



Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand

TE POARI WHAKAORA NGANGAHAU O AOTEAROA

FOSTERING FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN THE PROFESSION

POLICY FOR RENEWING A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE

Policy for Renewing Practising Certificates

Purpose

To enable efficient, safe and consistent processing of renewal applications to the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (OTBNZ), in accordance with sections 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act).

A renewal application is defined as an application for a practising certificate where a practitioner is seeking to renew an existing practising certificate or; where a practitioner does not have a current practising certificate but has practised occupational therapy in New Zealand at some point in the previous three years.

Background

legislation

The following requirements for annual practising certificate applications are set out in Section 26 of the HPCA Act:

"(1) Every health practitioner who wishes to obtain an annual practising certificate must apply to the Registrar of the responsible authority in accordance with this section.

(2) Every application for an annual practising certificate must—

(a) be in the form, and include the information, that is determined by the authority, including a statement specifying whether or not the applicant is, at the date of the application, practising the profession in respect of which the authority is appointed; and

(b) be accompanied by the fee (if any) set by the authority.

(3) If, after receiving a duly completed application under this section, the Registrar considers that none of the cases stated in [section 27\(1\)](#) applies to the applicant, the Registrar must issue to the applicant an annual practising certificate."

Delegation to the Registrar for determining applications

In accordance with clause 17, of Schedule 3, the Board has delegated to the Registrar functions, duties and powers under the HPCA Act by way of the OTBNZ's delegation document. The following are delegations relevant to this policy:

(a) "Receive and assess applications for annual practising certificates (ss26-27);

(b) Issue annual practising certificates (s 27):

(i) provided that any issue is in accordance with Board policy; and

(iii) provided that... none of the grounds set out in s27(1)(a), (b), (c), (e) or (f) apply"

The above functions, duties and powers under the HPCA Act have also been delegated to the Deputy Registrar pursuant to the delegation document.

Policy

The following comprises a complete renewal application:

- **Valid third party attestation; and**
- **Completed self-declaration by practitioner; and**
- **Payment of fee.**

In accordance with section 26(3), if a complete renewal application has been received and none of the restrictions described in section 27 (see below) apply, the renewal application will be approved by the Registrar.

The application will not be considered complete if one of the above three items has not been received by the OTBNZ.

Third party attestation

This attestation is required to satisfy the OTBNZ of a practitioner's competence and fitness to practise under the HPCA Act.

A third party must be a registered occupational therapist with a current practising certificate and no conditions on their scope of practice. They must be in a position to be able to attest, to the best of their knowledge, to the practitioner's competence and fitness to practise.

An attestation made by a third party is valid for a period of 90 days. If the attestation expires before the applicant submits their self-declaration and fee, the third party will need to submit a current attestation for the renewal application to be complete.

Practitioner self-declaration

This declaration must be the valid form for the relevant practising year, and all questions must be answered by the practitioner. If all questions are not answered, the application will not be considered complete.

Fee

Every application for an annual practising certificate must be accompanied by the fee prescribed by the OTBNZ.

Currency of practising certificates

An annual practising certificate will be valid for the length of the practising year: 1 April – 31 March. If the renewal application is received after 1 April, the annual practising certificate will be valid from the date of its approval until 31 March.

Practitioners may also apply for a short-term practising certificate, valid for a period of up to three months.

If a practitioner's name appears on the public Register of practising occupational therapists, this is their legal entitlement to practise.

Deemed practising certificates

Under section 30 of the HPCA Act, if a complete renewal application is submitted by 31 March, and the practitioner holds a practising certificate expiring 31 March of that year, the practitioner will be treated as holding that practising certificate and therefore entitled to practise from 1 April. This is known as "deemed practising status".

Deemed practising status applies when a practising certificate application has not yet been approved by the Registrar by 1 April, and continues in effect until *either* the date the renewal application is approved, or until the practitioner is notified by the Registrar that it will not be approved.

Issue of electronic practising certificates

Following approval of their renewal application, an electronic practising certificate (ePC) will show in the practitioner's online site. This online record of the ePC will be considered the most current version of the practitioner's ePC.

ePortfolio

ePortfolio is the OTBNZ's recertification programme in accordance with section 41 of the HPCA Act.

The OTBNZ requires all practising occupational therapists to participate in ePortfolio. This framework, which records continuing competence objectives and activities, is completed online via the practitioners'-only area of the OTBNZ's website.

ePortfolio contains the OTBNZ's five competencies for registration and continuing practice. A practitioner is responsible for providing sufficient information to satisfy their third party that they are using their ePortfolio to demonstrate reflective practice and maintain competence relevant to their role, level of experience and responsibility.

Restrictions on issue of annual practising certificate

Under section 27(1), an annual practising certificate may not be issued if any of the below apply:

1. Competence concerns (s27(1)(a))

- a. "the applicant has, at any time, failed to maintain the required standard of competence"*

2. Failure to fulfil or comply with conditions on scope of practice (s27(1)(b))

Practitioners are strongly encouraged to apply for removal of condition at the specified time. If a practitioner's condition is overdue for removal, this may have implications for the practitioner's renewal application.

3. Return to Practice applicants (s27(1)(d) and (f))

Practitioners who have not practised in New Zealand at any point in the previous three years, are subject to the requirements of practitioners returning to practice in New Zealand, and will need to submit a complete return to practice application according to OTBNZ policy.

4. Mental or physical health conditions (s27(1)(e))

Refer to the OTBNZ's *Fitness Policy* for determination of renewal applications where there is a fitness concern.

If any of the above restrictions apply, the OTBNZ will in accordance with section 27(2):

- a. "ascertain whether the Registrar is able to consider and determine the application under a delegation given to the Registrar under [clause 17](#) of Schedule 3; or*
- b. if that is not the case, submit the application to the authority for its consideration."*

See also the OTBNZ's *Policy for Renewing Late Practising Certificate Applications* for how the OTBNZ will consider renewal applications received after 31 March.

Approved on 26 February 2015