



EXPLANATORY NOTES – STAGE 1

For assessment of qualifications for internationally qualified occupational therapists for the purposes of skilled migration to Australia and registration to practise in Australia

and

Assessment of Australian qualified occupational therapists for skilled migration purposes

Revised January 2024

Stage 1 assessment procedure

Introductory Information

- **Internationally qualified** occupational therapists wishing to migrate to and practise in Australia must have their skills assessed by the Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd (OTC) in order to apply for registration with the Australia Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) to practise as an occupational therapist in Australia.
- **Australian qualified** occupational therapists seeking a skills assessment for immigration purposes need to submit a Stage 1 application only for this purpose.

The Australian Government's skilled migration program is implemented through a partnership between government and industry. The OTC has been appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs 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.

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

Submission of application

- Stage 1 application form should be emailed to the OTC at admin@otcouncil.com.au with all supporting documentation.
- All supporting documentation – outlined below - must be submitted as a jpeg, in colour and of high resolution.
- To achieve a high-resolution jpeg, using your mobile phone camera, take a photo of the **original** document and email it to the OTC as actual size. Supporting jpeg documents may need to be sent across multiple emails to maintain the required resolution.

- A recent photograph, no older than **one month**, must also be submitted in jpeg format. This photograph should be full facial (similar to a passport photograph) and taken against a light-coloured background (white, cream) with no objects or other people in the frame.
- Each page of each document should be a separate jpeg.
- The application form can be forwarded as a Word or pdf document; it does not need to be sent as a jpeg.
- Results will be forwarded via email.

The practitioner will be assessed against the following criteria:

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.

To verify your identity, you will be contacted by the OTC via video link. Please ensure you include an appropriate number including international dialling code and area code to allow this to occur.

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
- 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>

Qualification papers must be provided i.e. graduation certificate together with associated academic 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 online.

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 registration to practise in Australia must demonstrate your English language competency in one of the following ways:

3.1. 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, which you are relying on to support your eligibility for registration under the **National Law**, which were taught and assessed solely in English.

Recognised countries:

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

OR

3.2. 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 occupational therapy which were taught and assessed solely in English in a **recognised country**.

OR

3.3 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 occupational therapy upon which you are relying to support your eligibility for registration.

OR

3.4 You achieve the required minimum scores in one of the following English language tests and meet the requirements for **test results** specified in this standard:

- a. the **IELTS** (academic module) with a minimum overall score of 7 and a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

NOTE:

We will only accept test results:

- i. from one test sitting, **or**
- ii. a maximum of **two test sittings in a six-month period** only if:
 - you achieve a minimum overall score of 7 in each sitting, and
 - you achieve a minimum score of 7 in each component across the two sittings, and
 - no score in any component of the test is below 6.5

- b. the **OET** with a minimum score of B in each of the four components (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

NOTE:

We will only accept test results:

- i. from one test sitting, **or**
- ii. a maximum of **two test sittings in a six-month period** only if:

- you are tested in all four components in each sitting, and
 - you achieve a minimum score of B in each component across the two sittings, and
 - no score in any component of the test is below C.
- c. the **PTE Academic** with a minimum overall score of 65 and a minimum score of 65 in each of the four communicative skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking).
- NOTE:**
We will only accept test results:
- i. from one test sitting, **or**
 - ii. a maximum of **two test sittings in a six-month period** only if:
 - a minimum overall score of 65 is achieved in each sitting, and
 - you achieve a minimum score of 65 in each of the communicative skills across the two sittings, and
 - no score in any of the communicative skills is below 58
- d. the **TOEFL IBT** with a minimum total score of 94 and the following minimum score in each section of the test; 24 for listening, 24 for reading, 27 for writing, and 23 for speaking.
- NOTE:**
We will only accept test results:
- i. from one test sitting, **or**
 - ii. a maximum of **two test sittings in a six-month period** only if:
 - a minimum total score of 94 is achieved in each sitting, and you achieve a minimum score of 24 for listening, 24 for reading, 27 for writing and 23 for speaking across the two sittings, and
 - no score in any of the sections is below; 20 for listening, 19 for reading, 24 for writing, and 20 for speaking
- e. other English language tests approved by the Board from time to time and published on the Board's website with the required minimum scores.

Test results

The following requirements apply to the English language **test results**.

Test results will be accepted if they were obtained:

1. within the two years before the date you lodge your application for registration.
- OR**
2. more than two years before the date you lodge your application for registration if, in the period since the **test results** were obtained, you:
 - a. have been in **continuous employment** as a registered health practitioner 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
 - b. lodge your application for registration within 12 months of finishing your last period of employment;
- OR**
3. more than two years before the date you lodge your application for registration if, in the period since the test result was obtained, you:
 - a. have been continuously enrolled in a **Board approved 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
 - b. lodge your application for registration within 12 months of completing the **Board approved program of study**.

The Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) may require occupational therapists to meet separate English language proficiency standards even though the OTC has assessed the practitioner as meeting all its English language requirements.

4. Translation of documents

If the practitioner's qualification has been undertaken in a language other than English, a translated document must form part of the application. 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

These translated documents must be sent as a jpeg and you should include some form of reference on each document so the OTC can relate them to each other. For example, a small 'A' on the corner of the original document and a small 'A' on the corner of the relevant translated document, perhaps using a small stick-on note to avoid marking the original documents.

An assessment will not be undertaken unless translations are provided.

5. Authenticity of documents

If the authenticity of documents is suspected, they will be provided by the OTC Executive Officer to the Department of Home Affairs for an opinion. The OTC will not progress with the assessment until advice has been received from The Department of Home Affairs. The assessment fee will not be refunded.

6. Documents unavailable

Practitioners who cannot obtain the required documents should attach a Statutory Declaration to the application form identifying which documents they cannot obtain and explaining the reasons for this. Each application is assessed individually.

7. 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.

8. Refund

Practitioners are eligible to apply for a refund of the assessment fee if the assessment process has not yet commenced. This would be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer of the OTC.

9. Support and feedback to practitioners

Practitioners considering or preparing an application for the Stage 1 assessment may seek support 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

10. Cultural responsiveness training

All internationally qualified practitioners are required to complete successfully the OTC approved training as part of the Stage 2 period of supervised practice.

Please refer to the Cultural Responsiveness Training document for further information in relation to the requirements.

11. Privacy

In collecting, storing and using information, the Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd (OTC) is bound by the provisions of the Privacy Act 1998 (the Act). The Act sets out a series of privacy principles that must be observed in the management of personal information. Our policies in relation to these principles are set out below.

Upon request to OTC, the practitioner may find out the personal information OTC holds about them, for what purposes it holds this information and how it collects, holds, uses and discloses that information.

Collection of personal information

The OTC will only collect personal information with the practitioner's prior knowledge and consent. The information provided by the practitioner will be used by the OTC for the purposes it was collected.

Use and disclosure of personal information

The OTC collects information from applicants and candidates for the Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment processes.

The OTC collects information from education providers in relation to the accreditation of occupational therapy programs.

The OTC will not disclose personal information to a third party unless required by law and other regulation.

Specific issues relating to the use and disclosure of information

Data quality and security

The OTC endeavours to ensure the personal information it holds is accurate, complete and up to date. To assist OTC with this, please inform the office of any changes to your details.

The storage, use and transfer of personal information is undertaken in a manner that ensures security and privacy.

The OTC will remove personal information from its system when it is no longer required.

Openness

The OTC will inform the practitioner what personal information is collected and why it is collected.

Access to and correction of personal information

The practitioner is entitled to request access to the personal information the OTC holds and to seek to correct inaccurate information. This request should be made in writing to the OTC and a response will be received within 30 working days of receiving the request. Please note; an administrative fee may be imposed for your request to access personal information.

12. Records management

Stage 1 applications are received via email and stored in a file under the practitioner's name. All correspondence relating to the progress of Stage 1 is then carried out by email and kept in an email folder in the practitioner's name. Upon successful completion of Stage 1, files are kept for reference for Stage 2 (if required).

Following a video call with the practitioner for identification purposes, passport and birth certificate documents are deleted from the OTC files.

Stage 1 applications for migration purposes only are archived securely upon completion.

Once Stage 2 is complete, the files are archived securely.

Relevant application details are entered onto a secure database and progress of the application is recorded.

Upon successful completion of the Stage 1 desktop assessment, the OTC will issue and email/mail a formal acknowledgement letter to the practitioner. Practitioners who do not meet the requirements for Stage 1 are advised by email, outlining the reasons why.

The OTC records management policy is available upon request if you require further details.