



Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand

TE POARI WHAKAORA NGANGAHAU O AOTEAROA

FOSTERING FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN THE PROFESSION

OTBNZ competence examination information

To gain registration within the General Scope of Practice: Occupational Therapist, applicants must have a minimum of a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy Degree from an accredited educational institution in New Zealand **or** qualifications and experience assessed by the OTBNZ as being equivalent.

Applications for registration from therapists who have undertaken their training overseas are considered on a case-by-case basis. The OTBNZ does not automatically accredit any overseas qualifications. In making a decision about eligibility for registration and practice in New Zealand, the OTBNZ considers both the comparability of an applicant's qualification and evaluates his or her competence for registration.

When applicants fail to satisfy the OTBNZ of the equivalence of their qualification and competence for registration, they may be given the opportunity to sit the OTBNZ competence examination. Not all applicants are required to undertake the examination.

Overseas qualified occupational therapists applying for registration will have their applications assessed. The application will be:

- approved and you will be registered as an occupational therapist, or
- declined because you do not meet the requirements for registration, or
- you will be invited to sit the competence examination to determine your eligibility for registration.

Note: You must **not** begin practising as an occupational therapist until you are registered and hold a current practising certificate.

Examination

The competence examination is only available in Auckland, New Zealand. It is held four times a year in February, May, August and November.

The examination consists of oral and written questions about the theory and practice of occupational therapy in New Zealand. The candidate's ability to use oral and written English is evaluated and a basic understanding of both the New Zealand health care system and the cultural context is expected. The examination takes approximately four hours.

Applicants for registration will be advised if they are required to sit the competence examination. The invitation to sit the examination must be responded to within six months or the application will be deemed to have lapsed. The examination must be taken within one year of the date of the invitation.

The examination fee (see [Fees page](#)) must be paid at least six weeks prior to the examination date. If the applicant cannot attend the scheduled examination, the fee will be transferable - provided the applicant informs the OTBNZ at least two weeks beforehand.

Examination results will be advised as soon as possible after the examination. If successful, the OTBNZ will approve the registration application.

Suggested reading

The following books can give an insight into New Zealand society, social policy and health. They will be of particular use to overseas trained occupational therapists undertaking the OTBNZ competence examination

Cheyne, C., O'Brien, M., & Belgrave, M. (1997). **Social Policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A critical introduction**. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Durie, M. (1994). **Whaiora: Maori Health Development**. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Orange, C. (1989). **The Story of the Treaty**. Wellington: Allen & Unwin.

Beaglehole, R., & Bonita, R., (1998). **Public Health at the Crossroads: Achievements and prospects**. Auckland: University of Auckland.

Ballard, K. (Ed.). (1994). **Disability, Family, Whanau and Society**. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press

Christiansen, C., & Baum, C., (Eds.). (1997). **Occupational Therapy: Enabling function and wellbeing** (2nd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: Slack

The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 is available from Bennetts Government Bookshop, Bowen House, cnr Bowen Street & Lambton Quay, Wellington. Phone 04 499 3433 or facsimile 04 499 3375.

Other texts may be available through Bennetts Mail Order, University & Polytech Textbooks, Commercial Complex, Palmerston North. Phone 0800 118 333.

You could also try international loans through a university or hospital library.