training Limited
- Australasian College of Sports Physicians Training Program—Australasian College of Sports Physicians
- Queensland Country Relieving Program—Queensland Department of Health
- Pre-Vocational General Practice Placements Program—Royal Australian College of General Practitioner and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Specialist College Trainee program—relevant Australian Specialist.

Overseas trained doctors and former overseas medical students—section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act*

If you are an overseas trained doctor or a former overseas medical student **and** you were first registered with an Australian medical registration board on or after 1 January 1997 then you are not able to attract Medicare benefits for your services for a minimum period of ten years.

If you applied to the Australian Medical Council (AMC) before 1 January 1997 and you were eligible to sit the exam then you may not be subject to the restrictions in section 19AB. You must supply Medicare Australia with a copy of the AMC letter acknowledging receipt of your application and eligibility to sit the exam.

An overseas trained doctor is a medical practitioner whose primary medical qualification was not obtained from an Australian medical school located in Australia.

A former overseas medical student is a medical practitioner whose primary medical qualification was obtained from a medical school located in Australia and who was not an Australian permanent resident or citizen when he/she first enrolled in a medical school in Australia.

You will be able to attract Medicare benefits for your services if you have a section 19AB exemption approved by the Minister of Health and Ageing or his delegate in the Department of Health and Ageing.

Section 19AB exemptions are time and location specific, cannot be backdated and take effect from the date specified. Medicare Australia and the Department of Health and Ageing will notify you of the approved 19AB exemption dates and location/s. Reminder letters are not sent.

If you have a section 19AB exemption and are a temporary resident then your exemption allows you to satisfy the requirements of section 19AA (see page 1).

If you become an Australian permanent resident or citizen then you will need a section 19AB exemption **and** the requirements of section 19AA become mandatory. This means you must be a recognised specialist, consultant physician or general practitioner for Medicare purposes, or be in an approved program placement before you can attract Medicare benefits for your services.

Additional information about section 19AB and districts of workforce shortage can be found on the Department of Health and Ageing's website www.health.gov.au or by calling the Department of Health and Ageing's Information Line on 02 6289 5903 (8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

New Zealand citizens

If you are a New Zealand citizen you are considered to be a temporary resident under the *Migration Act 1958*. A medical practitioner whose primary medical qualification is from a medical school located in New Zealand is considered to be an overseas trained doctor.

Remote area exemption for diagnostic radiology services

If you are working in a remote area where you have to provide a diagnostic radiology service which would normally be provided by a specialist radiologist you may apply for an exemption from the referral requirements associated with 'R' type diagnostic imaging services. A separate application form is available on our website.

Personal contact details (email and/or mail address if different from required location)

Your email or mailing address will be used for general correspondence. These details must be kept up to date or important Medicare Australia program information may not reach you.

You can update your contact details on Medicare Australia's Provider Directory System using your health professional smart card or ikey issued by Medicare Australia through the Health eSignature Authority (HeSA), or alternatively with your ACIR/Feedback user id and password.

You can apply for a health professional smartcard or an ikey at www.hesa.gov.au. You can apply for ACIR /Feedback access through our website.

EFT payments

Your Medicare and DVA benefits for bulk bill claims can be paid into a nominated bank account by completing the EFT details at section 6.

Recognition as a specialist or consultant physician

You must be recognised as a specialist or consultant physician for Medicare purposes to access the specialist or consultant physician attendance items in the Medicare Benefits Schedule. Further information and an application form are available on our website.

Approved pathology practitioner

A pathology service will not attract a Medicare benefit unless that service is provided by, or on behalf of, an approved pathology practitioner (APP). If you have any questions about Medicare pathology arrangements please call Medicare Australia's Pathology Section on 02 6124 6839 or 02 6124 6356.

Medicare Benefits Schedule

The Department of Health and Ageing is responsible for the distribution of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) which lists the services and unique item numbers for which a Medicare benefit is payable.

Enquiries about the MBS distribution should be directed to:

The Department of Health and Ageing
MDP 106
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601
Freecall 1800 020 103

The MBS is also available on the Department of Health and Ageing's website www.health.gov.au

Medicare Australia—Education sessions

Education sessions are available to newly registered medical practitioners and medical practitioners commencing or returning to private practice. The sessions take about 3 hours and explain the Medicare Benefits Schedule, bulk bill processing, electronic claiming, private accounts and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. You can arrange attendance at an information session by calling the number for your state or territory below:

QLD	07 3004 5980
NSW and ACT	02 9895 3338
VIC	03 9605 7518
TAS	03 6215 5674
SA and NT	08 8274 9784
WA	08 9214 8133

Lodgement details

Refer to section 8 of the application form for address and facsimile details.

Additional documents

You may need to send additional documents with your application—this will be detailed in the application form and set out in the Additional Documents on page 4. The additional documents should be sent with your application. We will contact you if additional documentation is required.

Assistance

Please refer to

- our website at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au, or
- call 132 150 during business hours (8.30am to 5.00pm), or
- email medicare.prov@medicareaustralia.gov.au

Additional documents

1. If you are an Australian trained doctor who:

- was a temporary resident (including a New Zealand citizen) on 1 November 1996

or

- had not completed your internship or period of supervised training on 1 November 1996

or

- was first registered with an Australian State or Territory medical board on or after 1 November 1996

and

Medicare Australia has **not** advised you in writing that you are:

- recognised as a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- included on the Vocational Register
- recognised as a specialist or consultant physician for Medicare purposes

then you need an approved program placement. The approving body must send the approved placement to Medicare Australia direct. Refer to the information under Approved Program Placements for more details.

2. If you are

- **an overseas trained doctor (primary medical qualification obtained overseas),**

or

- **former overseas medical student (primary qualification obtained in Australia and a temporary resident when first enrolled in medical school in Australia)**

and

- **were first registered with an Australian State or Territory medical board on or after 1 January 1997**

then you need a section 19AB exemption from the Department of Health and Ageing (which we will apply for on your behalf) when you have provided the following documents:

(a) if you are a temporary resident (including New Zealand citizen)

- passport—a copy of personal details page
- visa—a copy of your current visa showing that you have permission to work as a medical practitioner or to study medicine in clinical training positions
- evidence of your current medical registration for the State or Territory in which the location is situated. The document must show your name, the period of registration and any conditions attached to the registration (eg limited to specific locations, to work under supervision, area of need)
- letter of confirmation from your employer. Supporting letters must confirm the term and location of your employment, reason why you require a Medicare provider number and explain attempts to recruit Australian doctors. Letters from employers of locums should confirm that locum or deputising work is in districts of recognised workforce shortage
- copy of your employment contract—if working in a public hospital

(b) if you are an Australian citizen or permanent resident

- passport—a copy of personal details page
- visa—a copy of your permanent resident visa or Australian citizenship if this documentation has not been previously supplied to Medicare Australia
- evidence of your current medical registration for the State or Territory in which the location is situated. The document must show the applicant's name, the period of registration and any conditions attached to the registration (eg limited to specific locations, to work under supervision, area of need)
- letter of confirmation from your employer. Supporting letters must confirm the term and location of your

employment, reason why you require a Medicare provider number and explain attempts to recruit Australian trained doctors. Letters from employers of locums should confirm that locum or deputising work is in districts of recognised workforce shortage.

- copy of your employment contract—if working in a public hospital

and

Medicare Australia has **not** advised you in writing that you are:

- recognised as a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- included on the Vocational Register
- recognised as a specialist or consultant physician for Medicare purposes

then you also need an approved program placement. The approving body must send the approved placement to Medicare Australia direct. Refer to the information under Approved Program Placements for more details.

(c) If you are an overseas trained doctor working in Australia under an academic appointment with one of the following medical schools

- (a) Australian National University
- (b) Flinders University of South Australia
- (c) James Cook University Medical School—Townsville
- (d) Monash University
- (e) University of Adelaide
- (f) University of Melbourne
- (g) University of New South Wales
- (h) University of Newcastle
- (i) University of Queensland
- (j) University of South Australia
- (k) University of Sydney
- (l) University of Tasmania
- (m) University of Western Australia
- (n) Bond University
- (o) Griffith University
- (p) University of Notre Dame Australia (Fremantle campus)
- (q) University of Notre Dame Australia (Sydney campus)

then you must provide:

- documentation from the university to confirm the location/s is part of your academic appointment
- passport—a copy of personal details page
- visa—a copy of current visa showing you have permission to work as a medical practitioner
- medical registration—copy of current medical registration for the State or Territory in which the location is situated.

If the new location is outside your academic appointment then you must supply the documentation in 2(a) or 2(b) for an overseas trained doctor according to your residency status.

(d) if temporary resident and wanting to access Medicare benefits for assisting at operations only

then you must provide the following documents:

- passport—a copy of personal details page
- visa—a copy of your current visa
- letter of confirmation from your employer or copy of your
- employment contract

*If you do not have an occupational trainee visa then you must provide the following additional documents:

- endorsement from relevant medical College
- letter of support from the hospital/practice
- training schedule

3. **If you do not fall into one of the categories above then you may not need to supply any additional documentation.** A Medicare Australia staff member will contact you if documents are needed.



Application for an initial Medicare provider number for a medical practitioner

This application is to be used by a medical practitioner when applying for a Medicare provider number for the first time. If you have a Medicare provider number and are applying for a provider number for an additional location address then you should complete an application form for that purpose on our website. If you do not know if you have a Medicare provider number then you can use this form. Your application will not be processed if we need supporting documentation and you have not sent those documents to us. Your application may be returned if incomplete. When completing the form by hand, please print clearly.

Section 1—Personal details

Title Dr Mr Mrs Ms Miss Other (please specify)

Family name First name

Other given names Date of birth / / Gender M/F

A provider number will be issued in the name in which you are registered with the medical board.

Section 2—Personal contact details (email and/or mail address if different from required location)

For this application only For general mailout purposes

Telephone number (during business hours) <input type="text"/>	Street details <input type="text"/>
Mobile <input type="text"/>	OR Postal details PO Box number <input type="text"/> or GPO Box number <input type="text"/>
Facsimile number <input type="text"/>	Suburb/Locality <input type="text"/>
Pager <input type="text"/>	State <input type="text"/> Postcode <input type="text"/>
	Email <input type="text"/>
	Languages spoken (other than English) <input type="text"/>

Section 3—Registration details

You must have current registration in the State or Territory for the required location. A copy of your medical registration certificate or confirmation from the Medical Board advising your current registration status should be sent with this application.

If you are practising as a specialist in the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland or South Australia you must be registered as a specialist with the medical board in that State or Territory.

State or Territory	Registration number	Date registered

Does your medical registration allow you to work at the location/s listed in section 6? Yes No

If you answer 'no', a provider number cannot be allocated for the required location.

If prior to 1/1/97 you were registered with an Australian State or Territory medical registration board, please provide evidence to support.

Section 4—Qualifications

Primary medical qualification

Country obtained

Medical school obtained

Year obtained

Have you signed a Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship Scheme contract with the Department of Health and Ageing? Yes No

Have you signed a Bonded Medical Placement Scheme agreement with the Department of Health and Ageing? Yes No

If your primary medical qualification was obtained in Australia

Date of enrolment in medical school / /

Date internship completed / /

If your primary medical qualification was obtained overseas

Did you lodge an application with the Australian Medical Council to sit exams before 1 January 1997? Yes No

If yes, what date? / /

Did the AMC advise you that you were eligible to sit the exam? Yes No

You must provide a copy of the AMC letter showing the date and your candidate number.

Section 5—Medicare eligibility

5.1 a. What is your current residency status in Australia?

Australian citizen Permanent resident Temporary resident

b. What was your residency status on 1 November 1996?

Australian citizen Permanent resident Temporary resident

c. What was your residency status when you enrolled in medical school in Australia?

Australian citizen Permanent resident Temporary resident

Note: New Zealand citizens enter Australia on a temporary resident visa—you are not a permanent resident unless you apply for and have been granted permanent residency. The legislative provisions for Medicare billing eligibility refer to the *Migration Act 1958*. If there is any uncertainty about your Australian residency status you may be asked to provide evidence from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

5.2 a. Are you a specialist or consultant physician? Yes No
If recognition is required for Medicare billing as a specialist or consultant physician a form is available on our website.

b. Are you a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners? Yes No
If recognition of Fellowship is required for Medicare billing as a general practitioner a form is available on our website.

c. Are you in an approved specialist or general practice training program? Yes No
If **yes**, the General Practice Education and Training Limited or specialist medical college must complete and sign the approved placement advice and send it to Medicare Australia.

d. Are you in an approved rural locum relief program placement? Yes No
If **yes**, the organisation authorised to approve your placement must complete and sign an approved placement form and send it to Medicare Australia.

e. Are you a salaried medical officer in a government funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Service? Yes No
If **yes**, you must complete the EFT details in the required location section to direct Medicare benefits back to the relevant community.

Section 6—Required location

Do you only want to use your provider number to request and refer services for your patients? Yes No
If **yes** you do not need to provide any additional documents.

Do you want access to Medicare benefits for assisting at operations only? Yes No
If **yes** and overseas trained doctor or former overseas medical student, refer to the Additional documents in the information sheet of this form.

Do you want access to Medicare benefits at this location? Yes No
If **yes** refer to the Additional documents in the information sheet of this form.

Do you want a prescriber number for prescribing purposes under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme? Yes No

A location is the physical address (not a post office box) from which you render services.

Start date <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> (day/month/year)	Practice name/Building <input type="text"/>
End date (if required) <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> (day/month/year)	Property/Department <input type="text"/>
	Tick a box Suite <input type="checkbox"/> Unit <input type="checkbox"/> Shop <input type="checkbox"/> Number <input type="text"/> Floor number <input type="text"/>
	Street details <input type="text"/>
	Suburb/locality <input type="text"/>
	State <input type="text"/> Postcode <input type="text"/>
	Telephone number <input type="text"/>
	Facsimile number <input type="text"/>
	Email <input type="text"/>

Payments for bulk bill claims are usually made by EFT. You should therefore complete the following banking details.

I, the applicant, being a medical practitioner entitled to render professional services as defined in the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, apply to Medicare Australia to have Medicare benefits paid directly into the above mentioned account via electronics funds transfer (EFT).

BSB no

Bank name and branch

Account no

Name in which account is held

Is this location an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Health Service? Yes No

The nominated account for this location will be used for both Medicare and DVA bulk bill benefit payments.

You should attach a list if you are applying for additional locations and complete separate EFT details (if applicable) for each location.

Section 7—Declaration

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all the information provided in this application form is true and correct.

Signature of applicant Date signed / /

Privacy Note: Information provided on this form will be used to assess your application for a provider number and to determine your eligibility to participate in the Medicare program in accordance with the *Health Insurance Act 1973*. This information may be disclosed to the Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Ageing, Department of Veterans' Affairs, private health funds and other approved organisations or as authorised or required by law. Medicare Australia may contact the Medical Board to verify your medical registration. Medicare Australia will use your BSB and account details to identify your nominated financial institution for the purpose of making electronic payments for Medicare bulk bill and all DVA claims. Your financial institution account details will be disclosed to the relevant financial institutions to facilitate payment of your claims.

Section 8—Lodgement details

When completed, please post to:

**Medicare Australia
Provider Eligibility Section
PO Box 9822
(in your capital city)**

OR

Via facsimile to:

NSW and ACT	(02) 9895 3439	VIC	(03) 9605 7984	QLD	(07) 3004 5634	NT	(08) 8922 6322
SA	(08) 8274 9307	WA	(08) 9214 8201	TAS	(03) 6215 5700		

Please note:

- Your application and supporting documentation (if required) should be sent to Medicare Australia prior to your proposed commencement date.
- You should not commence billing until Medicare Australia has advised you of your provider number and Medicare eligibility.
- Where applications are faxed, you must retain your original documents for auditing purposes.

Enquiries: Telephone 132 150 (8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday) or email medicare.prov@medicareaustralia.gov.au