

SA IMET
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DH) GUIDING PRINCIPLES
FOR ASSESSMENT OF AREA OF NEED SUBMISSIONS

OVERVIEW – AREAS OF NEED AON MEDICAL PRACTICE ACT 2004

Area of Need: South Australia

Provisions within the Medical Practice Act 2004 Part 4, Division 2 Registration, 33 (2) (d) (iii) & (e) allow for limited registration of International Medical Graduates to provide services into areas that the Minister and the Board consider in urgent need of services of a medical practitioner; or in the Board's opinion it would be in the public interest to do so www.medicalboardsa.asn.au.

To qualify for 'in urgent need of a medical practitioner' an employer is expected to meet the following criteria:

- a genuine vacancy exists;
- that the provision of medical services would fall below an acceptable level if the vacancy was not filled; and
- that the market has been tested. The Australian medical community does need to have a vacancy brought to its attention (state and national and relevant specialty advertising) and the SA IMET, DH be satisfied that no Australian trained medical practitioner can be appointed to the position.

The area of need program is one of a number of strategies developed to address workforce shortages and provide access to medical services especially in the remote and rural areas of SA. More recently with workforce shortages and Commonwealth endorsement of DWS in outer metropolitan areas, the process has been required to enable placement of international medical practitioners to outer metropolitan sites. The program provides a mechanism for the recruitment of international medical graduates to work in an area where it has clearly been established that a labour market shortage exists.

An underpinning philosophy of the program is that there will be no disadvantage to appropriately qualified and experienced Australian trained medical practitioners.

The AON program involves a number of stakeholders that play a particular and defined role at various stages of the program such as employers, recruitment companies, health services, local government and the SA IMET, DH.

The following principles will apply in the assessment of each written submission for the determination of a position as area of need.

Submissions for determinations for AON may be prepared and forwarded to SA IMET, DH for assessment before the recruitment for an international medical graduate commences. The determination is based upon a geographic area with a determined medical services shortage. It is not dependent upon the recruitment of a specific IMG. Early lodgement of a submission allows adequate time for the administrative processes to be implemented.

PRINCIPLE 1: REQUIREMENT FOR POSITION

Vacant Position

There must be an identified vacant position.

Labour Market Testing

Applicant organisations/employers will provide documented evidence of labour market testing to demonstrate genuine attempts to have tested the Australian labour market. While it is accepted that there will be different levels of labour market testing, exemptions will not be provided to any organisations/employers.

Reasons why particular applicants (if any) were not suitable for the position after advertising should be documented in the submission.

Alternative Recruitment and Retention Strategies and / or Service Delivery

Applicant organisations, in consultation with the relevant stakeholder organisations should explore alternative recruitment and retention strategies and / or service delivery and other relevant aspects of the unfilled position prior to applying for area of need status. Details of the progress of implementation of any strategies that have been developed should be documented in the submission.

Practice Details

Details of operational aspects of the practice (eg solo general practice or attached to a hospital) nature of the practice (eg: paediatric services, obstetric services etc) and travel (eg distance from hospital or between town etc.) should be documented to support the submission.

Position Descriptions

A position description is to be attached to the submission. Information detailing supervision requirements for the position are to be included. A proforma position description is available from SA IMET, DH website at <http://www.SAIMET.org.au/amcdoctors/info/area/apply.php> this is provided for organisations that do not routinely have position descriptions and is provided as a useful template and guide.

PRINCIPLE 2: APPROVAL PROCESS FOR AREA OF NEED (AON) STATUS

The assessment of area of need applications will be considered in the context of the provision of medical services to a community and not the commercial endeavours and activities of a business.

Applications will be assessed under published criteria in a consistent, effective and efficient manner and will only be considered when submitted via the formally agreed process.

Applications may be accepted, refused or referred back to applicants for clarification of points which are not able to be assessed against the agreed criteria.

In assessing area of need applications to the SA IMET, DH may seek advice from other stakeholders but the final decision on the outcome of the application rests with DH.

Area of need status for a position is not transferable to another position or another location.

Requests to extend the area of need status for a position will occur through the same process.