

Communiqué

October 2016 meeting of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

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 functions within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme).

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

Health Profession Agreement 2016-20

The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (the Board) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) have published the health profession agreement (HPA) for 2016-20.

The HPA sets out the partnership between the Board and AHPRA, and the services AHPRA will provide in supporting the Board to carry out its functions.

The Board and AHPRA work together to implement the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, (National Scheme), which is the scheme regulating registered health practitioners in Australia, in the public interest.

The 2016-20 Occupational Therapy Board of Australia and AHPRA Health Profession Agreement is available on the [Health Profession Agreements](#) page.

Occupational Therapists renewal for 2016/17

The Board encourages occupational therapists to renew their registration with the Board online by the 30 November registration expiry date. Renewal applications received within a month after the expiry date will incur a late fee.

Under the National Law, occupational therapists who do not renew their registration within one month of their registration expiry date must be removed from the Register of Occupational Therapists. Their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise or work as an occupational therapist in Australia until a new application for registration is approved.

Graduate applications for registration: Final-year students can apply online now

Occupational therapy students who will soon complete an approved program of study can go online now to apply for registration before they graduate.

Graduates need to be registered as an occupational therapist with the Board before they start practising and must meet the Board's registration requirements.

The [online graduate application](#) service on the AHPRA website helps to smooth the path from study to work by enabling students to apply for registration four to six weeks before completing their course. All applicants must send their [supporting documents](#) to AHPRA by mail to complete their application.

Engagement with new graduates

The Board was pleased to note that attendance at its recent Graduating Soon? Webinar was high. From 331 registrations, 207 people attended the webinar. The webinar covered topics such as the role of the Board, the role of AHPRA, the registration process, including when and how to apply for registration and the obligations of practitioners. A recording of the webinar will be published on the Board's website shortly.

The Board considered that the webinar was a worthwhile opportunity to engage with students from all over the country, and hopes to continue to run webinars of this kind on a yearly basis.

A short animated video introducing new graduates to the Board and registration requirements is currently in the production phase and will be published on the Board's website once completed.

The webinar and animated video will be ongoing resources on the Board's website that can be used by new graduates to assist their understanding of registration with the Board.

Revised competency standards development project

Analysis of the feedback on the revised competency standards has progressed to the stage where the Board has been able to consider and accept proposed revisions to the standards. The Board is keen to ensure that the revised competency standards appropriately emphasise occupational therapy practice and recognition of cultural competence. The Board is in the final stages of refining the standards ahead of public consultation.

The Board is anticipating that public consultation on the draft revised standards will commence in late November. As previously advised, the Board wants to engage with occupational therapists working in a range of practice areas, settings and locations across the country. If you are interested in participating in the Board's public consultation on the revised draft competency standards, please email otboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au. Your details will be recorded and we will be in touch once further details on the public consultation process have been finalised.

Australian Catholic University program of study approved

The Board has approved the accreditation of two programs from the Australian Catholic University, the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours) and the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy offered at the MacKillop, North Sydney campus.

This decision was based on advice received from the [Occupational Therapy Council \(Australia and New Zealand\)](#).

More information about your advertising obligations

National Boards across the National Scheme continue to discuss issues about claims in advertising, in particular claims about benefits of treatments.

The Board would like to remind all practitioners that they must comply with the provisions of the National Law on the advertising of regulated health services, relevant national, state and territory consumer protection legislation and, if applicable, legislation regulating the advertising of therapeutic goods.

The Board has published further information on its [website](#) to help occupational therapists better understand their advertising obligations, including [further information on advertising therapeutic claims](#).

This information does not replace the Board's [Guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#), which should be an occupational therapists first point of reference to understanding their obligations.

The burden is on you to substantiate any claim you make that your treatments benefit patients. If you do not understand whether the claims you have made can be substantiated based on acceptable evidence, then remove them from your advertising.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is responsible for prosecuting breaches of the advertising requirements in the National Law. This means that AHPRA with the Board needs to decide whether there has been a breach of your advertising obligations.

These are serious matters that can have serious consequences for your professional standing and your criminal record: **if in doubt about a claim, leave it out of your advertising.**

Australian Health Ministers' communiqués published

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council has published two communiqués after its most recent meeting, one highlighting the main topics of discussion at the recent COAG Health Council meeting and a second announcing the start of the reviewer for the Independent Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Go to the [COAG Health Council website](#) to access this information.

Keeping in touch with the Board

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. Practitioners are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on policy and guidelines affecting their profession.

Julie Brayshaw

Chair

Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

25 October 2016