Pathologists – Practise in Australia

Able Medico · Information for overseas-trained pathologists · November 2026

Overview

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) assesses overseas-trained pathologists in all pathology disciplines. Pathology underpins most diagnoses made in Australia, and laboratories in public and private sectors recruit overseas specialists.

Pathology in Australia

Pathologists diagnose disease by examining tissue, cells, blood and other samples, and advise clinicians on testing and treatment. Australia has large private pathology networks alongside public hospital laboratories.

Disciplines

- Anatomical pathology, including cytopathology
- Chemical pathology
- Forensic pathology
- General pathology
- Haematology (laboratory)
- Immunology
- Microbiology
- Genetic pathology

What Australian pathologists do

- Report surgical, cytology and autopsy specimens
- Oversee laboratory testing, quality and accreditation
- Advise clinicians and take part in multidisciplinary meetings
- Lead laboratory teams of scientists and technicians
- Teach and supervise registrars

Where they work

Public hospital laboratories, private pathology providers, forensic institutes and regional laboratories.

About RCPA assessment

The RCPA is accredited by the Australian Medical Council to assess overseas-trained pathologists on behalf of the Medical Board of Australia. The RCPA assesses comparability and recommends requirements. It does not grant registration, find you a position, arrange visas or set salaries — that is where Able Medico helps.

Your pathways

There are two routes for pathologists. Our Due Diligence report tells you which fits your training and experience.

Pathway	Who it is for	Possible outcomes	What follows	Leads to
RCPA specialist assessment	Pathologists who have completed specialist training and are recognised as specialists in their country of training	Substantially / partially / not comparable, after an interim assessment and interview	Substantially comparable: a short period of supervised practice or orientation. Partially comparable: 12 to 24 months' supervised laboratory practice with workplace-based assessments and CPD	Specialist registration and FRCPA
Area of Need	Pathologists selected by an employer for a position the state or territory has declared an Area of Need	Suitable / not suitable for the position	Practise in that position under supervision, alongside specialist assessment	Registration tied to that position, while you complete specialist recognition

Points to know

- Partially comparable pathologists complete their requirements as an RCPA Educational Affiliate.
- Area of Need applications may be prioritised by the RCPA.
- Not comparable applicants may enter RCPA training.

Medical licencing process

1. **Due Diligence.** Our opinion on your most likely RCPA outcome, your registration pathway and visa options.
2. **Primary source verification.** Verify your medical and specialist qualifications through the Australian Medical Council.
3. **RCPA assessment.** Application, interim assessment, then interview.
4. **Find your position.** We introduce you to laboratories. The RCPA must be satisfied the position and supervision meet your requirements.
5. **Ahpra registration.** Limited (or provisional) registration while you complete supervised practice.
6. **Visa.** Skills in Demand visa (subclass 482) or a permanent residence visa.
7. **Medicare.** Provider number and section 19AB exemption for your location.
8. **Commence practice.** Supervised laboratory practice, workplace-based assessments and CPD.
9. **Fellowship and specialist registration.** Complete your requirements, then FRCPA and specialist registration.

Workforce, demand and remuneration

Workforce. The Medical Board of Australia reported 2,302 pathologists in Australia in 2023: anatomical pathology 43%, haematology 29%, microbiology 12%, immunology 6%, chemical pathology 4%, forensic pathology 3% and general pathology 3%.

Demand. Pathology is not on the acute-shortage list, so where you can bill Medicare depends on District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) status for the location. We check this for every position we propose.

Remuneration. Earnings depend on your discipline, public or private employment, location and your supervision level before specialist registration. We discuss remuneration for specific opportunities with you directly.

How Able Medico helps

Medical licencing and migration is our forte. We prepare your RCPA application and interview, help you secure a suitable position, and manage Ahpra, visa and Medicare steps. Through our employer contacts we can introduce you to public and private laboratories.

Next steps

- **Start with Due Diligence:** ablemedico.com.au/able-medico-for-doctors
- **Contact us:** ablemedico.com.au/contact-us

Sources

- Specialist International Medical Graduates — RCPA
- Specialist pathway – specialist recognition — Medical Board of Australia