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# NEWSLETTER

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## PRESCRIBING RIGHTS FOR PODIATRISTS

As reported in the 2007 and 2008 Newsletter, an important initiative of the new Act and a result of changes in the *Drugs, Poisons and controlled Substances Act 1981*, Regulations 2007, podiatrists can now be endorsed by the Podiatrists Registration Board of Victoria ("the Board") to prescribe an approved list of restricted drugs.

The Board is pleased to announce that the Minister for Health has approved a list of Schedule 2, 3 & 4 drugs for prescribing for endorsed podiatrists. The approval became effective from **9 July 2009**, following its publication in the Government Gazette. In addition to an approved list of drugs for endorsed podiatrists, the original submission requested a second level of endorsement (specialist). The provisions of the Act prevent two levels of endorsement. The mechanism and drugs agents for what was to be specialist endorsement is yet to be finalised.

The full list of currently endorsed drugs can be down loaded from the Board's WEB site.

**Only Endorsed Podiatrists can prescribe from the list of approved drugs.** The Board is presently in the process of putting arrangements in place for the endorsement process and we will contact the profession via our WEB site when this is completed.

We would also like to bring to your attention the requirements for Podiatrists wishing to be endorsed by the Board. The full details can be down loaded from the Board's WEB site [www.podboardvic.gov.au](http://www.podboardvic.gov.au) a summary of this follows.

### Required Academic Qualifications

The Podiatrist must have the following:

- a working understanding of the microbiological and pathological processes relevant to foot pathologies;
- a thorough understanding of the microbiology of foot infections;
- a sound knowledge of the pharmacology of the podiatric drugs used in the treatment of foot pathologies;
- competence to diagnose and treat allergic, infective, inflammatory, toxic and traumatic conditions of the foot and be aware of the circumstances in which referral for specialist medical treatment is required;
- an understanding of the emergencies and serious complications that can be associated with foot conditions so that these can be identified and properly managed, and awareness of the circumstances in which referral for specialist medical treatment is appropriate;
- a thorough understanding of the side effects of drugs and their interactions with other drugs, and how to avoid or manage such complications;
- the knowledge to be able to provide non-invasive first aid for foot conditions; and
- a minimum of 1000 hours clinical training with rotation through various centres in which a broad range of foot pathologies and treatment strategies are provided.

Podiatrists who have completed the basic undergraduate degree in podiatry from La Trobe University prior to 2003 do not have the requisite knowledge, and require additional education and training.

### **Clinical training and experience**

For those podiatrists who have a minimum of seven years clinical experience working in a hospital environment, a statement from two referees confirming the podiatrist has completed this clinical experience and has had adequate experience in observing the administration of a variety of classes of restricted drugs for various foot related conditions is required. The referees must be medical practitioners or other endorsed prescriber.

The Board considers that seven years of clinical experience is consistent with the Health Professions Services - Public Sector - Victorian Award definition of a senior clinician. The award defines a Senior Clinician as a Podiatrist possessing specific knowledge in a branch of the profession and working in an area that requires high levels of specialist knowledge as recognised by the employer.

For those podiatrists who do not have this clinical experience, they are to undertake 40 sessions (one session consists of 4 hours) of direct supervision by a medical practitioner or other endorsed prescriber in a hospital setting, to be completed over a 12 month period. In addition, 20 hours of board approved web-based case studies are to be completed.

### **First time applicants mandatory course update**

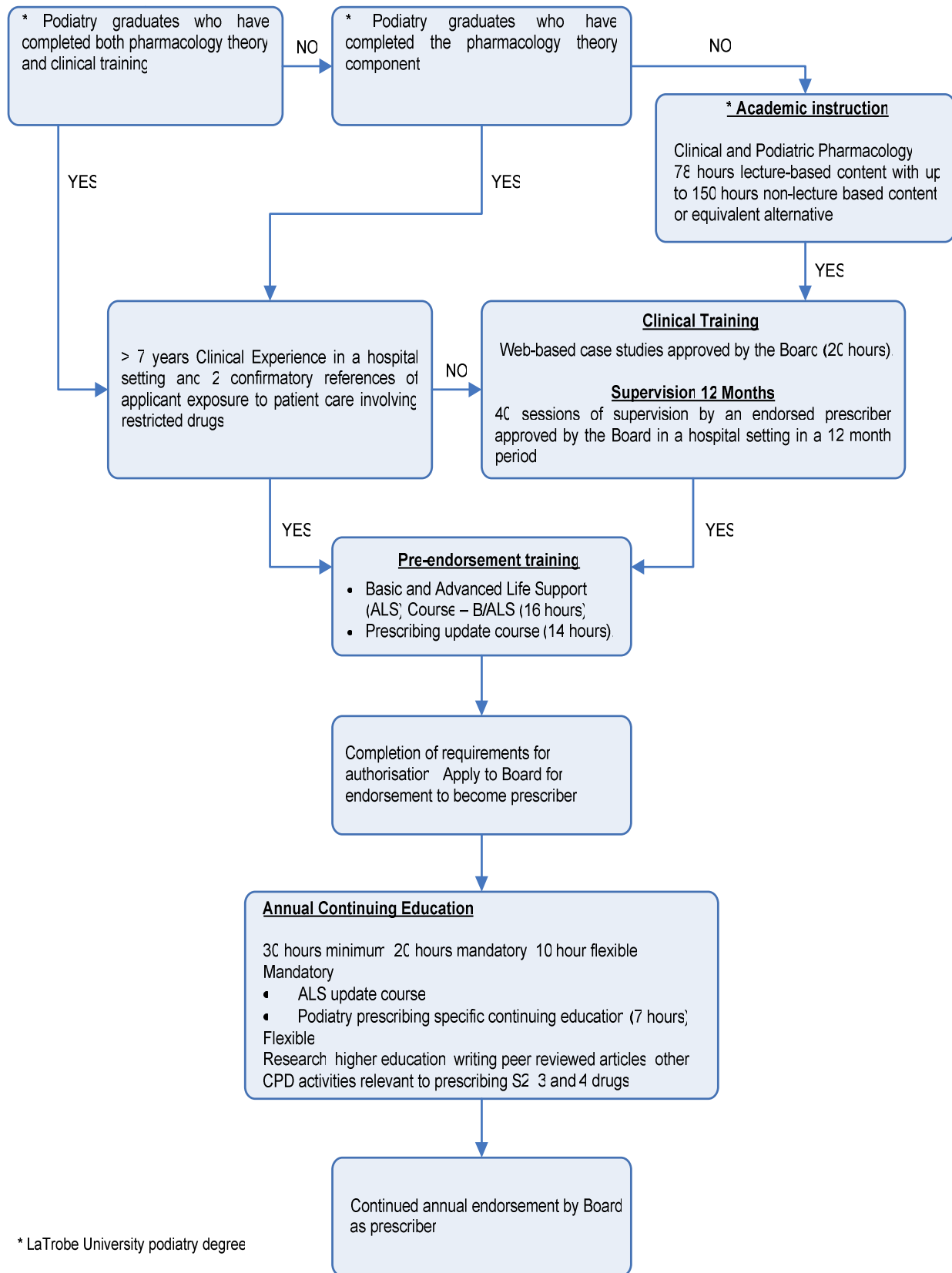
For all first time applicants, a course update of 30 hours is required for initial endorsement. This will include:

- Advanced Life Support (ALS) Course (certification). This can be provided over a two day block (approximately 16 hours). This course is expected to contain training in invasive procedures and/or the administration of a drug via injection. Examples include, insertion of a laryngeal mask airway, endotracheal intubation, intravenous cannulation, intravenous fluid therapy, the parenteral administration of drugs, principles of electrocardiography and defibrillation and recognition and management in anaphylaxis; and
- Education specifically related to the practicalities of prescribing S2, 3 and 4 drugs (approximately 14 hours).

### **What you must do prior to applying for endorsement**

The Flow chart below sets out the order in which podiatrists should obtain the necessary education and clinical training and provides a summary of the requirements. **The final step prior to submitting your application is to undertake the mandatory update course.** La Trobe University has agreed to run the mandatory update required by all first time applicants. The first course is scheduled to be run later this year. If you wish to undertake this course, please contact the Board by **1 August 2009** via email [registrar@podboardvic.vic.gov.au](mailto:registrar@podboardvic.vic.gov.au) to register your interest.

### Flow Chart Summary of Requirements



\* LaTrobe University podiatry degree