



# A GUIDE TO COMPLETING YOUR PRACTISING CERTIFICATE

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Medical Council of New Zealand, March 2019



TE KAUNIHERA RATA O AOTEAROA  
MEDICAL COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND

Protecting the public, promoting good medical practice

Te tiaki i te iwi whānui me te whakatairanga pai i te mahi e pā ana ki te taha rongoā

This guide will help you complete your practising certificate application.

If you have any questions about completing your application please contact us at [pc@mcnz.org.nz](mailto:pc@mcnz.org.nz)



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# Important information

## Please read carefully

### Your responsibility

If you are currently practising medicine in New Zealand, it is your responsibility to complete your renewal application, with payment by the due date.

### myMCNZ

All practising certificate renewal applications are now made using myMCNZ - our online portal.

Please email [myMCNZHelp@mcnz.org.nz](mailto:myMCNZHelp@mcnz.org.nz) or call 0800 636 555 during business hours if you require help with using myMCNZ.

### Incomplete applications

If your application is incomplete an email will be sent to you with details of what is outstanding.

### Deemed to hold

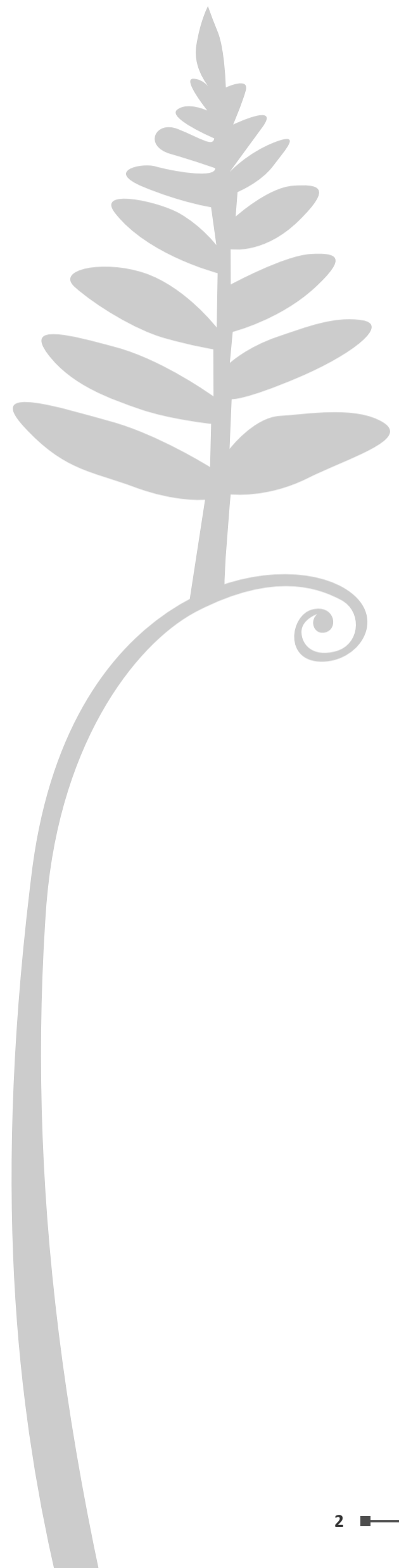
You will be considered to hold a practising certificate from the date your completed application and payment is received by the Council, provided this is received before your current practising certificate expires.

### Recertification/Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Audit

At least eighteen percent of all applications are audited for CPD compliance. This will delay the issue of your practising certificate; however you will still be entitled to work while the audit takes place.

### Late applications

If your practising certificate application is received by the Council after your current practising certificate expires, or after



you have started work, your new practising certificate will be dated from the date the complete application was received.

It will not be backdated to when your last practising certificate expired or when you started work.

### **Practising without a current practising certificate**

Practising medicine without a current practising certificate is an offence under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA). If convicted of that offence you face a fine up to \$10,000.

Other consequences of not holding a current practising certificate are:

- your patients may not be covered by their health insurers or ACC
- you may not be covered by your own medical indemnity insurer
- pharmacies may not fill scripts for your patients
- you may be referred to a professional conduct committee
- your employer is at risk of investigation by the Health and Disability Commissioner if a complaint is received about you.

### **Please ensure that you:**

- complete all sections of the application
- include payment of the fee by either paying online, bill payment or sending a cheque, and if relevant send:
  - documentation confirming your change of name
  - reports requested under section 7 (disclosures)
  - request Certificate(s) of Professional Status (COPSs) from overseas registration authorities if you were registered or practised medicine overseas since your last practising certificate and return it to the Council office by the due date. All COPSs must have been dated within the last 3 months.

**If paying by cheque, please do not post-date these.**



# Completing your application

## Step 1 – Personal

Please check all details carefully.

### Change of name

If you have changed your name the HPCAA requires you to let us know within 1 month of the change so we can update the medical register.

Please send us a certified copy of any document which records your change of name for example a marriage certificate, or deed poll. Officers of the Court, Notaries Public, or Justices of the Peace are authorised to certify photocopies of original documents.

The medical register will then be amended to record your new name, and cross referenced to show your previous name(s).

At work, please use the name you are registered with. It is confusing to the public when a doctor practises under a name different to that recorded in the medical register, as the medical register will show that you are not registered to practise unless your alternative name is recorded on the register.

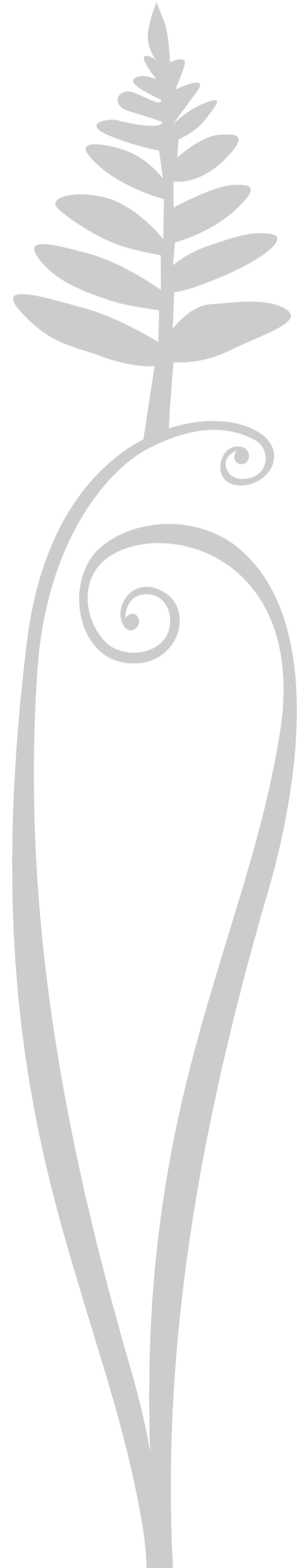
### Change of address

If you have changed your postal, residential, or work address, the HPCAA requires you to tell us. Please use the 'update any incorrect personal information' link for changes. Your name may be removed from the medical register if we cannot contact you.

## Step 2 – Intentions

This section confirms your practising intentions. If you are not practising you do not need to apply for a practising certificate, however you are required to complete the application so that our records are accurate.

Please carefully read the Council's definition of the practice of medicine below to establish whether you are required to hold a practising certificate.



The Council defines the practice of medicine as:

- advertising, holding out to the public, or representing in any manner that one is authorised to practise medicine in New Zealand
- signing any medical certificate required for statutory purposes, such as death and cremation certificates
- prescribing medicines whose sale and supply is restricted by law to prescription by medical practitioners
- assessing, diagnosing, treating, reporting or giving advice in a medical capacity, using the knowledge, skills, attitudes and competence initially attained for the MB ChB degree (or equivalent) and built upon in postgraduate and continuing medical education, wherever there could be an issue of public safety.

The practice of medicine goes wider than clinical medicine, and includes teaching, research, medical or health management, in hospitals, clinics, general practices and community and institutional contexts, whether paid or voluntary.

### Step 3 – Practising overseas

If you have worked outside New Zealand since you were last issued a practising certificate you must request a Certificate of Professional Status (COPS) from each authority you were registered or licensed with during this time. The COPS must be sent directly to us from that authority and must be dated within the last 3 months.

COPSs are documents that indicate a doctor was legally registered and permitted to practise. A COPS also shows that there is no legal impediment to your current registration.

If you were working overseas in a voluntary capacity for no longer than 3 months, and you were lawfully not registered for that period, a letter of good standing from the person you reported to in the organisation or hospital you worked in, is acceptable in lieu of a COPS.



## Step 4 – Development

Under the HPCAA all doctors registered in the general or vocational scope are required to meet recertification programme requirements set by the Council. These requirements will differ depending on your scope of practice.

Please refer to the Council’s pamphlet ([Recertification and continuing professional development](#)) for full details.

Enrolment in accredited vocational training programmes satisfies the requirements for recertification in a general scope. Participation will be audited and confirmation of enrolment may be obtained from the relevant medical college or Vocational education and advisory body (VEAB).

## Step 5 – Disclosures

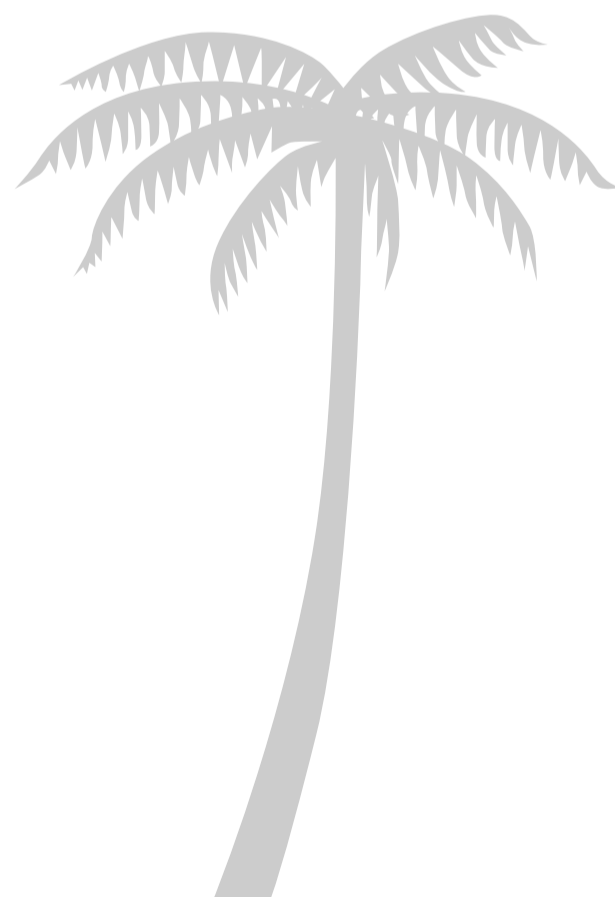
We ask that you complete the application carefully and honestly. If you make a false declaration or representation, a fine not exceeding \$10,000 may be imposed and your registration may be cancelled. Any sensitive information you share with us will be dealt with very carefully by observing our confidentiality and privacy principles.

Correspondence with you about your response to these questions will be sent to you in an envelope marked ‘Private and confidential — for addressee only’ or emailed to the email address you have told us to use. If you do not want this correspondence to go to your registered address, please make this clear. You can choose another address for correspondence on fitness to practise issues.

For further information on health disclosures [read here](#).

## Step 6 – Registered Address

If you would like your registered address to remain confidential please check the relevant box.





## Step 7 – Te ORA - for doctors of Māori descent

Te ORA provides peer support to increase the number of Māori doctors and works to improve Māori health and ensure a focus on Māori health issues in mainstream medicine. The Council supports this work as part of its obligation under the Treaty of Waitangi and includes a question in the application to assist Te ORA to establish contact with interested doctors of Māori descent.

## Step 8 – Declaration

Please:

- double-check your details and the disclosures you have made in your application
- read the declaration and indicate you agree by checking the box
- enter your myMCNZ password in the Authentication field.

## Step 9 – Workforce survey

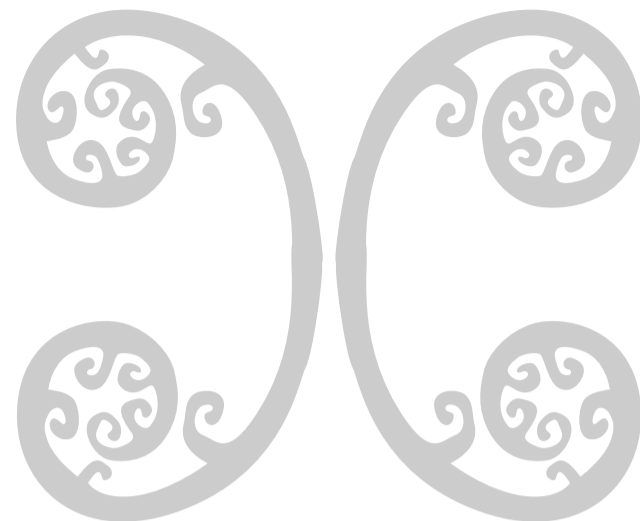
The Council is responsible for collecting medical workforce information each year. In addition to providing workforce statistics to the Ministry of Health, the Council has also assisted individual researchers and special interest groups. Your cooperation in this exercise is essential — the commitment to a high response rate and accurate reporting is important as government policy decisions are based on the data.

The Council owns the database and protects its confidentiality vigorously. We do not release unit data to the Ministry and information derived from the survey is not published where results show numbers fewer than four. New Zealand is a small country and this prevents the identification of individual doctors.

Researchers can apply for access to survey data. Research projects must meet our ethical and confidentiality criteria and must be compatible with the survey objectives which are to obtain 'statistical information on structure and trends in the medical workforce'.

If you wish to apply for access to survey data, or to suggest improvements to the survey, please write to the Registrar separately.

## Step 10 – Payment



### **Practising certificate fee and disciplinary levy**

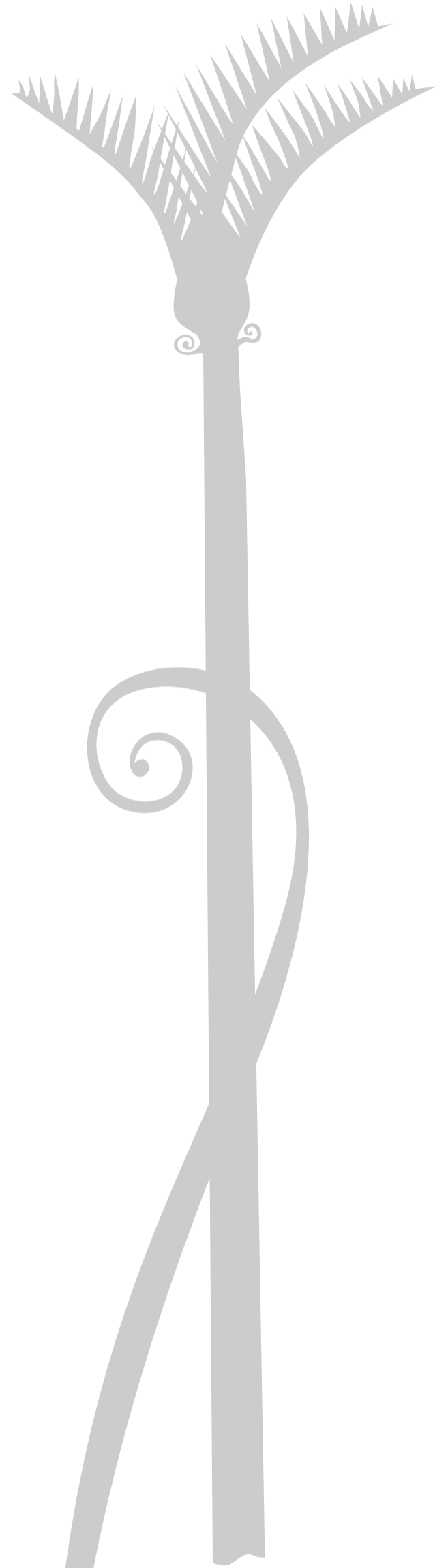
You can find details about the practising certificate fee and disciplinary levy on our [website](#).

Any costs incurred in collection of an overdue amount will be recoverable in addition to the practising certificate fee.

### **Low income refund**

A 50 percent refund of the practising certificate fee/levy is available for doctors earning \$20,000 or less per annum from the practice of medicine in New Zealand or overseas. Please complete the practising certificate form in the usual way and return it to the Registrar with the full fee attached. You may apply for this refund on your practising certificate at the end of the financial year (31 March) or at the end of your practising certificate cycle. A signed declaration of your earnings or a taxation statement will be required.

You can find the low income application form [here](#).



# Frequently Asked Questions



## **When will my practising certificate be issued?**

We will make every attempt to ensure that you have your new practising certificate before your current certificate expires. To help us do this, we ask you to submit the practising certificate application by the due date with the fees (and any supporting documents necessary).

If your application is received by Council after your current practising certificate expires, your new practising certificate will not be backdated.

## **How long will it take to process my application?**

If your application is complete and correct we aim to issue your practising certificate within 20 working days. If your application is incomplete or there are problems, processing will take longer.

## **What if the Council is proposing to decline my practising certificate?**

If the Council proposes to decline your application for a practising certificate, or to impose conditions on your scope of practice, we will contact you. We will let you know the reasons and give you an opportunity to make submissions and be heard by Council before a final decision is made.

## **Health Provider Index (HPI)?**

The HPI is intended to improve the delivery of health services to New Zealanders and contribute to improving health outcomes by:

- providing a central source of core information about all registered practitioners and their qualifications, reducing the current number of practitioner identifiers
- facilitating better and secure ways to access and transfer health-related information while respecting privacy expectations of practitioners and patients

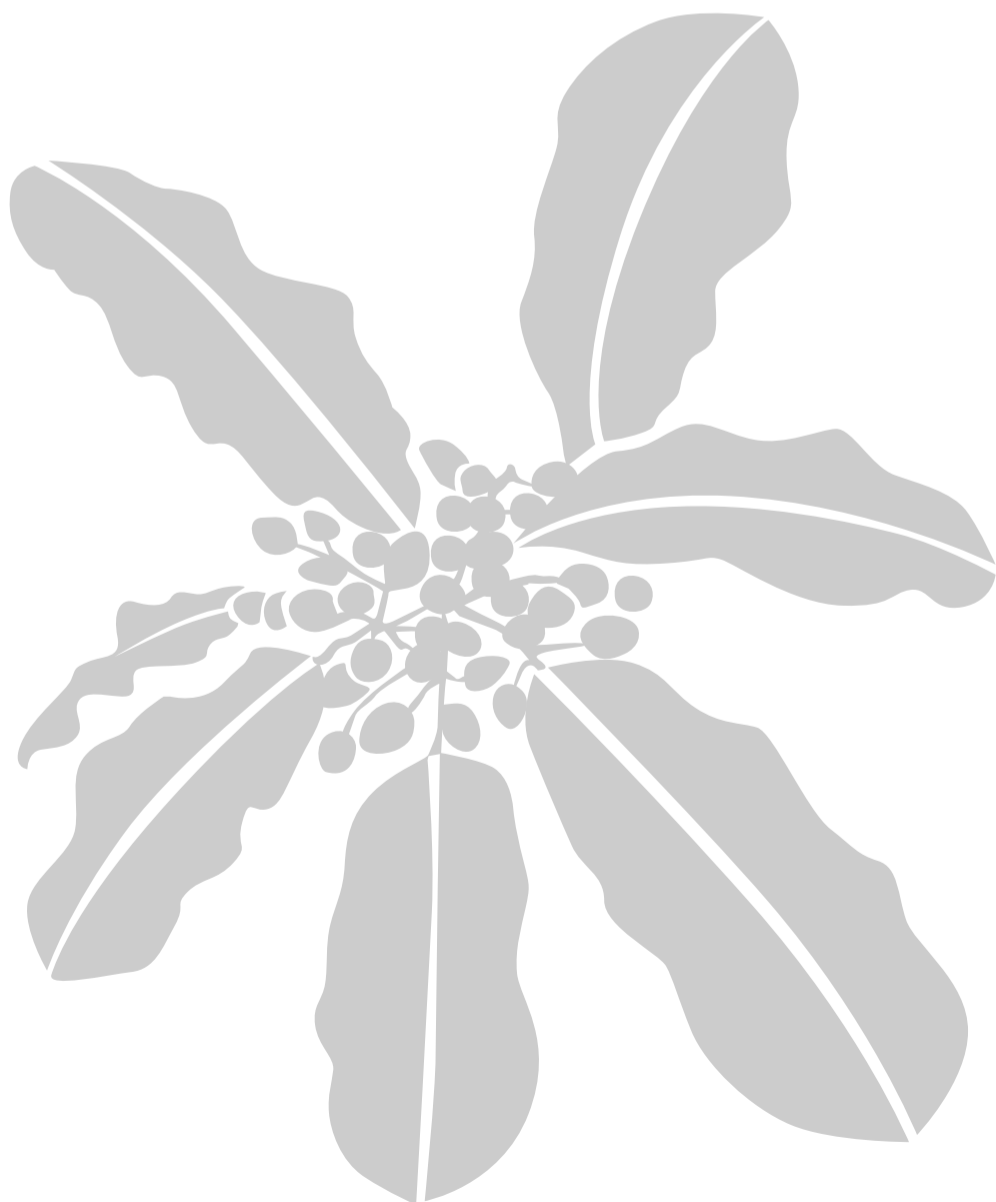
- allowing registered practitioners to access information from a range of sources.

### What is in it for me?

- accurate information about my qualifications and areas of practice
- protection of personal information
- authentication and verification of who is submitting and accessing information on patients and practitioners
- electronic information sharing for the benefit of patients and health care practitioners.

### Where can I find out more about the HPI?

For more information see the [National Health Board's website](#).



## Contact details

### Medical Council of New Zealand

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Wellington 6143

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**FREEPHONE** 0800 286 801

**EMAIL** [pc@mcnz.org.nz](mailto:pc@mcnz.org.nz)

**WEBSITE** [www.mcnz.org.nz](http://www.mcnz.org.nz)

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