



# Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand

Kaihaumanu Tūroro o Aotearoa

## **Policy For The Use of Occupational Therapy Qualifications and/or Titles**

This policy must be read in conjunction with the OTBNZ 'Policy on When Registration and a Practising Certificate are Required'

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### **Purpose**

This policy sets out the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand's (OTBNZ's), requirements relating to the use occupational therapy qualifications and/or titles by individuals who are not registered occupational therapists, and who do not hold a current practising certificate.

### **Background**

Under section 7(1) of the HPCA Act a person is not entitled to use any names, words, titles, initials, abbreviations or descriptions that state or imply registration as a health practitioner unless that person is registered and qualified to be registered. It is an offence against the HPCA Act for an unregistered person to use the title 'occupational therapist', or any words stating or implying registration as an occupational therapist. Importantly, section 7(1) is not limited to situations where a person specifically states that they are an occupational therapist; section 7(1) extends to situations where a person uses abbreviations or other descriptions that imply registration as an occupational therapist.

Section 7(2) of the HPCA Act provides that no person may claim to be practising as an occupational therapist, or say or do anything to suggest that he or she is practising as an occupational therapist, unless they are registered *and hold a current practising certificate*.

The OTBNZ's policy on 'When Registration and a Practising Certificate are Required' (available on the OTBNZ website at [www.otboard.org.nz](http://www.otboard.org.nz)), stipulates that an individual must be registered with the OTBNZ and hold a practising certificate if:

- their position title is 'occupational therapist'; or
- if the person uses or intends to use any names, words, titles, initials, abbreviations or descriptions that state or imply registration; or
- if the person is otherwise likely to be perceived by others to be an occupational therapist (for example in their employment tasks).

### **Policy**

If an unregistered individual is using their occupational therapy qualification or any term suggesting registration, they must make it expressly clear that they are not registered. How this is achieved is up to the individual, however it may involve a direct statement that while qualified in occupational therapy, they are not a registered occupational therapist.

A number of occupational therapists use the acronym 'NZROT' (New Zealand Registered Occupational Therapist), alongside their name to signify registration. As such, using 'NZROT' is in effect the same as using the title 'occupational therapist'. An individual who uses 'NZROT' or any other term suggesting that they are registered, must ensure that in doing so they do not breach section 7(1) of the HPCA Act, and/or the OTBNZ's registration and practising certificate policy.

Similarly, an individual who records their occupational therapy qualification alongside their name must ensure that in doing so they do not breach section 7 of the HPCA Act, and/or the OTBNZ's registration and practising certificate policy.

The OTBNZ takes into account a number of factors in determining whether an individual may be in breach of section 7 of the HPCA Act and the OTBNZ's practising certificate policy. Of particular importance is the context in which the qualification or title is used, and whether a member of the public seeking occupational therapy services would reasonably understand that person to be a registered occupational therapist.

## **Guidance**

- A retired occupational therapist who is no longer registered, may be at risk of breaching section 7(1) of the HPCA Act if they are using any term or title which appears to confirm registration (for example 'NZROT'), to promote themselves as providing occupational therapy services.
- An unregistered individual using their occupational therapy qualification should ensure that they do not use the title 'occupational therapist', or say or do anything to imply registration – for example, stating '*Occupational Therapy Board approved qualification*'.
- An unregistered individual using their occupational therapy qualification may be at risk of breaching section 7(1) of the HPCA Act and the OTBNZ's practising certificate policy, if they are using their qualification to provide or to promote occupational therapy services, or to perform tasks commonly associated with occupational therapy, and they do not make it clear that they are not a registered occupational therapist.
- An unregistered individual using their occupational therapy qualification must ensure that members of the public receiving or seeking their services understand that they are not a registered occupational therapist, and care should also be taken to ensure that they are not otherwise perceived to be a registered occupational therapist because of their role.
- A registered occupational therapist who does not hold a current practising certificate, may use their occupational therapy qualification provided that they do not claim to be practising as an occupational therapist, or say or do anything to suggest that they are practising as an occupational therapist.

**Date approved: 26 August 2011**

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