

Communiqué

June 2015

The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The Board meets face-to-face each month to consider and decide on any matters related to its regulatory function within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

This communiqué aims to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board.

Budget and health profession agreement

Under the National Law, the National Boards and AHPRA work in partnership to implement the National Scheme, each with specific roles and responsibilities.

The guiding principles of the National Law require the National Scheme to operate in a 'transparent, accountable, efficient, effective and fair way'.

Every year each of the National Boards and AHPRA publish a health profession agreement that details the fees payable by health practitioners, the annual budget of the Board and the services provided by AHPRA that enable the National Boards to carry out their functions under the National Law.

In order to inform its review of the health profession agreement the Board reviewed and signed off on its 2015/16 budget and work plan. These documents will be published on the [Board's website](#) soon.

The Board was then able to review and agree to the health profession agreement for the 2015/16 financial year. The 2015/16 health profession agreement will be published on the [AHPRA website](#) under *Publications* in the near future.

New threshold competency standards for the profession

The Board has started a project to develop new threshold competency standards for the occupational therapy profession in Australia. This month it published a [request for tenders](#) for the development of the new competency standards in the *News* section of its website. The closing date for tenders is 28 July 2015.

The Board has also published a [request for applications](#) from individuals with knowledge and expertise in the field of occupational therapy and/or competency standards for a position on the threshold competency standards advisory panel (the advisory panel). The advisory panel will be called upon to provide professional knowledge and experience to assist in the development of new Australian threshold competency standards for the profession.

Approved programs of study

The Board reviewed an updated list of its approved programs of study. The Board agreed to the list of all approved, adequate and inactive programs of study in Australia. The updated lists will be published on the Board's website.

Additionally, the Board received accreditation advice about several programs from the University of Western Sydney and Flinders University and approved these programs of study so that graduates of these programs are

eligible to apply for registration as an occupational therapist in Australia. Details as to these courses and their approval dates can be found on the Board's list of approved programs

Revised English language skills and criminal history registration standards in effect soon

AHPRA and the Board have published the contents of two revised registration standards – the English language skills registration standard and the criminal history registration standard – and supporting materials to help practitioners understand the new requirements before they come into effect.

Both these standards were developed after a review of the current standards and public consultation. They are approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

The Board's website has been updated with both the [revised registration standards](#). Both standards come into effect from 1 July 2015.

End of grandparenting arrangements

On 30 June 2015, the grandparenting provisions in the National Law that allowed some occupational therapists to become registered when the profession joined the National Scheme in 2012 will expire.

Affected practitioners

Occupational therapists who have not yet applied for registration and do not meet the qualifications requirements of section 53 of the National Law will be affected.

From 1 July 2015, the only way to become registered will be by completing an approved program of study, demonstrating substantial equivalence or doing an exam or assessment as required by the Board¹.

Only occupational therapists who are registered with the Board can practise using protected titles or make claims to be qualified to practise a regulated health profession. Penalties exist if you pretend to be registered (or lead someone to believe that you are) when you are not. You can check your registration on the [AHPRA homepage](#) using the *Check your health practitioner is registered* search.

More information

More information on the *Grandparenting registration standard* is available on the [Registration standards](#) page or the Board's website.

Conclusion

The Board publishes a range of information about registration and its expectations of practitioners on its website at www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au or www.ahpra.gov.au.

Julie Brayshaw

Presiding Member

Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

¹ Section 303 of the National Law sets out the 'grandparenting' provisions for individuals to be eligible to apply for registration to the profession but who do not hold an academic qualification gained by completing an approved program of study.