



## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **ASSESSMENT FOR THE RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **STAGE 1 DESKTOP ASSESSMENT**

**September 2020**

#### **Glossary**

AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
COPC	Certificate of Practical Completion
EO	Executive Office - OTC
OTC	Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd
OTBA	Occupational Therapy Board of Australia
PA	Professional Adviser – Overseas Qualified Assessment Committee
OQAC	Overseas Qualified Assessment Committee
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection

How the roles of the OTBA, OTC and AHPRA are involved in the process leading to general registration to practise independently in Australia:

#### **OTBA**

The functions of the OTBA include:

- developing standards, codes and guidelines for the occupational therapy profession;
- approving accreditation standards and accredited courses of study;
- registering occupational therapy practitioners and students;
- handling notifications, complaints, investigations and disciplinary hearings;
- assessing internationally-qualified practitioners who wish to practise in Australia.

These functions are supported by AHPRA.

#### **AHPRA**

AHPRA is the organisation responsible for the implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme across Australia. It supports the OTBA. Documentation in relation to gaining registration is provided to AHPRA.

## OTC

For registration purposes: The OTC is the assessment authority appointed by the OTBA to undertake the assessment of internationally-qualified practitioners

For migration purposes: The OTC is the assessment authority appointed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian Government, Department of Education and Training to assess qualifications of internationally-qualified practitioners for skill migration purposes (see (ii) below).

### **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE**

This desktop assessment has a dual purpose:

- i) for internationally-qualified occupational therapy practitioners wishing to migrate and practise in Australia.

Internationally-qualified occupational therapists wishing to practise in Australia must have their skills assessed by the OTC in order to apply for registration to practise as an occupational therapist in Australia.

- ii) occupational therapists who have completed an approved program of study suitable for registration in Australia (please visit <http://www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx>) requiring a qualification assessment for skilled migration purposes.

The Australian Government's skilled migration program is implemented through a partnership between government and industry. The OTC has been appointed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian Government, Department of Education and Training in accordance with the Migration Regulations 1994 as the assessing authority for the occupation of **Occupational Therapist ANZSCO Code: 252411**. For migration purposes, occupational therapy skills are assessed as "suitable" or "not suitable" against the requirements established by the OTC. Internationally-qualified occupational therapists who wish to apply to migrate to Australia under the skilled migration program must have their qualifications and skills assessed by OTC.

- iii) If a migration agent is being used to assist with the process, please ensure the correct address for the assessment letter is included on the Stage 1 application.

Stage 1 is a desktop assessment of qualifications and English language proficiency.

The practitioner will be assessed against the following criteria (all copied documentation must be certified correctly in accordance with the requirements below):

#### **1. Proof of Identity**

The practitioner must provide the following identification:

- Birth certificate
- Passport
- Driver's licence or ID card where relevant or another official photo-bearing document.

If the name of the practitioner has changed and is different from that shown on the qualification upon which they rely for the assessment, then evidence/proof of this change of name should be provided i.e. marriage certificate, Deed poll, divorce papers.

You will be contacted by the OTC via Facetime once your application has been received. Please ensure you include an appropriate number to allow this to occur, providing appropriate telephone number including international and area codes

## 2. Qualifications

The practitioner must demonstrate successful completion of a tertiary education programme leading to an award in occupational therapy (undergraduate or graduate entry). This programme must:

- have been accredited by the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) at the time of graduation, and
- be comparable to an Australian Bachelor or Graduate Entry Master degree in accordance with Country Education Profiles produced by Australian Government, Department of Education and Training.

If the practitioner has any doubt regarding the qualification being comparable to an Australian Bachelor degree (a Diploma, for example), they should contact the Australia Government, Department of Education, Skills and Employment via the link below for an assessment, and include the results with the Stage 1 application.

<https://internationaleducation.gov.au/services-and-resources/pages/qualifications-recognition.aspx>

A certified copy of qualification papers must be provided i.e. graduation certificate together with associated transcript.

WFOT approval must have been in place at the time of graduation and cannot be considered retrospectively (i.e. if the institution or programme received WFOT approval after the time of graduation, this will not be sufficient to meet the criteria for assessment).

An approved WFOT programme is taken to mean those courses listed on the WFOT website under “Education – Entry Level Educational Programs WFOT Approved” which at the time of graduation was approved.

You need to include all contact details of the education provider attended in relation to the occupational therapy qualification and if available a link and log in details to verify the qualification on line.

## 3. English Language Proficiency

High-level competence in English language is essential for the practice of occupational therapy in Australia. The practitioner must submit evidence to demonstrate sufficient English language skills to work as an occupational therapist in an English language environment. Practitioners applying for skilled migration or practice in Australia must provide, evidence of either:

1. English is your **primary language** and you have undertaken and satisfactorily completed:
  - a. all of your primary and **secondary education** which was taught and assessed solely in English in a **recognised country**, and

- b. tertiary qualifications in the relevant professional discipline, on which you are relying to support your eligibility for registration under the **National Law**, which were taught and assessed solely in English in a **recognised country**.
2. You have a combination of **secondary education** and tertiary qualifications, where you have undertaken and satisfactorily completed:
  - a. at least two years of your **secondary education** which was taught and assessed solely in English in a **recognised country**, **and**
  - b. tertiary qualifications in the relevant professional discipline, on which you are relying to support your eligibility for registration under the **National Law**, which were taught and assessed solely in English in a **recognised country**.

**OR**

3. You have undertaken and satisfactorily completed at least **six years' (full time equivalent) continuous education** taught and assessed solely in English, in any of the **recognised countries**, which includes tertiary qualifications in the relevant professional discipline which you are relying on to support your eligibility for registration under the **National Law**.

**Recognised countries:**

Australia  
New Zealand  
United States of America  
United Kingdom  
Republic of Ireland  
Canada  
South Africa

A certified copy of the educational transcripts or letter must be provided from the secondary school and tertiary institution in Canada or South Africa attesting that courses were taught and assessed in English (including subjects, hours, examination results and, where applicable, details of clinical education when relating to the tertiary education).

If documents are unavailable, there is a process below to address this (Documents Unavailable).

**OR**

4. complete, to the level specified, one of the OTC-approved English language tests outlined below:

**International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination (Academic Module) – results must be from one test sitting or a maximum of two test sittings in a six-month period:**

- a minimum overall score of seven (7) in each sitting;
- a minimum score of 7 in each component across the two sittings;
- no score in any component of the test is below 6.5.

**Occupational English Test (OET) – results must be from one test sitting or a maximum of two test sittings in a six-month period:**

- you are tested in all four components in each sitting;

- a minimum grade B in each of the four competencies (listening, reading, writing and speaking) across two sittings;
- no score in any component of the test is below C.

**PTE Academic** - results must be from **one** test sitting or a **maximum** of **two** test sittings in a **six-month period**:

- a minimum overall score of 65 is achieved in each sitting, and
- a minimum score of 65 in each of the communicative skills across two sittings, and
- no score in any of the communicative skills is below 58.

**Test of English Language internet-based test (TOEFL iBT)** - results must be from **one** test sitting or a maximum of **two** test sittings in a **six-month period**:

- a minimum total score of 94 and the following minimum score in each section of the test across two sittings:
  - 24 listening
  - 24 reading
  - 27 writing
  - 23 speaking
- No score in any of the sections is below:
  - 20 listening
  - 19 reading
  - 24 writing
  - 20 speaking

Test results for all the recognised tests above will be accepted if:

- the results were obtained within two years prior to the date of application, or
- the results are older than two years if, since the test result was obtained, you have been in continuous employment as an occupational therapist (which commenced within 12 months of the date of the test) in one of the recognised countries where English was the primary language of practice, or
- the results are more than two years old before the date the application is lodged if, in the period since the test result was obtained:
  - you have been enrolled continuously in an OTC accredited program of study which commenced within 12 months of the date of the test and undertook subjects in each semester with no break from study apart from the education provider's scheduled holidays, and
  - the application is lodged within 12 months of completing an OTC accredited program of study.

An official certified copy of the results relied upon for assessment must be provided.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) may require occupational therapists to meet English language proficiency standards even though the OTC has assessed the practitioner as meeting all its requirements.

## **Certification**

All copied documentation must be certified appropriately as true copies of the original by an appropriate person. In Australia, people who are authorised to certify copies are:

- Justices of the Peace (JP).
- Legal practitioners.
- Persons eligible to sign statutory declarations

<http://www.ag.gov.au/Documents/StatutoryDeclaration200602.pdf>.

- Employees authorised by the OTC.

In countries **outside** Australia:

- Notary public.
- Registered legal practitioners (solicitors, lawyers, barristers).
- Australian Embassy or Australian High Commission personnel.

### **Family members are not able to certify documents.**

To have copies certified the practitioner must present both the original and the copy to the person carrying out the certification.

Each copy of the document must be certified separately and must show clearly:

- the words "*certified true copy of the original*";
- the signature of the certifying officer; and
- the name, address, position and phone number (with international dialling codes) of the certifying officer legibly printed below the signature. It must be possible, from the details provided, for the OTC to contact the certifying officer if necessary.

### **Translation of Documents**

If the practitioner's qualification has been undertaken in a language other than English, a translated document must accompany the certified copy of the original qualification document. In Australia translation should be undertaken by an accredited NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translations and Interpreters Ltd) translator. Further information can be found on its website at [www.naati.com.au](http://www.naati.com.au)

An assessment will not be undertaken unless translations are provided.

### **Authenticity of Documents**

If there is doubt regarding the authenticity of documents these will be provided by the OTC Executive Officer to DIBP for an opinion. The OTC will not progress with the assessment until advice has been received from DIBP. The assessment fee will not be refunded.

### **Documents Unavailable**

Practitioners who cannot obtain the required documents should attach a letter to the application form identifying which documents they cannot obtain, and explaining the reasons for this. Each case will be considered, and a Statutory Declaration from the practitioner explaining why documents are unavailable may be required if the assessment outcome relies on unobtainable documents.

## **Number of Attempts**

Practitioners may make an unlimited number of attempts for a Stage 1 assessment. Each repeat application must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. If the practitioner has previously been found to be unsuitable, the practitioner must provide additional evidence to demonstrate how they meet the criteria.

The practitioner has two years in which to commence the Stage 2 period of supervised practice before they will be required to apply for a review of the Stage 1 assessment.

## **Guidance and Feedback to Practitioners**

Practitioners considering or preparing an application for the Stage 1 assessment may seek guidance from the OTC Executive Officer. Where applications fail to meet the OTC requirements for the Stage 1 assessment, practitioners are advised in writing giving reasons where their assessment fails to meet the requirements. They will be asked to provide additional information for the assessment to continue. This documentary evidence must be received within 12 months of the OTC mailing the results.

OTC Executive Officer is available at [admin@otccouncil.com.au](mailto:admin@otccouncil.com.au)

## ***ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE***

### **Role of OTC Executive Officer**

- Administration of assessment process.
- Review all documents certified correctly.
- Undertake an assessment to determine successful completion of a Stage 1 assessment.

### **Role of Overseas Qualification Assessment Committee (OQAC)**

- Review standards and Stage 1 processes in conjunction with Executive Officer and Professional Advisor.