



EXPLANATORY NOTES

(applicable from 1 July 2015)

STAGE 1 DESKTOP ASSESSMENT

for the

RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY QUALIFICATIONS

For the purposes of

MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

AND

REGISTRATION TO PRACTISE IN AUSTRALIA

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

This desktop assessment has a dual purpose:

- i) for overseas-trained occupational therapy practitioners wishing to migrate and practise in Australia.

Overseas-trained occupational therapists wishing to practise in Australia must have their skills assessed by the Occupational Therapy Council (Australia & New Zealand) Ltd (OTC) in order to apply for registration with the Australia Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) 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 Minister for Immigration and Border Control 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. Overseas-trained 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 photographic identification (passport or driver's licence) when submitting their application.

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.

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 Education International - National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR).

A certified copy of qualification papers must be provided i.e. degree, diploma, 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.

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:

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

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. 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

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**:

1. **Test results** will be accepted if they were obtained:

1.1 within the two years before the date you lodge your application for registration

OR

1.2 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, and
- b. lodge your application for registration within 12 months of finishing your last period of employment

OR

1.3 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, and
- b. lodge your application for registration within 12 months of completing the **Board approved 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.

4. Statement of Service

Practitioners must include a brief curriculum vitae (no more than two pages) demonstrating their working experience as an occupational therapist in the past five (5) years.

Practitioners who apply for a Stage 1 assessment within three months of graduating may not be able to provide a working history, and must advise the OTC of this when making application.

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

An assessment will not be undertaken unless translations are provided.

Authenticity of Documents

If the authenticity of documents is suspected they 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.

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