

Occupational Therapy Board of Australia

REGISTRATION STANDARD: REGENCY OF PRACTICE

1 December 2019

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Summary

All National Boards must set recency of practice requirements to help registered practitioners maintain safe and competent practice within their scope of practice.

This registration standard sets out the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia's (the Board) minimum requirements for recency of practice for occupational therapists.

Does this standard apply to me?

This standard applies to all registered occupational therapists except students, recent graduates applying for registration for the first time or practitioners with non-practising registration.

What must I do?

To meet this registration standard you must complete a minimum of:

- 750 hours of practice in the previous five years
- 450 hours practice in the previous three years, or
- 150 hours of practice in the previous 12 months.

This standard sets minimum requirements to maintain recency of practice. Meeting these requirements doesn't automatically satisfy your professional and ethical responsibilities to ensure that you recognise and work within the limits of your competence and maintain adequate knowledge and skills to provide safe and effective care.

By declaring on an application that you meet the Board's recency requirements, you are declaring that you have the required minimum practice hours within your current scope of practice. If you intend to change to a new field of practice or from non-clinical to clinical practice and you do not meet the above criteria for this new scope of practice, you must undertake appropriate preparation before you commence practising in the new scope of practice (See 'What happens if I am changing my scope of practice?' below).

Are there exemptions to this standard?

There are no exemptions to this standard.

The 'What happens if I don't meet this standard' section below explains what you need to do if you don't meet this standard and wish to continue or return to practice.

What does this mean for me?

When you apply for registration

When you apply for registration as an occupational therapist, you must meet this registration standard. This includes practitioners who are applying for new or additional types of registration, such as changing from non-practising to general registration.

You don't need to meet this registration standard if you are a recent graduate applying for registration for the first time.

At renewal of registration

When you renew your registration, you must declare if you comply with this registration standard.

During the registration period

Your compliance with this registration standard may be audited from time to time. It may also be checked if the Board receives a notification (complaint) about you.

Evidence

You must keep records as evidence that you meet the requirements of this standard for five years in case you are audited.

What happens if I don't meet this standard?

If you want to continue to practise, or return to practice after taking a break, and you don't meet this standard, you will need to provide information to help the Board decide whether you are able to continue or return to practice.

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The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) establishes possible consequences if you don't meet this standard, including that the Board can impose conditions on your registration, or refuse your application for registration or renewal of registration (sections 82, 83 and 112 of the National Law).

The Board will consider your application to register or renew your registration, and any accompanying documentation, on an individual basis. It will take a number of factors into consideration when deciding whether or not to grant your application for registration or renewal of registration. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- your registration and practice history, including:
 - your length of time away from practice, and
 - the nature and scope of practice prior to your break from practice
- any continuing professional development (CPD) or education completed, or professional contact maintained during your break from practice,
- your intended field of practice, including
 - the role and position proposed
 - the level of risk associated with your proposed practice
 - any CPD or education proposed in relation to the role, and
 - access to supervision, if necessary.

The Board may require you to provide additional information about these factors, and after considering all this information, the Board may also require you to undertake:

- an assessment or examination to assess your competence to practice, and/or
- further specific education, and/or
- a period of supervised practice.

What happens if I am changing my scope of practice?

If you are proposing to change the scope of your practice you may be required to undergo additional training to ensure that you are competent in your new scope of practice.

The Board's requirements are:

- a. prior to extending your scope, you must complete any advanced training/preparation that your peers would reasonably expect to ensure you are competent to practise in the extended scope, and
- b. if it is a substantial change to a different scope of practice (for example, from an administrative to a clinical practice role), you must develop a plan for professional development to ensure your competence and submit this plan to the Board for consideration and approval prior to commencing the extended scope of practice.

Other possible consequences

The National Law establishes other possible consequences if you don't meet the recency of practice requirements in this standard, including that registration standards, codes or guidelines may be used in disciplinary proceedings against you as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional practice or conduct for the profession (section 41 of the National Law).

Authority

This registration standard was approved by the Ministerial Council on 30 June 2019.

Registration standards are developed under section 38 of the National Law and are subject to wide-ranging consultation.

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Definitions

Practice means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. Practice in this context is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge (working) in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

Recency of practice means that a health practitioner has maintained an adequate connection with, and recent practice in the profession since qualifying for, or obtaining registration.

Recent graduate is a person who qualified from an approved program of study within two years of lodging a complete application for registration.

Scope of practice means the professional role and services that an individual health practitioner is educated and competent to perform.

Review

This registration standard will be reviewed from time to time as required. This will generally be at least every five years.

Last reviewed: 30 June 2019.

This standard replaces the previous registration standard dated 1 July 2012.

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