

Recertification Programme for New Registrants and for Existing Registrants Returning to Practice Occupational Therapy in New Zealand 2020—Induction and Orientation for Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

Commencement

This notice is given pursuant to sections 41 and 118 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (“Act”) and comes into effect on **30 September 2020**. This is the first recertification programme promulgated by the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (“Board”).

Introduction

The principal purpose of the Act is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing for mechanisms to ensure that health practitioners are competent and fit to practise their professions (section 3(1)).

The Board has a number of functions as a responsible authority under the Act in respect of occupational therapists, to assist in furthering the Act’s principal objective. These functions are set out in section 118 of the Act. One of these, at section 118(e), is to recognise, accredit, and set programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of occupational therapists as health practitioners under the Act.

Under section 41 of the Act, for the purpose of ensuring that occupational therapists (as health practitioners under the Act) are competent to practise within the scopes of practice in respect of which those occupational therapists are registered, the Board may from time to time set or recognise recertification programmes for registered occupational therapists.

The purpose of the recertification programme

The recertification programme is distinct from, and additional to, the Board’s practising certificate renewal process (commonly referred to by occupational therapists as recertification) and to the ePortfolio requirements on occupational therapists.

The recertification programme applies to new occupational therapy registrants, those returning to practice after a break and those applying to be restored to the register.

The recertification programme is intended to:

- a. ensure new occupational therapy registrants commence practice with sufficient support, not only for the practitioner’s benefit but also for the protection of the public;
- b. provide the Board with an assurance of competence before the practitioner practises independently.

In September 2019, the Board commenced consultation with relevant stakeholders on the proposed recertification programme. Consultation took place with all practitioners on the Board’s register and with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia.

At its 10 December 2019 meeting, having considered the submissions it had received on the proposal, the Board resolved to approve the recertification programme.

The Board was satisfied that the recertification programme would protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing for mechanisms to ensure that all registered occupational therapists remain competent and fit to practise the profession in New Zealand, even if they are new graduates, overseas qualified, returning to practice or restored to the register.

Who the recertification programme will apply to

The recertification programme will apply to:

- a. All new occupational therapy registrants under the Act, including:
 - i. recent and non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand graduates registering as an occupational therapist under the Act for the first time in Aotearoa New Zealand.
 - ii. all overseas trained occupational therapy practitioners registering as an occupational therapist under the Act for the first time in Aotearoa New Zealand regardless of their pathway to Aotearoa New Zealand registration under the Act.
 - iii. any other occupational therapy practitioner registering as an occupational therapist under the Act in Aotearoa New Zealand for the first time. For example, this may include an occupational therapist who trained as an occupational therapist in Aotearoa New Zealand but moved overseas immediately after training without registering as an occupational therapist under the Act in Aotearoa New Zealand).
- b. Occupational therapy practitioners who have retained registration as an occupational therapist under the Act in

Aotearoa New Zealand but are applying for a practising certificate for the first time after more than 3 years since last holding a practising certification under the Act; and,

- c. Occupational therapy practitioners who, under section 145 of the Act, have been restored to the Register of occupational therapists maintained by the Board under section 136 of the Act.

The recertification programme does not apply to those occupational therapists seeking reciprocal registration in Aotearoa New Zealand under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997.

The requirements of the recertification programme—recent and non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand occupational therapy graduates

Recent and non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand occupational therapy graduates, who have not previously been registered as occupational therapists under the Act, must complete the Te Rito online bicultural course offered by the Board.

Recent and non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand occupational therapy graduates, who have not previously been registered as occupational therapists under the Act, are required by the recertification programme to undergo weekly supervision in the manner specified in this notice for the first 12 months of practice after registration as a registered occupational therapist under the Act.

After 6 months of practice, the supervisor of the recent or non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand occupational therapy graduate may notify the Board that he or she has sufficient confidence in the practice of the recent or non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand occupational therapy graduate that he or she is supervising to recommend to the Board that the recent or non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand occupational therapy graduate being supervised qualify for the Board to decide the practitioner can complete the recertification programme before expiration of the twelve month supervision requirement.

This early completion option is only available for recent and non-recent Aotearoa New Zealand graduates who have not previously been registered as occupational therapists under the Act, and who have completed the Te Rito online bicultural course offered by the Board.

The Board may set further requirements for the recertification programme from time to time in respect of an individual occupational therapist. When the Board sets any further general requirements for the recertification programme it will replace this notice with an updated notice setting out those further requirements.

The requirements of the recertification programme—overseas trained occupational therapists and occupational therapists returning to practice

All other categories of occupational therapist who are subject to the recertification programme must undergo fortnightly supervision in the manner specified in this notice for the first 6 months of practice after registration as a registered occupational therapist under the Act, and must complete the Te Rito online bicultural course offered by the Board.

The Board may set further requirements for the recertification programme from time to time and, when it does so, will replace this notice with an updated notice setting out those further requirements.

The supervisor required for the recertification programme

The supervisor required to be put in place by an occupational therapist who is required to comply with the recertification programme must be an Aotearoa New Zealand registered occupational therapist holding a current practising certificate and with no conditions on their own scope of practice.

An occupational therapist carrying out the requirements of the recertification programme will not be able to act as a supervisor, ePortfolio supervisor or act as a third party for the purposes of occupational therapists making practising certificate applications.

Supervisors and supervisees must review Supervision Requirements for Occupational Therapists for more information about the Board's expectations for supervision, such as supervision logs and supervision agreements. The Board will produce material to support supervisors.

End of recertification programme—all registrant types

At the end of the required supervision period under the certification programme, the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme will need to submit to the Board the following documentation to confirm successful completion of the recertification programme:

- Completion of Recertification Programme (Induction and Orientation for Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand) Form
- Supervisor's Report
- Supervision Log.

The documents required to be submitted by the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme will be reviewed by the Board, and the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme will be advised if the recertification programme has been satisfactorily completed within 20 working days of submissions of the required

documentation.

To assist occupational therapists subject to the recertification programme, the Board will send:

- a reminder to the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme 6 weeks prior to the expected completion date; and, if necessary (because no response has been received),
- a second reminder to the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme 4 weeks after the expected completion date.

Unsatisfactory results of the recertification programme

The Board may find that the recertification programme has not been completed to the Board's satisfaction in circumstances which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Situations of non-compliance by the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme with supervision requirements;
- b. Failure by the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme to maintain a supervision log;
- c. Identification, by the supervisor of the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme, of concerns related to the practitioner's practice that, in the supervisor's opinion, cannot be addressed through the recertification programme process; and
- d. Failure by the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme to submit the Completion of Recertification Programme Form and accompanying documents within the specified timeframe.
- e. Failure by the occupational therapist subject to the recertification programme to complete the Te Rito online bicultural course offered by the Board.

Under section 43 of the Act, if an occupational therapist does not satisfy the requirements of a recertification programme, the Board may make either of the following orders:

- a. That the practitioner's scope of practice be altered by:
 - i. changing any health services that the practitioner is permitted to perform; or
 - ii. including any condition or conditions that the authority considers appropriate;
- b. That the practitioner's registration be suspended.

If the Board proposes to make an order under 43(1) of the Act, the Board will provide the occupational therapist a notice stating:

- why the Board proposes to make the order; and
- that the practitioner has a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions and to be heard on the matter, either personally or by a representative.

The Board may also name the practitioner who is made subject to an order under section 43(1) of the Act (section 157 of the Act).

Dated at Wellington this 14th day of August 2020.

ANDREW CHARNOCK, Registrar, Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand.