



# Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand

Kaihaumanu Tūroro o Aotearoa

## **REGISTRATION POLICY FOR OVERSEAS QUALIFIED APPLICANTS**

Refer - Part 2 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003

## **POLICY FOR THE REGISTRATION OF OVERSEAS QUALIFIED APPLICANTS**

**This policy does not apply to individuals who are eligible for registration under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997**

### **Purpose**

In order to practise in New Zealand as an occupational therapist, it is a legal requirement to be registered by the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand, (OTBNZ), and to hold a current practising certificate. This document outlines the registration requirements of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA), and sets out the OTBNZ's policy requirements for overseas qualified applicants for registration.

The registration requirements for registration under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (TTMRA) are not included in this document - they are set out in a separate policy which is available on the OTBNZ website.

### **Background**

#### ***Section 15 of the HPCA Act – registration requirements***

Under section 15 of the HPCA Act the OTBNZ may register an applicant within the scope of practice 'General Scope of Practice: Occupational Therapist' if the applicant:

1. is fit for registration in accordance with section 16; and
2. have the qualifications that are prescribed, under section 12, for that scope of practice; and
3. is competent to practise within that scope of practice

### **Policy**

The OTBNZ's policy with respect to the competence, qualification and fitness requirements for registration is set out below.

#### **1. Competence requirements for overseas qualified applicants**

In order to be registered all applicants for registration in the General Scope of Practice: Occupational Therapist, must meet the OTBNZ's standards of clinical, cultural and ethical competence for registration. Individual applicants are required to complete the online *Mauriora Foundation Course on Cultural Competency* (at [www.mauriora.co.nz](http://www.mauriora.co.nz)), and submit a competence assessment application. The OTBNZ's assessors assess competence for registration and make a recommendation to the OTBNZ.

Where an applicant fails to satisfy the OTBNZ of their competence for registration, they may be required to provide further information. They may also be offered the opportunity to undertake the OTBNZ Examination.

In addition to meeting the competence requirements, an applicant for registration must also meet the OTBNZ's qualification and fitness requirements for registration – see 'Qualification for registration' and 'Fitness for registration' below.

## **2. Qualification for registration**

### **General qualification criteria**

To gain registration in the General scope of Practice: Occupational Therapist, an applicant must either:

- have a minimum of a bachelors degree in occupational therapy from an accredited educational institution in New Zealand; *or*
- have overseas occupational therapy qualifications and experience assessed by the OTBNZ as equivalent to the prescribed New Zealand qualifications for registration; *or*
- be registered as an occupational therapist in Australia and have entitlement to registration in New Zealand pursuant to the TTMRA.

In addition to meeting the OTBNZ's qualification criteria, an applicant must also meet the OTBNZ's competence and fitness requirements for registration – see 'Competence for registration' above and 'Fitness for registration' below.

### **Applicants with an overseas occupational therapy qualification**

The OTBNZ's assessors assess the applicant's qualification for registration and make a recommendation to the OTBNZ. In the first instance the assessors assess whether the occupational therapy qualification is comparable to the New Zealand qualifications for registration. If it is not, they assess whether the gaps that have been identified have been mitigated by the applicant's pre or postgraduate experience and/or training.

Where an applicant fails to satisfy the OTBNZ of the comparability of their qualification, they may be required to provide further information. They may also be offered the opportunity to undertake the OTBNZ Examination.

### **Applicants entitled to registration under the TTMRA**

Information about registration in New Zealand under the TTMRA is included in a separate policy on the OTBNZ's website.

## **3. Fitness for registration**

The criteria relating to fitness to practise are set out under section 16 of the HPCA Act. In addition to meeting the OTBNZ's fitness criteria, an applicant must also meet the OTBNZ's competence and qualification requirements for registration – see 'Competence for registration' and 'Qualification for registration' above.

### **(i) English language requirements**

If English is not the applicant's first or home language, the OTBNZ requires him/her to demonstrate proficiency in English.

The OTBNZ's policy requirement for registration is International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic test results with a score of 7 in each band, or the Occupational English test (OET) with a score of at least a B in each component. The full English language policy is available on the OTBNZ website.

**(ii) Assessment of criminal convictions**

Section 16(c) of the HPCA Act 2003 states that no applicant for registration may be registered if he or she has been convicted in New Zealand or elsewhere of any offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of 3 months or longer, and he or she does not satisfy the responsible authority that, having regard to all the circumstances, including the time that has elapsed since the conviction, the offence does not reflect adversely on his or her fitness to practise as a health practitioner of that profession.

The OTBNZ will consider each case on its merits in order to be satisfied that the person is fit to practise as an occupational therapist in New Zealand.

**(iii) Physical and mental health**

In order to register an applicant, the OTBNZ must be satisfied that he/she is able to perform the functions required for the practice of occupational therapy, and that he/she is not prevented from doing so because of some mental or physical condition.

**(iv) Good standing**

In determining an applicant's fitness for registration, the OTBNZ is required to take into consideration:

- professional disciplinary proceedings, (whether in New Zealand or in another country); and
- investigations in respect of any matter that may be the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings, (whether in New Zealand or in another country); and
- orders of professional disciplinary tribunals, (whether in New Zealand or in another country); and
- any issue which may give the OTBNZ reason to believe that an applicant may endanger the health or safety of members of the public.

**4. Condition on the scope of practice of Overseas Qualified Registrants**

An overseas qualified applicant who has satisfactorily met the requirements for registration, is registered with the 'Overseas Qualified Registrant' condition on their scope of practice. This condition is noted on the public 'Register of Occupational Therapists' and on the practitioner's practising certificate.

The 'Overseas Qualified Registrant' condition requires the practitioner to receive fortnightly supervision for the first six months of practice in New Zealand. Sometimes the condition is personalised, depending on individual circumstances. The supervisor must be a registered occupational therapist with a current practising certificate, and no condition on his/her own scope of practice.

It is up to the practitioner to apply to have the condition removed; the supervision requirements continue to apply until the OTBNZ has removed the condition. The OTBNZ will not remove the condition until it has received the following:

- an application for the removal of the condition; and
- a satisfactory supervisor's report in all core competency areas; and
- a copy of the practitioner's supervision log; and
- the prescribed fee.

**Date approved: 14 August 2012**

**Due for review: August 2013**