

Information

May 2021

Framework: Pathways for registration of overseas-trained osteopaths

1. Introduction

The Framework has been developed by the Osteopathy Board of Australia (the Board) to explain the assessments the Board requires of overseas qualified osteopaths seeking registration in Australia.

The Framework applies to overseas qualified osteopaths, except for those registered in New Zealand who are eligible for registration in Australia under Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition arrangements.

2. Summary of the Framework

Under the Framework, osteopaths who have certain qualifications recognised by the General Osteopathic Council in the United Kingdom (GOsC) will have two pathways to registration in Australia – these candidates are able to choose either the competent authority pathway or the standard pathway. Osteopaths with qualifications not specified in the Framework, will continue to be assessed through the standard pathway¹ for eligibility for general registration. The two pathways are summarised in the table below.

Step	Standard pathway	Competent authority pathway
Desktop assessment	Yes	Yes
Written exam	Yes	No
Online practical exam	Yes	No
Face to face practical exam	Yes	No
Assessment on the Guide on Australian practice	Yes	Yes
Supervised practice under provisional registration for a minimum of six months	No	Yes

On completion of the requirements for the relevant pathway, the overseas qualified osteopath will then be able to apply for general registration in Australia. Registration is subject to satisfying the requirements for general registration in the National Law, including the Osteopathy Board's five registration standards.

¹ Currently a five-stage process conducted by AOAC: www.osteopathiccouncil.org.au/standard_pathway_for_australia.html

3. Assessment of overseas authorities

A key objective of the National Law is to protect the public. Section 42(c) of the National Law makes provision for an accreditation authority to assess 'authorities in other countries who conduct examinations for registration in a health profession or accredit programs of study relevant to registration, to decide whether persons who successfully complete the programs/examinations conducted or accredited by the authority have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practice the profession in Australia'.

The Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council (AOAC) is the independent authority exercising accreditation functions under the National Law for the osteopathy profession.

AOAC has compared Australian accreditation and practice standards and the standards applied by GOsC with the recognition of Osteopathy training programs. Applicants who are deemed ineligible for the competent authority by way of the desk-top assessment by AOAC may be eligible to apply for registration through the standard assessment pathway.

AOAC will advise candidates of their eligibility to apply through either the standard or competent authority pathway at the desk-top stage of the assessment process.

In each case, the applicant's good standing with the GOsC and any other relevant regulatory authorities will be considered in the assessment of their application for general registration.

AOAC has developed a Guide on the orientation to the Australian health care system. Overseas qualified osteopaths will be required to undertake an assessment based on the material in the Guide. AOAC is the contact agency for questions about the Guide.

4. Qualifications, assessments and supervision

All osteopaths must have a qualification for general registration under s. 53 of the National Law. Overseas qualified osteopaths do not have a qualification from an approved program of study.

Any applicant from the UK must be registered with GOsC before being assessed by AOAC under the standard pathway or the competent authority pathway; and applying to the Board for registration in Australia. This includes recent graduates who have not worked as an osteopath.

The Board does not require applicants in the competent authority pathway to undertake formal written or clinical assessments by AOAC of their knowledge, skills or professional attributes before registration in Australia, apart from the assessment on the Guide. However, these applicants will be required to undertake a period of supervised practice under provisional registration for the first six months of work as an osteopath in Australia. The supervised practice is intended to ensure that osteopaths entering through the competent authority pathway are safe practitioners oriented to the Australian health care system. A [separate fact sheet](#) for supervisees and supervisors: '*Supervision in the competent authority pathway*' and relevant forms for both supervisors and supervisees are published on the Board's website. Once the period of supervised practice is satisfactorily completed, a practitioner can apply for general registration.

5. Summary of requirements for overseas qualified osteopaths

1. **Current registration as an osteopath in their own country.**
2. **An overseas qualification** assessed by AOAC as being eligible for the competent authority or standard assessment pathway.
3. **Successful completion of the assessment:**
 - a. the desk-top assessment, written and clinical examination (standard pathway) or
 - b. desktop assessment (competent authority pathway)
 - c. completion of an assessment on the Guide on the Australian health care system (standard and competent authority pathways).

4. **Six months work-based supervised practice** with provisional registration (competent authority pathway only).
5. **Eligibility for general registration.** All the Board's requirements for general registration as an osteopathy practitioner under the National Law must be satisfied, including the practitioner being in good standing with their regulatory authority when they are, or have been, registered (standard and competent authority pathways).

6. Applying for provisional registration

The application [form](#) for provisional registration is published on the Board's website and must be lodged with AHPRA. If the initial six month supervision period has not been satisfactorily completed, the practitioner can apply to the Board to renew provisional registration for supervised practice. Provisional registration may be renewed twice.

7. The role of the Osteopathy Board of Australia

The primary role of the Board is to protect the public by ensuring that only osteopathy practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered.

7. Acknowledgement

The Board acknowledges the considerable work undertaken by AOAC in the development of this current Framework and in the ongoing assessment of individual applicants for registration. More information about the assessments and Guide are available from AOAC.

8. Review

This framework will take effect on 1 January 2014. The Board will review the Framework at least every two years.

Extract of relevant provisions from the National Law

42 Definition

In this Part—

accreditation function means—

...

- (c) assessing authorities in other countries who conduct examinations for registration in a health profession, or accredit programs of study relevant to registration in a health profession, to decide whether persons who successfully complete the examinations or programs of study conducted or accredited by the authorities have the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes necessary to practise the profession in Australia; or
- (d) overseeing the assessment of the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes of overseas qualified health practitioners who are seeking registration in a health profession under this Law and whose qualifications are not approved qualifications for the health profession; or
- (e) making recommendations and giving advice to a National Board about a matter referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d).

52 Eligibility for general registration

(1) An individual is eligible for general registration in a health profession if—

- (a) the individual is qualified for general registration in the health profession; and
- (b) the individual has successfully completed—
 - (i) any period of supervised practice in the health profession required by an approved registration standard for the health profession; or
 - (ii) any examination or assessment required by an approved registration standard for the health profession to assess the individual's ability to competently and safely practise the profession; and
- (c) the individual is a suitable person to hold general registration in the health profession; and
- (d) the individual is not disqualified under this Law or a law of a co-regulatory jurisdiction from applying for registration, or being registered, in the health profession; and
- (e) the individual meets any other requirements for registration stated in an approved registration standard for the health profession.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the National Board established for the health profession may decide the individual is eligible for general registration in the profession by imposing conditions on the registration under section 83.

53 Qualifications for general registration

An individual is qualified for general registration in a health profession if—

- (a) the individual holds an approved qualification for the health profession; or
- (b) the individual holds a qualification the National Board established for the health profession considers to be substantially equivalent, or based on similar competencies, to an approved qualification; or
- (c) the individual holds a qualification, not referred to in paragraph (a) or (b), relevant to the health profession and has successfully completed an examination or other assessment required by the National Board for the purpose of general registration in the health profession; or
- (d) the individual—
 - (i) holds a qualification, not referred to in paragraph (a) or (b), that under this Law or a corresponding prior Act qualified the individual for general registration (however described) in the health profession; and
 - (ii) was previously registered under this Law or the corresponding prior Act on the basis of holding that qualification.

54 Examination or assessment for general registration

For the purposes of section 52(1)(b)(ii), if a National Board requires an individual to undertake an examination or assessment, the examination or assessment must be conducted by an accreditation authority for the health profession, unless the Board decides otherwise.

62 Eligibility for provisional registration

(1) An individual is eligible for provisional registration in a health profession, to enable the individual to complete a period of supervised practice that the individual requires to be eligible for general registration in the health profession, if—

- (a) the individual is qualified for general registration in the profession; and
- (b) the individual is a suitable person to hold provisional registration in the profession; and
- (c) the individual is not disqualified under this Law or a law of a co-regulatory jurisdiction from applying for, or being registered in, the profession; and
- (d) the individual meets any other requirements for registration stated in an approved registration standard for the health profession.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the National Board established for the health profession may decide the individual is eligible for provisional registration in the health profession by imposing conditions on the registration under section 83.