FAQs – New graduates

13 September 2019

When should I submit my application for registration?

If you are about to graduate, you should apply for registration at least four to six weeks before completing your course. This will help AHPRA to register you as a health practitioner as soon as possible after your education provider / university advises AHPRA that you have successfully completed your course.

As soon as you are registered, your name will be published on the national Register of practitioners and you will be eligible to start work.

When can I work as an occupational therapist?

Once your education provider/university confirms that you have successfully completed your course, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) will finalise your registration and send you an email confirming that you are registered. Your name will be published on the Register of health practitioners and, in due course, you will receive a hard copy Certificate of Registration via post.

You cannot work as an occupational therapist until you are registered with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (the Board) and your name is published on the Register of health practitioners

What are the supporting documents that I’m required to submit with my application?

When you apply online you will need to follow the instructions on the form and upload any of the required documents to meet:

- proof of identity
- proof of change of name if you provide one or more previous names in your application
- academic qualifications if you have already received your qualification
- evidence of English language skills that meet the Board’s English language skills registration standard
- signed and dated written statement relating to any disclosed criminal history in Australia and/or overseas
- signed and dated written statement with details of any impairments that you disclosed and how that impairment is being managed.

Detailed guidance about all the supporting documents that you are required to submit in support of your application can be found on the AHPRA website.
Where do I submit my application for registration?

You can access the online graduate application process through the AHPRA website.

AHPRA has a legal obligation to verify your identity and, if applicable, check the evidence for other disclosures you make on your online application form about your English language skills, criminal history and/or impairments that could affect your capacity to safely practise your profession. That’s why we need certified copies of your identity and other documents. You will be required to submit any relevant information in support of your application online.

How long does it take to get registered after submitting all the supporting documents?

AHPRA will assess your application and check that all required information and documents are received.

The exact time can vary and depends on a number of factors, for example:

- Have you provided all the information and supporting documentation that AHPRA needs? Your application will take longer to process if it is not complete and correct.
- Have you made any disclosures (e.g. criminal history)? Your application may take longer because the National Board needs time to consider your circumstances.
- Have you applied during a peak registration period? From time to time, AHPRA receives a large volume of registration requests (e.g. graduated students who are starting work, practitioners renewing their registration). During these times AHPRA may take more time to process your application.

How can I apply for registration when I have not received my academic transcript?

While you will not have received your academic transcript four to six weeks before completing your course, AHPRA recommends that new or soon-to-be graduates apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course.

Starting your application process early helps AHPRA to register you as an occupational therapist as soon as possible after your education provider/university advises us that you have successfully completed your course.

What are the costs of applying for registration as a new graduate?

When you first register with the Board you will be asked to pay both an application fee and a registration fee. Each subsequent year, should you choose to renew your registration with the Board, you will only be required to pay the registration fee.

If you apply for registration but do not successfully graduate or choose to withdraw your application after it has been processed, AHPRA will refund your registration fee only.

The application fee is non-refundable, as this is required to process your application.

A full schedule of fees is available on the Board’s website.

When is the registration renewal date?

The annual registration renewal date for all occupational therapists with general or non-practising registration is 30 November of each year, regardless of when you gained your initial registration.

Reminders regarding the renewal date will be sent to your email address. It is important that your contact details are up-to-date so you can receive reminders and key information and updates from the Board.
What happens if my surname changes after I have been granted registration?

New applicants for registration must provide sufficient evidence of their identity Proof of identity requirements. The name displayed on the Category A document will be the name used for registration and will be published on register of practitioners.

Once registered, if your name has changed you can complete the Request for change of personal details - CHPD-00 form to have your details updated.

Where can I find out further information about the Board’s registration requirements?

The following webpages provide details about the registration standards and relevant guidelines and also include frequently asked questions about each of the registration standards:

- Continuing professional development
- Professional indemnity insurance arrangements
- English language skills
- Criminal history
- Recency of practice

Do I have to meet the Board’s English language skills registration standard?

In order to be registered as an occupational therapist in Australia, you must be able to demonstrate that your English language skills will enable you to safely practise your profession.

There are four pathways that you can use to demonstrate your English language competence:

- primary language pathway
- combined secondary and tertiary education pathway
- extended education pathway
- English language test pathway.

The above pathways are outlined in the English language skills registration standard.

The Board has also published further FAQs and information related to this standard at https://www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards/English-language-skills.aspx.

Who can certify documents?

In Australia, the following people are authorised to certify documents:

- Health professions: Chiropractor, Dentist, Medical practitioner, Nurse, Optometrist, Pharmacist, Physiotherapist, Psychologist
- Legal professions: Legal practitioner, Patent attorney, Trademarks attorney
- Court positions: Bailiff, Justice of the Peace, Judge, Magistrate, Registrar, or Deputy Registrar, Clerk, Master of a court, CEO of a Commonwealth court
- Commissioner for Affidavits, or Commissioner for Declarations (dependent on jurisdictions)
- Government representatives (elected): Federal, State or Territory or Local
- Public servants: Federal, State or Territory or Local – employed for five years or more.
- Permanent employees of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- Bank officer, building society officer, credit union officer, finance company officer – employed for five years or more
- Veterinary surgeon
- Accountant (member of ICA, ASA, NIA or CPA, ATMA, NTAA)
• Minister of religion, or marriage celebrant
• Member of Chartered Secretaries Australia, Engineers Australia, Australian Defence Force, Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy
• Notary public
• Holder of a statutory office not specified in another item in this Part
• Police officer
• Sheriff or Sheriff’s officer
• Teacher (full-time) at a school or tertiary education institution.

Outside Australia, the following people are authorised to certify documents:

• Justice of the Peace
• Notary public
• Australian Consular Officer or Australian Diplomatic Officer (within the meaning of the Consular Fees Act 1955)
• Employee of the Commonwealth or the Australian Trade Commission who works outside Australia.

An Authorised Officer should do the following in the presence of the applicant:

• Certify that each document is a true copy of the original
• Certify that the photograph on photographic documentation (e.g. licence or passport) is a true likeness of the applicant
• Witness the signature of the applicant.

Certified documents must:

• Be initialled on every page by the Authorised Officer
• Annotated on the last page as appropriate e.g. “I have sighted the original document and certify this to be a true copy of the original” and signed by the Authorised Officer.

When do I need to be registered?

To help applicants decide whether or not they should be registered, the Board has issued a statement on its website. This statement sets out a number of factors to guide practitioners whether they need to be registered. This advice may answer a practitioner’s question about whether they should be registered.