

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Considerations Policy

Introduction

Doctorportal Learning Pty Ltd, trading as 'CPD Home' is a jointly owned subsidiary of the Australian Medical Association (WA) Inc, and Australian Society of Anaesthetists.

AMA CPD Home is available to non-exempt medical practitioners in Australia at www.cpdhome.org.au. It is not limited to members of the AMA or ASA.

Background

AMA CPD Home is committed to supporting its subscribers to meet their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements under the Medical Board of Australia's (MBA)'s *Registration Standard: Continuing professional development* (the Standard). However, AMA CPD Home recognises that there may be times where due to exceptional circumstances an unreasonable burden would be placed on a subscriber in fully meeting their CPD requirements. AMA CPD Home affords subscribers in this position the opportunity for special consideration for an exemption from their annual CPD requirements.

Determinations of this nature, in line with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, will be made by AMA CPD Home following receipt of an *Application for Special Consideration of Exceptional Circumstance* on a case-by-case basis.

Purpose

To outline the circumstances which may justify special consideration for an exemption from fulfilling their annual CPD requirements.

Objective

To demonstrate our support for subscribers experiencing exceptional circumstances and to provide guidance to subscribers in applying for special consideration.

Scope

This policy applies to all subscribers of AMA CPD Home.

Definitions

Please refer to the Glossary for definition(s) of terms that apply to this policy.

Policy

General Principles

Subscribers of the CPD Home Program of Learning (CPD Program) are expected to meet the CPD requirements of the Standard within the CPD year.

Subscribers who are experiencing exceptional circumstances as described below, which will prevent them from meeting their annual CPD requirements for the CPD year may apply for special consideration for an exemption from their annual CPD requirements.

Subscribers without an exemption who do not meet the annual CPD requirements of the Standard will not be awarded a CPD Statement of Completion by AMA CPD Home and will be reported to Ahpra as 'Non-compliant'.

Qualifying exceptional circumstances resulting in the continuous absence from practice, of at least six months and up to and including 12-months are as follows.

1. Professional, personal or family reasons, being:
 - o parental leave

- prolonged carers leave
 - prolonged serious illness, including serious injury
 - short-term incapacitations from an illness or injury
 - sabbatical
 - extended leave to attend to cultural responsibilities
 - bereavement
2. Severe and debilitating stress resulting from extreme hardship or trauma (e.g. victim of violent crime or coercive control)
 3. Sudden and extended disruption due to an unforeseen event or hardship (e.g. devastating natural disaster).

The following circumstances are examples of non-exceptional circumstances:

- demands of employment
- minor illness or medical conditions
- pre-existing illness or medical condition which is not regarded as acute and substantive taking on optional commitments of a work or personal nature
- difficulties adjusting to the self-discipline needed to plan, undertake, record and track CPD activities
- stress or anxiety normally associated with meeting annual CPD requirements
- lack of knowledge of the:
 - services and supports offered by AMA CPD Home to subscribers
 - minimum annual CPD requirements of the Standard.

Below are examples of supporting documentation that subscriber's must include with their application. Depending on the exceptional circumstance, multiple documents may be required as part of the application including:

- travel itinerary
- letter from employer related to extended period of leave
- medical certificate/s with the dates clearly marked when the subscriber was unfit to work or to undertake CPD activities
- letter of support from an independent (i.e. not related to the applicant) medical practitioner, psychologist or lawyer attesting to the practitioner's judgment, based on the subscriber's circumstances and on information provided, that the subscriber would not have had the capacity to practise or undertake required CPD activities for at least 6 months or more. A letter of support should be provided only when the subscriber was unable to obtain medical advice on the date(s) they were affected by exceptional circumstances
- death notice or certificate
- police report
- insurance reports
- the subscriber's victim of crime statement
- statutory declaration from the subscriber or other relevant party attesting to impact of the exceptional circumstance on the subscriber's ability or capacity to undertake required CPD activities.

Exemptions

Exemptions to the annual CPD Program, on the grounds cited in this policy, may be approved by AMA CPD Home upon written application by the subscriber. For example, if you are on extended leave and not practising medicine, an exemption may be granted following submission of an Application for Special Consideration of Exceptional Circumstance form available from the subscriber's CPD Tracker with accepted supporting evidence.

Exemptions will apply for the CPD year(s) for which special consideration of exceptional circumstance was sought. An exemption application that falls consecutively across two CPD years must be submitted in the first year.

Where a subscriber will be absent from practice for more than 12-months they should contact the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) to amend their practising status. For absences longer than 12 months, CPD requirements are set by [MBA's recency of practice registration standard](#), as well as the [MBA's re-entry to practice requirements](#).

All applications will be reviewed confidentially, without prejudice and on their merits on a case-by-case basis. Where additional advice is sought, the CPD Advisory Panel may be called upon for input before a determination is reached by AMA CPD Home.

Review of applications may take up to six weeks. Applicants will be notified as soon as practicable of the determination and, if applicable, the exemption requirements.

An Exemptions Register of subscribers who have applied for special consideration of exceptional circumstance including the review determination will be kept by AMA CPD Home.

Action

AMA CPD Home may determine that:

- no exemption of annual CPD requirements for the CPD year be granted
- an exemption from meeting annual CPD requirements for the CPD year be granted
- an exemption with pro-rata CPD hours for the CPD year be granted
- an exemption with pro-rata CPD hours across two CPD years be granted proportionate to the amount of consecutive leave taken in each CPD year.

Related Documents / Legislation

The following documents are related to this policy.

1. Medical Board of Australia (MBA) *Registration Standard: Continuing Professional Development* (the Standard)
2. MBA's *Registration Standard: Recency of practice*
3. Application for Special Consideration of Exceptional Circumstance
4. CPD Home Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy

Appendices

1. Glossary

Version Tracking

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	December 2022	
1.1	January 2023	Amendment specifying Subscribers granted a variation or deferral subject to the yearly compliance audit of at least 5% of participating subscribers.
1.2	March 2023	Typographical correction – replaced “referral” with “deferral”.
1.3	June 2023	Amendment to review process resulting in a recommendation to the AMA (WA) CEO.

Version	Date	Comments
1.4	September 2024	Updated Introduction to reflect the joint ownership of CPD Home, and list of acceptable exceptional circumstance to include bereavement. Amended CPD Home Program of Learning start year from 2023 to 2024, Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority to Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Replaced AMA (WA) CEO with Executive Lead, Senior Leadership Team with Compliance and Policy Lead to reflect current SOP. Removed unrelated glossary terms.
1.5	October 2024	Added Definitions statement and edited glossary. Transferred roles and responsibilities to SOP. Updated minor amendments.
1.6	July 2025	Expanded Exemptions description. Removed reference to Deferrals and Variations.

Appendix 1

Glossary

Term	Definition
Applicant	Any Subscriber or Education Provider directly affected and unsatisfied with a CPD Home decision who applies to have the decision reviewed, reconsidered or appealed.
Ahpra	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
CPD Advisory Panel	Panel of medical advisers who provide advice regarding the CPD Home Program of Learning.
CPD Home Program of Learning	The CPD Home Program of Learning (CPD Program) provides a pathway for Australian registered medical specialists, international medical graduates, PGY2+ trainees and non-vocationally registered doctors to engage in an accredited CPD program. From 1 January 2024, the CPD Program is a mandatory program for subscribers to the CPD Home service.
CPD requirements	Means CPD requirements against the Standard, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a written annual CPD Plan complete a minimum of 50 hours per year of CPD activities that are relevant to your scope of practice and individual professional development needs allocate your minimum 50 hours per year between the following types of CPD activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 12.5 hours (25 percent of the minimum) in educational activities at least 25 hours (50 per cent of the minimum) in activities focused on reviewing performance and measuring outcomes, with a minimum of five hours for each category the remaining 12.5 hours (25 percent of the minimum), and any CPD activities over the 50-hour minimum across any of these types of CPD activities, including any relevant specialist high-level CPD requirements reflect on your CPD goals at the end of the year in preparation for your next CPD Plan

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retain records of your annual CPD compliance for auditing purposes by your CPD home and the MBA for three years after the end of each one-year cycle.
CPD year	CPD year commences 1 January and concludes 31 December.
Exceptional circumstances	Means circumstances that are not ordinarily encountered or anticipated, which are beyond the control of the individual concerned and which are of such severity or gravity that they may impact adversely on the individual's capacity to complete their CPD requirements.
Exemption	CPD requirements for the CPD year are waived in part or full.
Reconsideration	Of a decision, to be undertaken by the original decision maker.
Special consideration	Means the consideration of circumstances pertaining to an individual to enable variation from the requirements normally expected in relation to CPD requirements.
the Standard	The Medical Board of Australia's (MBA)'s revised <i>Registration Standard: Continuing professional development</i> .