

Medical Regulatory Councils

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The National Medical Regulatory Council **Medical Council of India (MCI)** has been in the news for many reasons. This is the time to reflect on the role of medical regulation and the way it is carried out in different countries.

Medical Council is the name of the regulatory body that grants medical licenses in many countries. Specifically, it may refer to:

1. Australian Medical Council, a national standards advisory body for medical education and mental health medication and education
2. Bahamas Medical Council
3. General Medical Council, the regulator of the medical profession in the United Kingdom
4. Medical Council (Ireland), the regulator of the medical profession in the Republic of Ireland
5. Medical Council of Canada, an examining body in Canada
6. Medical Council of India, a constitutional body in India set up primarily to establish uniform standards of higher qualifications in medicine
7. Medical Council of Hong Kong
8. Medical Council of Jamaica, a licensing body in Jamaica
9. Medical Council of Mauritius
10. Medical Council of New Zealand
11. Medical Council of Thailand, a national standards advisory body for medical education and training, and regulator of the medical profession at the same time
12. Medical Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran
13. Pakistan Medical & Dental Council
14. Singapore Medical Council
15. Sri Lanka Medical Council
16. Ukrainian Medical Council

The Medical Council of India is a statutory body for establishing uniform and high standards of medical education in India. It was established in 1933 and is headquartered in New Delhi. It is affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Council grants recognition of medical qualifications, gives accreditation to medical schools, grants registration to medical practitioners, and monitors medical practice in India. Now the Supreme Court has allowed the Central Government to replace the medical council and with the help of five specialized doctors monitor the medical education system in India, from July 2017.

The NITI Aayog has recommended the replacement of Medical Council of India (MCI) with National Medical Commission (NMC). The decision has been approved by most states and after its approval by the Prime Minister it will be proposed as final bill in the upcoming parliamentary sessions.¹

The Medical Council of India was first established in 1934 under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1933. The Council was later reconstituted under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 that replaced the earlier Act.

Following this, the Council was superseded by the President of India and its functions entrusted to a Board of Governors. The present Board of Governors was notified on 13 May 2011.

Again vide Govt. of India notification, the Council reconstituted and functioning currently

The main functions of the Medical Council of India are as follows:

1. Establishment and maintenance of uniform standards for undergraduate medical education.
2. Regulation of postgraduate medical education in medical colleges accredited by it. (The National Board of Examinations is another statutory body for postgraduate medical education in India).

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3. Recognition of medical qualifications granted by medical institutions in India.
4. Recognition of foreign medical qualifications in India.
5. Accreditation of medical colleges.
6. Registration of doctors with recognized medical qualifications.
7. Keeping a directory of all registered doctors (called the Indian Medical Register).
8. Registration of doctors and their qualifications is usually done by state medical councils.

“**MCI Online**” is the portal of the Medical Council of India for online processing of applications for registration (of medical qualifications) and for professional certificates. “MCI Online” also provides online search of the Indian Medical Register.

Under the Digital Mission Mode Project (DMMP), the Medical Council of India (MCI) will be able to monitor attendance of faculty members in about 516 medical colleges through biometric system.

The General Medical Council is a public body that maintains the official register of medical practitioners within the United Kingdom. It was founded in 1858. The General Medical Council helps to protect patients and improve medical education and practice in the UK by setting standards for students and doctors. The GMC supports them in achieving and exceeding those standards, and take action when they are not met.

Good medical practice describes what it means to be a good doctor. It says that as a good doctor you will:

1. make the care of your patient your first concern
2. be competent and keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date
3. take prompt action if you think patient safety is being compromised
4. establish and maintain good partnerships with your patients and colleagues
5. maintain trust in you and the profession by being open, honest and acting with integrity.

This guidance is split into four sections which describe the professional values and behaviours GMC expects from any doctor registered with it. GMC expect doctors to use professional judgement and expertise to apply the principles in this guidance to the various situations they face. This guidance came into effect 22 April 2013. It was updated on 29 April 2014 to include paragraph 14.1 on doctors’ knowledge of the English language.

In the USA, **The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB)** represents the 70 state medical and osteopathic regulatory boards—commonly referred to as state medical boards—within the United States, its territories and the District of Columbia. It supports its member boards as they fulfil their mandate of protecting the public’s health, safety and welfare through the proper licensing, disciplining, and regulation of physicians and, in most jurisdictions, other health care professionals.

The Physician Data Centre (PDC) maintains and can search profiles for actively licensed physicians in the United States, including bio, education, licensure history and past regulatory actions. Our premium profile also includes specialty board certifications.

The United States Medical Licensing Examination ® (USMLE®) is a three-step examination for medical licensure in the United States and is sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME®).

The USMLE assesses a physician’s ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to demonstrate fundamental patient-centred skills, that are important in health and disease and that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care. Each of the three Steps of the USMLE complements the others; no Step can stand alone in the assessment of readiness for medical licensure.

Australian Medical Council

The AMC’s purpose is to ensure that standards of education, training and assessment of the medical profession promote and protect the health of the Australian community.

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) is an independent national standards body for medical education and training.

The objects to the AMC are:

1. to improve health through advancing the quality and delivery of medical education and training associated with the provision of health services in Australia and New Zealand;
2. to develop accreditation standards, policies and procedures for medical programs of study based predominantly in Australia and New Zealand and for assessment of international medical graduates for registration in Australia;

3. to assess programs of study based predominantly in Australia and New Zealand leading to general or specialist registration of the graduates of those programs to practise medicine in Australia to determine whether the programs meet approved accreditation standards, and to make recommendations for improvement of those programs;
4. to assess education providers based predominantly in Australia and New Zealand that provide programs of study leading to registration of the graduates of those programs to practise medicine in Australia, to determine whether the providers meet approved accreditation standards;
5. to assess authorities in other countries that conduct examinations for registration in medicine, or that accredit programs of study relevant to registration in medicine, to decide whether persons who successfully complete the examinations or programs of study conducted or accredited by those authorities should have the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes necessary to practise medicine in Australia;
6. to assess, or oversee the assessment of, the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes of overseas qualified medical practitioners who are seeking registration in medicine under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and whose qualifications are not approved qualifications under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law for medicine;
7. to assess the case for the recognition of new medical specialties;
8. to act as an external accreditation entity for the purposes of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law;
9. to advise and make recommendations to Federal, State and Territory governments, the Australian Health Workforce Advisory Council, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, the Medical Board of Australia and State and Territory boards of the Medical Board of Australia, and any other state and territory medical regulatory authorities in relation to:
 - a. matters concerning accreditation or accreditation standards for the medical profession
 - b. matters concerning the registration of medical practitioners
 - c. matters concerning the assessment of overseas qualifications of medical practitioners
 - d. matters concerning the recognition of overseas qualifications of medical practitioners, and
 - e. the recognition of medical specialties
10. to work with international health, accreditation and testing authorities and agencies to bring about improvement in the furtherance of these objects; and
11. to do all such matters as are ancillary to, convenient for or which foster or promote the advancement of matters that are the subject of these objects.

The Australian Medical Council Limited Constitution as amended at the Annual General Meeting 24 November 2017 is available here.

The AMC does not:

1. register doctors, which is a function of the **Medical Board of Australia** (MBA)
2. have responsibility for medical employment in Australia
3. make decisions regarding Australia's medical workforce
4. process applications for medical training in Australia
5. provide continuing medical education courses or other medical training.

END NOTE

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Conflict of Interest: None declared

REFERENCES

1. The National Medical Commission Bill 2017 PDF