



# Area of Need – application assessment criteria

In Western Australia (WA), the Area of Need (AoN) program helps health services (i.e. employers) recruit international medical graduates (IMGs) when a suitable Australian-qualified medical practitioner cannot be found to fill vacant positions.

AoN applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the following criteria:

## 1. Evidence of a vacant position(s) and labour market testing

The purpose of this section is to ensure there is a bona-fide vacant position. This is demonstrated by advertising the vacant position within state and national forums to attract a suitable Australian-qualified medical practitioner.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate a workforce shortage and the inability to successfully recruit a suitable Australian-qualified medical practitioner through a fair and equitable recruitment process.

Evidence that labour market testing (LMT) within Australia was designed and conducted to attract the best possible response must be documented, and that no suitable applicant was identified through this process prior to applying for an AoN determination.

Draft advertisements are encouraged to be sent to [areaofneed@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:areaofneed@health.wa.gov.au) prior to advertising to ensure they meet the minimum requirements.

Note: LMT is not required for new applications for currently contracted IMGs who hold limited registration for AoN to complete their Australian qualification.

The following are the minimum requirements for proof of evidence of labour market testing:

### 1.1 Statement of duties or job description

A statement of duties or a job description form detailing the required skills, duties and benefits of the position included in the advertisement must be submitted as part of an AoN application.

### 1.2 Advertising forums

All vacant positions must be advertised on 2 separate Australian targeted forums at a state and national level.

Of the 2 forums, one must be the website or publication of the relevant medical college (e.g. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners) or professional body (e.g. Australian Medical Association (AMA), Medical Journal of Australia (MJA) Jobs Board)

Additional forums accepted include:

- the WA Department of Health vacancy website: [jobs.health.wa.gov.au](https://jobs.health.wa.gov.au) (public sector positions must use this forum)
- medical magazines/journals
- medical recruitment websites (e.g. jobactive, MedJobsWA, AusDoctorJobs and Rural Health West)
- national job search websites (e.g. Career One, Indeed and Seek)
- national newspapers.

Note: International advertisements are not admissible and should not be included in the application.

### 1.3 Timing and duration of advertising

All advertising must run for a minimum of 4 consecutive weeks within 6 months of the application being lodged.

Applicants must provide copies of advertisements and evidence confirming the dates and duration.

### 1.4 Content of Advertising

At a minimum, advertisements should include the following details to attract applications from suitable Australian-qualified medical practitioners:

- position title
- name of the health service
- all locations for the position
- required qualifications
- skills, duties and benefits for the position.

For LMT, advertising must not refer to vocationally registered (VR) or non-VR positions or be designed to specifically attract an IMG.

### 1.5 Outcome of labour market testing

In addition to providing evidence of advertising, the application will need to demonstrate that no suitable Australian-qualified medical practitioner could be recruited and appointed to the position, by indicating:

- the number of Australian-qualified medical practitioners who applied for the position
- if there were Australian-qualified applicants; a brief explanation of why they were not suitable.

**Important:** Australian-qualified medical practitioners will be considered unsuitable if the applicant:

- did not meet the essential requirements in the Job Description Form or Statement of Duties
- had a pre-employment screen which precluded employment (e.g. criminal or disciplinary history or unable to be credentialed)
- applied for the position and subsequently withdrew interest.

**Please note:** The term ‘labour market testing’ is used by the WA Department of Health in relation to the AoN application process and by the Australian (i.e. Federal) Government Department of Home Affairs in relation to migration. Conditions of labour market testing may differ. Please refer to the Australian Government’s Department of Home Affairs website: [https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/ for more information regarding labour market testing for migration purposes](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/for-more-information-regarding-labour-market-testing-for-migration-purposes).

## 2. Distribution Priority Area or District of Workforce Shortage status

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed location is a distribution priority area (DPA) for general practitioners (GPs) or a district of workforce shortage (DWS) for non-GP specialists, classified by the Australian Government Department of Health (Australian Government). DPA and DWS determinations are required for IMGs to be eligible for an exemption to section 19AB (s19AB) of the Health Insurance Act 1973 and obtain a Medicare Provider Number (MPN).

AoN and DPA/DWS determinations are separate processes. DPA and DWS determinations are managed by the Australian Government and bound by national legislation. Neither the WA Minister for Health nor the WA Department of Health has authority to intervene in these matters.

### 2.1 Evidence of Distribution Priority Area and District of Workforce Shortage

- 2.1.1 To determine the DPA or DWS status of a proposed location(s) for GP and select non-GP specialist services respectively, please refer to the Australian Government [Health Workforce Locator Map](#).
- A copy of the DPA or DWS confirmation from the Health Workforce Locator Map must support an AoN application.
- 2.1.2 For those specialities not listed in the [Health Workforce Locator Map](#), applicants are required to email the Australian Government 19AB Team (19AB Team) at [19AB@health.gov.au](mailto:19AB@health.gov.au) to confirm the DWS status of a proposed AoN location(s).
- Email evidence from the 19AB Team confirming DWS status must support an AoN application.

Further information regarding exemptions in areas not classified as DPA or DWS can be found on the Australian Government’s website: [Section 19AB restricted doctors and access to Medicare | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)

## 3. Additional information

Applicants may choose to include additional information that is relevant to support their application. Letters of support may be provided by organisations holding a service contract with the employer, who have specific knowledge of the medical workforce needs of the proposed location.

Please contact the Area of Need Team by emailing [areaofneed@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:areaofneed@health.wa.gov.au) if you have any questions.