



# Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor (APIA)

## *Information Pack for* **NON – SPECIALIST** **MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS**

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# Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor: Non-specialist Medical Practitioners

## WorkCover WA

WorkCover WA is the government agency responsible for overseeing the workers compensation and injury management system in Western Australia.

Part of the agency's role is to monitor compliance with the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023* (the Act), approve and regulate certain individuals to perform functions in the scheme, inform and educate workers, employers and others about workers compensation and injury management, and provide an independent dispute resolution system.

## Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor

Only medical practitioners who are trained in the use of the *WorkCover WA Guidelines for the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* (WorkCover WA Guidelines) and meet WorkCover WA's eligibility criteria can be designated as an Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor (APIA).

An APIA plays an important role in the Western Australian workers compensation scheme. APIA assess an injured worker's degree of permanent impairment in accordance with the WorkCover WA Guidelines, to determine a worker's eligibility to access certain workers compensation entitlements.

## Eligibility criteria for designation as an Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor

To be designated as an APIA, under section 193 of the Act, a person must satisfy all of the criteria below:

1. Be registered as a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup> with no current notations, conditions or reprimands for disciplinary purposes recorded against their registration for medical practice.
2. Have at least five (5) years post-graduate experience as a medical practitioner.
3. Provide evidence of current clinical practice and/or expertise in assessment.
4. Have undertaken and completed training in the WorkCover WA Education Module, which includes training in the WorkCover WA Guidelines
5. **A)** Have undertaken and completed training in the use of the *American Medical Association Guidelines to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* upon which the current edition of WorkCover WA Guidelines are based, **or**  
**B)** Have current accreditation as a "Certified Independent Medical Examiner" with the American Board of Independent Medical Examiners (ABIME), **or**  
**C)** Undertaken other training in impairment assessment approved by WorkCover WA.
6. Have qualifications as an Australian recognised medical specialist.

<sup>1</sup> *Medical practitioner under the Act means:*

*(a) a person registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Western Australia) in the medical profession; or*

*(b) a person who is not resident in a State but who is recognised as a medical practitioner for the purposes of this Act by WorkCover WA.*

## Other (non-specialist) medical practitioners

Despite eligibility criteria 6, a non-specialist medical practitioner may be approved as an APIA and the criteria requirement to be a medical specialist waived. Upon application, WorkCover WA will consider the applicant's relevant skills, experience and qualifications to determine if the applicant's competency levels meet WorkCover WA's requirements. As a guide, WorkCover WA will review the extent to which a medical practitioner can demonstrate:

- Significant work in a medical practice with consistent management and assessment of injured workers.
- Experience in undertaking medical assessments of injured workers.
- Relevant qualifications, for example ABIME exam certification or other similar qualifications.

*Applications in this category will be considered on a case-by-case basis and decisions will be at the sole discretion of WorkCover WA.*

**To assist WorkCover WA to assess applicants in this category applicants are also required to provide two de-identified permanent impairment assessment reports.**

## Duration of approval

New APIAs will be approved for an initial three-year period. Prior to expiration of the initial approval period, WorkCover WA will determine whether to convert the fixed term period to indefinite approval.

## Operational conditions

APIAs are required to comply with the following operational conditions during the period of approval.

### *Statutory requirements*

1. Conditions prescribed now and in the future by the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023* (the Act) and the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Regulations 2024* (the Regulations).

### *Registration status*

2. Be registered as a medical practitioner with no current notations, conditions or reprimands for disciplinary purposes recorded against their registration for medical practice.

### *Ministerial fee order*

3. Comply with the *Workers Compensation (Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor) Fees Order* approved by the Minister in accordance with section 195 of the Act.

### *Production of reports on results of assessment*

4. Complete impairment assessments in accordance with the *WorkCover WA Guidelines for the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*.
5. Ensure assessments are arranged and conducted in a timely manner following a request for assessment.
6. Ensure reports are accurate and contain clear reasons for decisions and are in the form approved by WorkCover WA.
7. Ensure assessments, reports and certificates reflect the absence of actual bias and any apprehension of bias.
8. Provide reports to workers and employers within a reasonable timeframe following a request for assessment. If the APIA is unable to meet the timeframe, reasons are to be given and documents provided as soon as practicable.

9. Ensure errors in impairment assessment reports or certificates are kept to a minimum and are rectified in a timely manner.

#### *Compliance audits and investigations*

10. Participate in any audits and investigations as required by WorkCover WA to ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements in accordance with section 198 of the Act.

#### *Conduct and character*

11. Act in an ethical, professional and considerate manner when examining injured persons.
12. Comply with all applicable professional standards and codes of conduct.
13. Declare real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest as soon as practicable.
14. Notify WorkCover WA if found guilty or convicted of a criminal offence involving dishonesty, misconduct with regard to patients or sentenced to imprisonment.

#### *Interactions with WorkCover WA*

15. Keep all contact details up to date and notify WorkCover WA of any changes in a timely manner.
16. Notify WorkCover WA of any change in status of registration, disciplinary action taken against the APIA, and any changes in engagement in clinical practice.
17. Abide by any requirements published by WorkCover WA.
18. Participate in training with respect to impairment assessment from time to time as required by WorkCover WA.
19. Respond to WorkCover WA in a timely manner with respect to all matters.

#### **WorkCover WA expectations**

APIAs are expected to:

- Assess impairment in accordance with the WorkCover WA Guidelines.
- Assess a worker's degree of permanent impairment as soon as possible after a request is made.
- Use and properly complete the approved WorkCover WA templates and forms for permanent impairment reports and certificates.
- Participate in WorkCover WA training relating to impairment assessment changes.
- Comply with any criteria that must continue to be satisfied after approval and operational conditions at all times.
- Participate in any WorkCover WA audit or compliance investigations.

#### **Suspension or cancellation of an APIA approval**

Under section 197 of the Act, WorkCover WA has the power to suspend or cancel an APIA's approval for not satisfying any criteria that must continue to be satisfied after approval, or failure to comply with any operational conditions, or failure to comply with any provision of the Act or regulations.

The approval may also be cancelled by WorkCover WA at the request of the APIA.

## How to become an Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor – application process

1. Before undertaking training in the WorkCover WA Guidelines, applicants **must** have:
  - completed training in the American Medical Association Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment (**AMA 5**), or
  - current accreditation as a “Certified Independent Medical Examiner” with the American Board of Independent Medical Examiners (**ABIME**).

WorkCover WA **does not** provide training in AMA 5 or assistance with ABIME accreditation.

**WorkCover WA recognises satisfactory completion of equivalent AMA 5 training conducted by workers compensation jurisdictions in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.**

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure AMA 5 training meets specific requirements. *Please contact WorkCover WA prior to undertaking training based in other Australian jurisdictions to confirm it meets the required standard.*

2. After completing training in AMA 5 or obtaining ABIME accreditation, medical practitioners are required to complete training in the WorkCover WA Guidelines. This training is held at WorkCover WA when there is sufficient demand, usually from 5:30pm to 9pm on a weekday evening.
3. At the conclusion of the WorkCover WA Guidelines training, participants will receive correspondence confirming completion of the training.
4. After completing the pre-requisite training requirements, medical practitioners must submit the applicable completed ‘Application for approval as an Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor’ (APIA application form) together with the required supporting evidence to WorkCover WA. *(Please note: WorkCover WA cannot progress your application if all supporting documentation is not received with the APIA application form).*

The completed APIA application form and any required supporting evidence should be forwarded to:

**Regulatory Services Division  
WorkCover WA  
2 Bedbrook Place  
SHENTON PARK WA 6008**

Or via email to [regulation@workcover.wa.gov.au](mailto:regulation@workcover.wa.gov.au)

**WorkCover WA will only consider applicants who have completed the pre-requisite training requirements and meet the eligibility criteria. WorkCover WA may request further information when considering your application.**

5. When completed applications are forwarded to WorkCover WA, the application is reviewed to ensure the eligibility criteria for designation as an APIA has been met.
6. Once approved by WorkCover WA, applicants become an APIA and are then authorised to conduct permanent impairment assessments of injured workers. This approval remains in force for an initial three-year fixed period, after which time a decision to convert the fixed term period to indefinite approval will be made.

7. All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their APIA application.
8. A register of current APIA is published on the WorkCover WA website for public viewing.

The “Application for Approval as an Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor” Form is attached.

### **Further information**

#### **Visit**

[www.workcover.wa.gov.au](http://www.workcover.wa.gov.au)

#### **Call**

Advice and Assistance 1300 794 744

#### **Email**

[regulation@workcover.wa.gov.au](mailto:regulation@workcover.wa.gov.au)

**Section 1 – Personal details**

**Please note: This information must be included and is your preferred contact details for WorkCover WA to use only (not to be displayed on the public register)**

Title  First Name(s)  Surname

Date of Birth

**Postal Address**

Unit No.  No.  Street Name

Suburb  State  Postcode

Email address for WorkCover WA contact only  Phone No.

**Section 2 – Practice details**

**Please note: If your application is successful, the information provided in this section will be displayed on WorkCover WA's online register for public use.**

Practice / Business name

Unit No.  No.  Street Name

Suburb  State  Postcode

Phone No.\*

\*Phone number can be a mobile number, however, please note this number will be published on WorkCover WA's online register for public use.



**Section 3 – Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registration details**

Registration No.

Registration type

Do you have any notations or restrictions on your registration? If so, please provide details below

**Section 4 – Non-specialists qualifications and demonstration of competency**

Please provide two de-identified permanent impairment assessment reports:  Attached

Significant work in a medical practice with consistent management and assessment of injured workers:

Experience in undertaking medical assessment of injured workers:

Relevant qualifications, for example ABIME exam certification or other similar qualifications related to medico- legal assessments or disability assessments:

List and attach any other supporting documentation you would like considered as part of your application:

**Section 5 – Training details**

WorkCover WA Education Module (WorkCover WA Guidelines Training) - Date Attended:

- Attach evidence of Certified Independent Medical Examiner (CIME) with the American Board of Independent Medical Examiners (ABIME) training **OR**
- Attach evidence of American Medical Association Guides 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (AMA5) training.

Please specify the body system(s) you completed in your AMA5 training:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiovascular System | <input type="checkbox"/> Digestive System               | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear, Nose, Throat and Related Structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Endocrine System      | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hematopoietic System                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Extremities     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous System                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatric and Psychological Disorders  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory System    | <input type="checkbox"/> Skin                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Spine                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upper Extremities     | <input type="checkbox"/> Urinary & Reproductive Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual System                            |

Other

Copy of Resume / CV attached

## Section 6 – Declaration

Please note WorkCover WA may request further information when considering your application.

I wish to apply for approval as an Approved Permanent Impairment Assessor in accordance with section 193 of the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023*

Signed

Date

Please ensure your application is complete and all information provided is accurate.

Please submit the completed application and any supporting information:

Via email: [regulation@workcover.wa.gov.au](mailto:regulation@workcover.wa.gov.au)

Via mail: Regulatory Services Division  
WorkCover WA  
2 Bedbrook Place  
SHENTON PARK WA 6008

For further information, please contact the Advice and Assistance Service on 1300 794 744 or by accessing [www.workcover.wa.gov.au](http://www.workcover.wa.gov.au)