

Media release

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SHPA welcomes greater flexibility for interns

SHPA applauds the Pharmacy Board of Australia (PBA)'s decision to reduce required supervised hours and delay exams to support access to general registration for pharmacist interns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changes announced this week include a reduction in overall required supervised hours from 1,824 to 1,575, while the required minimum 80 hours of supervised practice in any four-week period and 152 hours with an individual preceptor have both been waived.

Oral exams will be revised for online completion in June, with this year's written examination moved to October 2020.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the greater flexibility in supervised hours, called for by SHPA for several years, is welcome as COVID-19 disrupts workplaces across the country.

'At a time when it is imperative interns are supported to complete their training, these revisions by the PBA are sensible and effective.'

'During the COVID-19 pandemic interns deserve additional assurance that changes in their workplaces, which could include the need for quarantine or unplanned leave, will not prevent their general registration.'

Ms Michaels says it is also important to take a longer term view of internship requirements.

'Pharmacy departments tell us the inflexible requirements of hospital employment contracts, coupled with PBA requirements, can be onerous for interns, often preventing them from taking much-needed and owed leave.'

'This burden can be particularly problematic in recruitment to regional and rural hospitals, or for internships interrupted by illness.'

'We hope this revision provides opportunity for a trial or adoption of a more flexible approach that helps mitigate these challenges, ensuring every intern has the time and energy to succeed in their early pharmacy career, to the benefit of their workplaces and patients.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA

members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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