



Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand

Kaihaumanu Tūroro o Aotearoa

REGISTRATION POLICY FOR RECENT NEW ZEALAND GRADUATES

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

REQUIREMENTS FOR RECENT GRADUATES APPLYING FOR REGISTRATION UNDER THE HEALTH PRACTITIONERS COMPETENCE ASSURANCE ACT 2003

This policy does not apply to individuals who graduated more than 12 months prior to applying for registration

PURPOSE

In order to practise in New Zealand (NZ), 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 (HPCA Act) and sets out the OTBNZ's policy requirements for recent NZ graduates¹.

The registration requirements for individuals who graduated from a NZ institution more than 12 months prior to applying for first time registration, 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 applicants within the scope of practice 'General Scope of Practice: Occupational Therapist' if they:

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

POLICY FOR REGISTRATION

The OTBNZ's policy with respect to competence, qualification and fitness requirements for registration, and the 'New Graduate' condition on scope of practice are set out below.

1. Competence for registration

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. Recent NZ graduates are deemed to be competent for registration.

¹ A 'recent graduate' is an individual with a prescribed NZ qualification for registration, who is applying for registration with the OTBNZ within 12 months of graduating.

2. Qualification for registration

The prescribed NZ qualifications for registration are:

- Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy), AUT University, Auckland; *and*
- Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin.

Recent NZ graduates are deemed to be qualified for registration if they hold a prescribed qualification for registration.

3. Fitness for registration

The criteria relating to fitness to practise are set out under section 16 of the HPCA Act.

English language requirements

Applicants whose first or home language is not English, are required 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.

Assessment of criminal convictions

Section 16(c) of the HPCA Act states that no applicant for registration may be registered if he or she has been convicted in NZ 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 to determine whether individuals are fit to practise occupational therapy in NZ.

Physical and mental health

For registration purposes the OTBNZ must be satisfied that applicants are able to perform the functions required for the practice of occupational therapy, and that they are not prevented from doing so because of some mental or physical condition.

Good standing

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

- professional disciplinary proceedings, (whether in NZ or in another country); *and*
- investigations in respect of any matter that may be the subject of professional disciplinary proceedings, (whether in NZ or in another country); *and*
- orders of professional disciplinary tribunals, (whether in NZ 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. 'New Graduate' Condition on scope of practice

Recent NZ graduates who have satisfactorily met the requirements for registration, are registered with the 'New Graduate' condition on their scope of practice. This condition is noted on the public 'Register of Occupational Therapists' and on individual practitioners' practising certificates.

The 'New Graduate' condition requires practitioners to receive weekly supervision for the first 12 months of practice in NZ. Supervisors must be registered occupational therapists with a current practising certificate and no condition on their own scope of practice.

Removal of condition after 12 months of practice in NZ

It is up to individual practitioners to apply to have the 'New Graduate' condition removed after they have completed 12 months of practice in NZ. The weekly supervision requirements continue to apply until the OTBNZ has removed the condition.

The OTBNZ will give consideration to removing the 'New Graduate' condition once practitioners have provided 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 supervision log; and
- the prescribed fee.

The OTBNZ will remove the 'New Graduate' condition only if it is satisfied that practitioners have satisfactorily demonstrated their competence to practise safely without the condition.

Recently registered practitioners applying for a practising certificate who have not commenced practice within 12 months of registration – refer to the *Policy for Recently Registered Practitioners who have not Commenced Practising 12 months after Registration*

Registration requirements for individuals who graduated from a NZ institution more than 12 months prior to applying for first time registration – refer to *Registration Policy for New Zealand Graduates Applying for Registration more than 12 months following Graduation*

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