

Tasmanian Authorised Immuniser Application Guidelines May 2023

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Glossary of Terms

- AI Authorised Immuniser: Registered nurse, midwife or pharmacist authorised to administer vaccines within an approved program.
- AHPRA Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency: National body responsible for the regulation of nurses and midwives in Australia.
- ARC Australian Resuscitation Council
- ASCIA Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy
- CDPU Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit: Director of Public Health is responsible for authorising Nurse Immunisers in Tasmania. Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit is the point of communication for all Nurse Immunisers seeking authorisation.
- CPR Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation: Adult and paediatric CPR, as per Australian Resuscitation Guidelines (ARC), must be completed every 12 months.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD): The ongoing, systematic, learning process that nurses and midwives undertake to maintain their competence to practice and to enhance their professional and personal skills and knowledge. The CPD cycle involves reviewing practice, identifying learning needs, planning, and participating in relevant learning activities, and reflecting on the value of those activities.
- DoH Department of Health
- Declaration of Competence: A formal declaration made by a nurse or a midwife that they have maintained their competence to practice and have complied with continuing competence requirements.
- DPH Director of Public Health
- HESA Health Education Services Australia
- Self-assessment: The process the health professional undertakes to compare their own performance against the relevant standards to identify practice and knowledge gaps in order to develop learning goals.
- Vaccination Program: A vaccination Program that has been approved by the Director of Public Health.

Introduction

In accordance with Tasmanian legislation a registered health professional other than a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner must be authorised by the Department of Health (DoH) to vaccinate independently in Tasmania.

An Authorised Immuniser (AI) is a registered nurse, registered midwife, or pharmacist who has completed an approved educational program of study in immunisation, and who:

- has been approved by the Secretary, under the *Tasmanian Poisons Act 1971, 38 (1) (i)* and *Poisons Regulations 2018 – Regulation 82 (c) & (d)* to administer vaccines (as listed in Schedule 4 of the Poisons List) to another person independently of a medical or nurse practitioner
- practices in accordance with a vaccination program approved by the Director of Public Health (DPH)

When AIs apply to renew their authorisation, they will reflect on their practice and declare they are competent to practice safely in accordance with their scope and context of practice.

To maintain safe and effective immunisation practices, AIs will accept responsibility for their personal competence and professional accountability. The requirement for authorisation to practice as an AI and the process for annual authorisation are outlined in this document.

An explanation of the requirements for authorisation and a list of resources that may be utilised are listed in this document to ensure the process is transparent and clear.

Scope of Practice

A registered nurse, midwife, or pharmacist's scope of professional practice is set by legislation and professional standards such as competency, practice standards, and codes of ethics, as well as public requirements, demands, and expectations.

An AI has expanded skills, experience, and knowledge in assessment, planning, implementation, diagnosis, and evaluation which involves the full spectrum of their role, functions, responsibilities, and decision-making. By accepting the title and role of an AI, the health professional must be competent to practice at this advanced level.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

It is expected that an AI's annual CPD will cover the following topics:

- Maintaining clinical knowledge of anaphylaxis.
- Annual CPR theory and practicum, including infant and paediatric CPR
- Knowledge and understanding of any legislation which affects immunisation practice.
- The annual influenza composition and any vaccine or administration changes.
- Any Commonwealth announcements or changes relating to immunisation, new vaccines introduced onto the schedule or any changes to national immunisation registers for reporting.

- Any changes or updates to The Australian Immunisation Handbook or other relevant publications pertaining to the AIs scope of practice.
- Any other identified learning requirement following a self-assessment of competence.

Application Process

Applying for Authorisation for the First Time

In addition to completing an *Application for Initial Authorisation Form*, health professionals who wish to apply for authorisation to immunise in Tasmania must provide:

- A certificate of current, general registration with AHPRA
- A certificate of competence in adult and paediatric Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) as per Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC) guidelines attended in the last 12 months.
- Evidence of having completed an approved immunisation education course within the last three (3) years. If longer than three years, the applicant must have recently been practicing as an Authorised Immuniser in another State.
- Pharmacists must also provide evidence of having completed a First Aid Course through a Registered Training Organisation within the last three (3) years.

Immunisation education courses accepted by the Director of Public Health in Tasmania

Health professionals seeking to practice in Tasmania must have completed an education course that has been accredited by Health Education Service Australia (HESA).

HESA accredits immunisation education programs offered by education providers for health practitioners.

See [HESA-approved courses](https://hesa.com.au/accredited-programs/) (https://hesa.com.au/accredited-programs/)

Additional Immunisation education programs approved include:

- The Pharmacy Guild of Australia Immunisation Course TAS

Annual Authorisation Process

To apply for annual authorisation the AI is required to:

1. **Nurse Immunisers** must undertake 8 hours of CPD specific to immunisation plus their CPR update.
2. **Pharmacist immunisers** must undertake 6hrs CPD - (6 x Group 1 or 6 x Group 2 credits) specific to immunisation plus their CPR update.
3. Complete the *Application for Renewal of Authorisation Form*. This includes your annual statement, which is supported by a declaration, confirming that the details given in your renewal of authorisation are 'true and correct'.

Please ensure current contact details are provided in your application and that any changes are updated as necessary via email to the CDPU throughout the year.

4. **Nurse Immunisers** are required to submit the *Application for Renewal of Authorisation Form* by 30 June each year. Written confirmation of authorisation to practice from the DoH will be issued before 1 August each year.
5. **Pharmacist Immunisers** are required to submit the *Application for Renewal of Authorisation Form* by 31 December each year. Written confirmation of authorisation to practice from the DoH will be issued before 1 March each year.
6. Documentation should be sent to the CDPU via one of the following methods:
 - Email: authorisedimmuniser@health.tas.gov.au
 - Mail: GPO Box 125 Hobart 7000.

Assessment Process for Authorisation

The health professional's Renewal of Authorisation Application will be assessed to confirm all requirements have been met and once they have been deemed competent to practice, they will be issued a letter providing authorisation to practice.

Audit Process

Audits of random samples of Authorised Immunisers will occur periodically throughout the year. They help to ensure that Authorised Immunisers are meeting mandatory authorisation requirements, providing important assurance to the DoH and the Tasmanian community.

Each time you apply to renew your authorisation, you make a declaration that you have (or have not) met the mandatory requirements to continue to practice as an Authorised Immuniser in Tasmania.

If you are selected for audit, you will receive a notification via email from the DoH. You will be requested to provide evidence, within 28 days, that you have met the mandatory requirements.

Als must maintain a comprehensive portfolio containing sufficient evidence from the previous 12 months to demonstrate continuing competence in their current area and context of practice.

Grievance Procedure

If an applicant has a grievance because authorisation to practice has not been granted, the Authorised Immuniser Grievance Procedure will be implemented.

The first step in the process is for the applicant to contact the CDPU to discuss reasons for non-authorisation.

The applicant must then consider the feedback provided and if wanting to continue with a grievance, lodge a formal appeal to the Director of Public Health (DPH) within 14 days from receipt of the initial contact made with CDPU.

The formal appeal against the decision must be made to The Director of Public Health, GPO BOX 125, Hobart 7001 detailing all necessary information and documentation, including contact details.

The applicant will be informed in writing of the DPH's decision within 14 days of the receipt of the application.

Lapsed Authorisation Policy

An Authorised Immuniser's authority to practice lapses if they fail to successfully submit their authorisation documents by the designated date.

While the health professional will be notified in writing that their authorisation has lapsed and that they are no longer authorised to practice as an Authorised Immuniser in Tasmania, it should be noted that the health professional who continues to practice without current authorisation will be operating outside the legal framework.

If an AI's authority to practice has lapsed for a period of greater than three (3) years they will be required to provide further educational evidence before being re-authorised.

Please contact CDPU for further information.

Information Support

Please contact a Public Health Nurse (Immunisation) within CPDU for any queries you may have relating to the authorisation process on 6166 0632

Please notify CDPU of changes in personal details as soon as possible, to ensure all correspondence sent to you is received in a timely manner.

Resources

The following resources will provide guidance and points of reference to assist the AIs to meet the standards of competency required for renewal of authorisation to practice.

- [ARC Home - Australian Resuscitation Council Website](https://resus.org.au/)¹
- [ASCIA e-training for health professionals](https://etraininghp.ascia.org.au/)²
- [Australian Government, Department of Health, Immunise Australia Program](https://www.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation?language=und)³
- [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#), Australian Government Department of Health, Canberra, 2018⁴
- [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\)](#)⁵
- [Centre for Disease and Control](#)⁶
- [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5' | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#), Third Edition. Commonwealth of Australia 2013⁷
- [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance | NCIRS](#)⁸
- [World Health Organization](#)⁹

¹ <https://resus.org.au/>

² <https://etraininghp.ascia.org.au/>

³ <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation?language=und>

⁴ <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>

⁵ <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-technical-advisory-group-on-immunisation-atagi>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>

⁷ <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-vaccine-storage-guidelines-strive-for-5>

⁸ <https://www.ncirs.org.au/>

⁹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab_1