

# Tasmanian Authorised Immuniser Application Guidelines

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# Contents

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Glossary of Terms .....                             | 1 |
| Introduction.....                                   | 2 |
| Scope of Practice.....                              | 2 |
| Continuing Professional Development (CPD) .....     | 3 |
| Application Process .....                           | 3 |
| Applying for Authorisation for the First Time ..... | 3 |
| Annual Authorisation Process.....                   | 3 |
| Assessment Process for Authorisation .....          | 4 |
| Audit Process .....                                 | 4 |
| Grievance Procedure .....                           | 5 |
| Lapsed Authorisation Policy .....                   | 5 |
| Information Support.....                            | 5 |
| Resources.....                                      | 6 |

## Glossary of Terms

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| AI  | Authorised Immuniser.<br>Registered nurse, midwife or pharmacist authorised to administer vaccines within an approved program.  |
| AHPRA                                     | Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency.<br>National body responsible for the regulation of nurses and midwives in Australia.   |
| CDPU                                      | Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit.<br>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                                       | Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation.<br>CPR for 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 practise 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. |
| 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.   |
| TIAAP                                     | Tasmanian Immuniser Authorisation Advisory Panel.<br>Panel convened to make recommendations to the Director of Public Health in relation to authorisation of Authorised Immunisers in Tasmania.   |
| Self-assessment                           | The process the health professional undertakes to compare their own performance against the relevant competency standards to identify practice and knowledge gaps in order to develop learning goals.   |
| Vaccination Program                       | A vaccination Program which has been approved by the Director of Public Health  |

# Introduction

In accordance with Tasmanian legislation a registered health professional other than a medical practitioner must be authorised by DHHS to vaccinate independently in Tasmania.

An Authorised Immuniser (AI) is a registered nurse, registered midwife or pharmacist who has completed an approved educational qualification in immunisation, and who;

- Has been approved by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), under the Tasmanian Poisons Act 1971, 38 (1) (i) and Poisons Regulations 2008 – Regulation 64 (c) & (ca) to administer vaccines (as listed in Schedule 4 of the Poisons List) to another person independently of a Medical Practitioner
- Practices in accordance with a vaccination program approved by the Director of Public Health
- Complies with the necessary competency standards and maintains competence in accordance with the DHHS [Vaccination Competency Standards for Authorised Immunisers in Tasmania](#).

The purpose of the *Vaccination Competency Standards (VCS)* is to assist Authorised Immunisers to:

- Self-assess performance annually to ensure delivery of safe and competent immunisation practice
- Identify knowledge and/or skills that require revision in order to maintain the expected competency standards for individual contexts and scope of practice
- Determine ongoing competence development and learning needs for the next 12 months
- Identify the broad competency standards across the immunisation continuum
- Recognise the necessary knowledge and skills required for various practice contexts.

In addition, the VCS will assist students when undertaking a clinical practice placement.

When AIs apply to renew their authorisation, they will reflect on their practice by undertaking a self assessment of their knowledge, skills and competence and declare they are competent to practice safely in accordance with their scope and context of practice.

In order to maintain safe and effective immunisation practice, 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.

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

## Scope of Practice

A registered nurse, midwife or pharmacists' scope of professional practice is set by legislation and professional standards such as competency, practice standards, codes of ethics, as well as public requirement, demand and expectation.

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.
- 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 copy of current registration with AHPRA
- evidence of having completed an approved immunisation education course
- certificate of competence in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), as per Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC) guidelines attended in the last 12 months.

Current immunisation education courses accepted by the Director of Public Health in Tasmania are:

- The Nurse Immuniser Program, Latrobe University, Victoria
- Immunisation Course for Registered Nurses, The Royal College of Nursing, New South Wales (in addition must complete a clinical practicum)
- Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses, University of Tasmania
- Guild Clinical Training - 'Pharmacist Administration of Influenza Vaccine' – Tasmanian Branch approved version
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia - 'Manage the delivery and administration of injections and immunisations' (APPIMM806A) - Tasmanian Branch approved version

### Annual Authorisation Process

To apply for annual authorisation the AI is required to:

1. Undertake a self-assessment of competence using the *Competency Self-Assessment Form* in conjunction with the VCS to inform ongoing development and learning requirements for the next 12 months. This document should be retained for your own records and must be provided if selected for audit.
2. **Nurse Immunisers** must undertake 8 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) specific to immunisation plus their CPR update.

3. **Pharmacist immunisers** must undertake 6hrs CPD - (6 x Group 1 or 6 x Group 2 credits) specific to immunisation plus their CPR update.
4. 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 Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit (CDPU) throughout the year.
5. **Nurses Immunisers** are required to submit the *Application for Renewal of Authorisation Form* by the 30 June each year. Written confirmation of authorisation to practice from the DPH will be issued before 1 August each year.
6. **Pharmacist Immunisers** are required to submit the *Application for Renewal of Authorisation Form* by the 31 January each year. Written confirmation of authorisation to practice from the DPH will be issued before 1 March each year.
7. Documentation should be sent to the CDPU via one of the following methods:
  - Email: [authorisedimmuniser@dhhs.tas.gov.au](mailto:authorisedimmuniser@dhhs.tas.gov.au)
  - Fax: (03) 6222 7668
  - Mail: GPO Box 125 Hobart 7000.

### Assessment Process for Authorisation

The health professionals 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 issued a certificate providing authorisation to practice.

In the case where renewal does not meet the criteria, the application will be referred to the Tasmanian Immuniser Authorisation Advisory Panel (TIAAP) for a recommendation. The Authorised Immuniser will be notified in writing of the panel's decision.

### 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 DPH 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.

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

Als are required to maintain a comprehensive portfolio which contains 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 CPDU 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 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 DPH will then consider the application and may seek advice from the TIAPP.

The applicant will be informed in writing of the DPHs 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.

## Information Support

Please contact a Public Health Nurse (Immunisation) within CPDU for any queries you may have relating to the authorisation process on 1800 671 738.

Please notify CDPU of change in personal details as soon 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.

- Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). [The Australian Immunisation Handbook, 10th Edition](#),(2015 update) Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health, 2015.
- Department of Health, [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines: Strive for 5](#), Second Edition. Commonwealth of Australia 2013
- Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania, [Vaccination Competencies Standards for Authorised in Tasmania](#)
- [Australian Resuscitation Council](#) Website
  - Anaphylaxis – First Aid Management
  - CPR

## Web sites:

- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Centre for Disease and Control](#)
- [Australian Government, Department of Health, Immunise Australia Program](#)
- [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance](#)