Transcript – OTBA revised registrations standard webinar

## 28 September 2020

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Welcome, everyone. My name is Vathani Shivanandan and I am the Executive Officer for the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia. Before we begin we would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on for their continued connection to land, sea, community, and culture. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present, and emerging.

Before I hand over to Julie, I'd like to run through some tips for the webinar. You should be able to see a box at the top right of your screen, clicking the arrow in the red box either expands or contracts this view. You'll see that your microphones are muted so you won't hear your voices. If you have a question please type it into the text chat box and we will answer as many as we can during the question breaks. Please note that this is a public webinar so you won't be able to see each of those questions. We will keep a log of your questions that won't be published and we will produce a FAQ document from today's webinar that will be published on the Board's website. You can adjust your audio by clicking on the sound-check button. Please note that we are recording the session so that it can be published on the Board's website at a later date. We also note that we are running this webinar remotely from a number of different locations around the country. We hope that we won't encounter any technical issues but if so, the recording of the webinar will cover the full presentation and we will also try to answer as many of the questions that we have received and then the FAQ document on the Board's website.

I'd now like to introduce Julie Brayshaw, the Chair of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia. Julie is an academic staff member at Curtin University in Western Australia. Julie has been a member of the Board since July 2011. I'll now hand over to Julie who will start today's webinar.

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks Vathani. So here are the topics that we hope to cover today and we'll be taking a small break between sections to answer some of your questions.

So before I begin I'd like to explain the role of the Board. The powers and functions of the Board are defined in the National Law. This defines what the Board can and must do. Functions include registering occupational therapists and students, developing and reviewing standard, codes, and guidelines for the profession, considering and making decisions on complaints about occupational therapists, approving accreditation standards, and approving accredited programs of study. The fundamental principle underpinning registration is the protection of the public. This is done by regulating practise, ensuring practitioners are suitably trained, defining standards to ensure competence, and responding to notifications about practitioners' conduct and competence.

So this is the Board. It has nine members, six practitioner members and three community members from across Australia.

Ahpra is the agency which administers the national scheme and supports the work of the Boards. Ahpra will be your first point of contact when you come to register.

This document which is available on the Board's website provides an overview of the Board's key stakeholders. The Board's key stakeholders include the Occupational Therapy Council of Australia and the professional associations Occupational Therapy Australia and the WA Occupational Therapy Association.

Thanks to the national scheme we now have a clear picture of the number of occupational therapists practising in Australia. In 2018-2019 there were 22,412 occupational therapists, and as at June 2020 this had increased to 23,997 registered occupational therapists. This slide shows the breakdown of occupational therapists by where they are based. That is, our principal place of practise.

This slide shows the demographics of our profession. Around 90% of the profession is female with the highest concentration in the profession being practitioners between the ages of 25 and 39 years of age. This group make up nearly 70% of the profession.

So we'll now move on to talking about graduate registration and the process of becoming a registered occupational therapist. As a new graduate, that is someone who is thinking about starting practise within two years of graduating from their occupational therapy studies, you will need to submit a registration application form to the Board in order to begin practising within the profession.

And there are two ways in which you can show that you are qualified to begin practise within the profession. The first will allow your application to be processed once the Board has received notification from your university that you have completed your studies and the second will require you to attach a certified copy of your transcript to indicate that you had completed your studies.

The online registration process is open now. So if you anticipate graduating at the end of this year the Board and Ahpra encourage you to apply now as it takes time to process applications. When applying for registration you are required to pay an application fee and a registration fee. The registration fee is currently $116. The registration fee is an annual fee and it's not a fee for service. Everyone must pay the full fee every year. If you choose to withdraw your application you will be refunded the registration fee. The application fee principally covers the cost of processing an application. Your application fee will not be refunded if you withdraw your application.

National Boards and Ahpra recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected people in several ways including financial hardship. The COVID-19 pandemic is considered a national health emergency for the purpose of the Board's definition of financial hardship. For recent graduates if you're experiencing financial hardship and are unable to pay the required fees you should contact Ahpra’s customer service team via the web inquiry form to discuss your individual situation before you complete your online graduation application. It might be helpful to note that you are not required to be registered if you're not planning on working next year. If you're not planning on working you may wish to consider applying for non practising registration. If you hold non practising registration you cannot treat or refer here in Australia. There is a reduced fee should you wish to hold non practising registration, and you'll be exempt from complying with some of the Board's registration standards.

As part of the registration process you are required to submit supporting documents. One of the main causes for delay in processing applications is when the information provided is incomplete. To facilitate the quick processing of applications I strongly encourage you to lodge your application early and to thoroughly check your application to ensure that you have provided full and complete information. Submitting your application early may also facilitate a smooth transition to your employment as an occupational therapist. The standard time frame for assessment of an application is up to 10 days for graduate applications. But this may be longer during peak periods for example during the annual renewal period. Once your education provider confirms that you have successfully completed your course Ahpra will finalise your registration and send you an email confirming that you are registered. Your name will then be published on the Register of Practitioners and once your name appears on the National Register you can begin to work as an occupational therapist.

I often get asked about the supporting documents required for submission of a registration application. It might be useful therefore to provide some more detail around this. You'll be required to submit all your supporting documents online. You can save and resume your online application if you need to. All new applicants for registration must provide sufficient evidence of their identity. It's important that you get your photographic proof of identity documents certified correctly. On the document with a photograph such as your passport or driver's licence you must make sure the authorised officer writes or stamps “I certify that this is a true copy of the original and the photograph is a true likeness of the person presenting the document as cited by me”. There's an example of this on the Ahpra website. If you have provided one or more previous names in your online application Ahpra will need to see copies of your name change documentation. The name on your application for registration must match the student name provided to Ahpra by your education provider. If your name has changed after enrolling in an approved program of study you must contact the education provider to update these details. I will discuss your declarations in relation to English language skills and criminal history later on in this presentation.

When submitting your application you're required to declare whether or not you have an impairment. An “impairment” means a physical, or mental impairment, disability condition or disorder including substance abuse or dependence that is likely to detrimentally affect your capacity to practise occupational therapy. If you disclose an impairment in your online application you must provide a written statement with details of that impairment and how it's managed with any available supporting documentation. The Board will then review this information and decide whether your impairment is relevant to your ability to practise occupational therapy.

I thought it might be helpful to outline why you're required to register. The National Law requires that a person be registered if they claim to use the title “occupational therapist”, they claim to be qualified to practise as an occupational therapist, or claim to be registered as an occupational therapist. It's important to note that practising as an occupational therapist is not limited to providing direct clinical services to clients. Typically the Board will require somebody to be registered if they hold qualifications as an occupational therapist, and if they're using their skills and knowledge as an occupational therapist regardless of whether or not they are treating people. There's additional guidance about this provided on the Board's website.

Here are some examples to help illustrate when registration might be required. If you or your employer refer to your position as occupational therapist. For example Mary is our return to work co-coordinator and a trained occupational therapist. Then the Board will require you to be registered. If clients or service users are given the impression that you are an occupational therapist. For example John our disability services coordinator will be able to sort out your wheelchair as he has worked as an occupational therapist. Then the Board will require you to be registered.

If you describe yourself as an occupational therapist on social media such as Facebook or LinkedIn then the Board will require you to be registered. If a job requires a person to have an occupational therapy qualification although the job title might not be occupational therapist but the work involves direct clinical practice as an occupational therapist then you may need to be registered. For example Peter works in a mental health team as a mental health worker and requires qualifications as an occupational therapist or mental health nurse to hold this position. Then despite the generic title of the position the Board will require you to be registered. However you might not need to be registered if you're working in a role with a generic title such as disability support worker or policy officer and this work involves generic non-clinical tasks that could be undertaken by someone who is not an occupational therapist or where the individual is not held out to clients or colleagues as an occupational therapist. So will now take a break to answer some questions.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. Our first question is do I need to register every year?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, Vathani. In order to practise as an occupational therapist you will need to undertake initial registration and then renew your registration every year.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: We have a question here, s there any minimum amount of time between the completion of my degree and when I need to apply for registration. For example can I apply for registration five years after completing my qualification.

**Julie Brayshaw:** So there is not a minimum amount of time required for you to complete your application. That's your application for registration after you've completed your studies. However, if you're seeking registration more than two years after you graduate you'll need to demonstrate current competency in accordance with the Board's registration standard - the recency of practise registration standard. I'll talk more about this standard in the next section of the presentation. I also note that there is more information too about registration standards and recency of practise available on the Board's website including frequently asked questions, a fact sheet, and a pathway diagram for re-entry to practise.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks Julie. We have a question here. Can I start applying for OT jobs prior to receiving my registration?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Yes you can. It's important however to note that you can't practise as an occupational therapist until Ahpra has finished your registration and confirmed that you’re eligible to register as an occupational therapist, and that you meet all of the Board's registration requirements. So if your registration is processed andyou are granted registration, your name will be published on the register of practitioners .When your name is published on the register you'll be eligible to practise within the terms of your registration.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks Julie. We have had a fewr of these types of questions come through today, what happens if I apply with the anticipation that I will finish in the next couple of weeks but fail a unit and consequently don't complete my studies in December 2020. Do I lose my registration and application fee?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks Vathani. So if you apply for registration but don't successfully graduate or you choose to withdraw your application after it's been processed, Ahpra will refund just the registration fee only. The application fee though is non-refundable and this is required to process your application.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Another question Julie is how long does it take to become registered after submitting all the supporting documents?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So if your application is complete, that it is Ahpra has received all of your supporting documents, the standard time frame for assessment of a completed application is approximately 2 weeks for graduate applications. But it's really important to note that an assessment process for registration takes time due to the requirements for criminal history checks and other assessment criteria - the exact time may vary due to a number of different 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 for example about criminal history. Noting that your application may take longer because your profession's National Board i.e. the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia needs time to consider your circumstances. Have you applied during a peak registration period. Noting that from time to time Ahpra receives a large volume of registration requests from graduating students who are starting work and practitioners who are renewing their registration and during these times Ahpra might take more time to process your application

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, we have a question about when should I apply for registration?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So the Board encourages you to submit your application early and to check whether you've provided everything you need to provide to prove that you've met the requirements for registration and this is really important during the end of year peak graduate application period when we receive approximately 30,000 applications. This is across all of the professions and these are received within a few months. So submitting your application early will enable Ahpra to assess your application beforehand so that it's ready to go pending your results. Once Ahpra has received your graduate results from your education provider Ahpra will finalise your application within two weeks. We will now move on to talk about the Board's registration standards, codes, and guidelines.

The Board has developed five registration standards that you need to comply with as a registered occupational therapist. These standards relate to continuing professional development, criminal history, English language skills, professional indemnity insurance, and recency of practise. For each one you'll need to declare whether you met it and provide the necessary supporting documents. I'm going to start by discussing the CPD registration standard and I'll give you some tips and ideas for how you can meet the Board's requirements in relation to CPD.

CPD the first registration standard that we will discuss. Apart from those people who hold non practising registration as a registered occupational therapist you'll need to meet the Board's requirements for CPD each year. The CPD standard sets out that you must complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD per year. Each year when you renew your registration you will declare whether or not you have met the Board's requirements for CPD.

This requirement is the same whether you are working full time or part time. You must complete at least 20 hours of CPD that's focused on seeking to improve client outcomes and experiences with a focus on the safe delivery of occupational therapy services. CPD that draws on best available evidence to inform good practise and decision making. CPD that contributes directly to improving your competence and keeping you up to date in your current setting and scope of practise. CPD that builds on your existing knowledge, and CPD that includes a minimum of five hours that is undertaken in an interactive setting with other practitioners. Now these interactive CPD activities can take place face to face or online.

The CPD standard also includes a requirement that we must maintain a portfolio that documents our learning goals and record our CPD activities. The portfolio must also include your reflections on how these CPD activities are expected to, or have improved your practise. So, get into good CPD habits, make planning and recording your CPD a part of your daily practise. Each year when you renew your registration, you will declare whether or not you have met the Board's requirements for CPD. For audit purposes, you need to retain your records for five years. If you're selected for audit, your evidence of CPD will be checked against the declarations made at renewal. The Board has developed guidelines that provide more information about the requirements of the CPD standard. These guidelines are available on the Board's website.

A feature of the Board’s CPD standard is that you have the flexibility to define the areas of development most relevant to you and select activities that are accessible and will contribute to your currency and competency. We've taken a lot of care to identify ta range of CPD activities that you can do at no cost, and that don't require you to travel. The activities you claim must have a clear focus on your learning goals and support better outcomes for your clients. The revised guidelines provide some examples of CPD activities that might count towards your registration requirements. And these include, higher education programs and other accredited learning courses, conferences, forums, seminars, undertaking research and presenting results, online learning such as MOOCs or webinars, reading books and journal articles relevant to your practise. Quality assurance activities such as, clinical audits and reviews of records, work base learning contracts and employment related professional development, . professional or interprofessional interactions such as clinical forums and activities focused on developing your knowledge of current or emerging health priority areas. For example, cultural safety, particularly when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Another example is effectively identifying and responding to family violence. Undertaking your day to day routine work duties cannot be counted as CPD. Additionally, mandatory training such as hand hygiene, and fire and evacuation training in your workplace is generally not considered suitable for meeting the requirements of the standard.

Recording CPD is essential for audit and development purposes. You can do this by creating a CPD portfolio. Your CPD portfolio should include information about your CPD plan, the CPD activities that you have undertaken including your reflection on each completed CPD activity and how it has developed your practise. A blank template is available on the Board's website, as well as examples of completed CPD portfolios.

So, moving on to the Board’s, English Language Skills Registration Standard. This standard sets out how an applicant for registration can demonstrate to the Board that their competency in speaking and communication in English is sufficient to enable practise within the profession. The standard applies to all applicants for initial registration. The standard refers to four pathways to demonstrate English language competency. The first pathway: English language is your primary language, and you have completed all your primary, secondary and relevant tertiary qualification in English. The second is a combination of secondary education and tertiary qualifications that have been taught and assessed in English. The third pathway is satisfactory completion of at least six years, full time equivalent, continuous education, taught and assessed solely in English, or four, achieve minimum scores in one of the recognised English language tests set out in the standard. The four tests are listed on this slide. The standard sets out certain minimum scores that will be accepted by the Board as demonstrating that you have English language competency. The standard ensures that the Board has consistent English language requirements with other National Boards for internationally qualified applicants or for those who have not completed their secondary education in English.

The next registration standard is criminal history. When a practitioner first applies for registration, the Board requires the applicant to declare their criminal history in all countries, including Australia. It's really important that you declare any criminal history and the renewal form includes a statement about criminal history that has not previously been disclosed.

Declaring a criminal history will not necessarily result in a restriction on your practise. The Board considers a number of factors when assessing the implications of criminal history, including the nature and gravity of the offence, its relevance to health practise, the time that's elapsed since the offence and whether or not the offence is part of a pattern of behaviour.

There's more information, including fact sheets, guidelines, and frequently asked questions about the Board CPD, English language skills and criminal history registration standards on the Board's website, The Board has also recently hosted a webinar on the registration standards, and this is also be available on the Board's website. And within the webinar, there's useful content in relation to planning, reflecting and recording your CPD. But now we'll have time for another question, thanks, Vathani.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. Our first question is whether CPD hours are relevant if I'm working casually?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, the CPD standard is relevant to all registered occupational therapists. You must be registered in order to practise whether in a full time, part time or voluntary capacity.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. Our next question asks, what happens if I am sick and cannot complete 20 hours of CPD?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Applications for exemption from the CPD requirements can be made in exceptional circumstances. The absence from practise on its own does not mean that you'll be automatically exempt from the CPD requirements. The absence from practise must be due to exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances that may entitle you to an exemption are circumstances that prevented you from undertaking your CPD and are out of the ordinary, so that you couldn't have been expected to manage their impact. An example may include significant injury or illness. If you're applying for an exemption, it's important that you complete the application form that's available on the Board's website and submit the form with relevant supporting documents.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have a question here. How do I provide evidence of having completed CPD, when I submit my application for initial registration with the Board?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So, when making an initial application for registration, applicants will be required to give an undertaking to meet the CPD requirements during the registration period. There's no requirement to have completed the 20 hours of CPD, prior to the initial application per registration. What you are doing is making a declaration that you will meet the requirement during the registration period.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. A question has come through about, what if we were registering for the first time and get a job later in the year for example, in October or November next year. Does that mean we need to do 20 hours or CPD in that period of time?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, Vathani. Just a reminder that all registered occupational therapists must complete a minimum 20 hours of CPD each year, regardless of whether or not they're employed. Noting, that we need to consider that consumers of occupational therapy services have the right to expect that occupational therapists will provide services in a competent and contemporary manner that best meets the practise standards. CPD is the process to maintain and extend the practitioner's knowledge, expertise and competence throughout their career. Continuing professional development is an important component of the provision of safe and effective services.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, we have a question about what happens if I do not meet the 20 hours of CPD at renewal?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So, all registered occupational therapist must complete a minimum of 20 hours. If a practitioner does not meet the 20 hours, they would need to make a declaration around that when they are renewing their registration. At that point, the Board would consider action that could be taken in relation to a practitioner who has not met the requirements of the standard.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have another CPD question, can I undertake CPD that's not related to my current area of practise, but to an area that I'm seeking to practise into the future?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, Vathani. That's a good question. So, your CPD must be developed according to your learning goals, and that may relate to your current competency, in relation to your current position. But if you are also considering a change of practise, you may want to update your learning goals to consider what you need to review prior to commencing in a new area of a practise. So, whilst we encourage you to establish your learning goals at the start of a registration period, these can change during that period, according to your practise requirements. It's anticipated that you will continually update your CPD goals to meet the requirements of the CPD standard. That CPD may relate to your current position to ensure competency and currency in your current position. But it may also consider professional development you will require if you're moving into a new area of practise.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. So, our last question for this section is, in relation to a criminal history checks. I have lived in New Zealand and England for over five years each. I have criminal history certificates from when I applied for Australian citizenship, should I way include those certificates as part of my application process?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, Vathani. So, applicants and registered practitioners who have either declared an international criminal history in their application for registration or who've lived in a country other than Australia for six consecutive months, when aged over 18, are required to apply for an international criminal history check from an Ahpra approved vendor. An international criminal history check will then be provided to the applicant and directly to Ahpra.The results of the check are valid for three months. It's good to note that applicants will need to get a check, for every country outside Australia, where they have lived or been primarily based for six consecutive months over the age of 18 years, some applicants will need to obtain, checks from several different countries.

So, now we'll move on to talk about the remaining registration standards.

Recency of practise, this standard doesn't apply to recent graduates who are applying for registration for the first time or practitioners with non-practicing registration. However, it's useful for you to consider this standard in relation to the future. This standard requires an occupational therapist to maintain recency of practise whilst registered. There are now three ways an occupational therapists can demonstrate meeting recency. These are, completion of 750 hours of practise in the previous five years,or 450 hours of practise in the previous three years or 150 hours of practise in the previous 12 months. If you don't meet this standard such as when returning to practise after a break, you'll need to provide information to help the Board decide, whether you are able to return to practise. The Board will consider your application 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 include factors such as your registration and practise history, including your length of time away from practise and the nature and scope of your practise, prior to your break from practise,any continuing professional development or education completed, or professional contact maintained during your break from practise,and your intended area of practise, including the role and position proposed the level of risk associated with your proposed practise, and access to supervision.

After considering all of this information to return to practise, the Board may require you to undertake an assessment or examination to assess your competence to practise, or further education, or possibly a period of supervised practise.

I'll now talk about changes in scope of practise. In the context of the standard, scope of practise is the professional role and services that an individual health practitioner is trained, qualified and competent to perform. A practitioner's scope of practise may include, clinical and or nonclinical practise. The Board's definition of “practise: is very broad. This aspect of the standard relates to occupational therapists who have been practising and they are proposing to change the scope of their practise. In these circumstances, practitioners may be required to complete additional training to ensure that they are competent in the new scope of practise.

The requirements vary depending on the change that is being made. If a practitioner is narrowing their scope of practise, there are no additional requirements. If they're extending or changing their scope of practise, they must complete the training that their peers would expect before taking up the new area of practise. If a practitioner is making a substantial change to their scope of practise, for example, moving from a nonclinical role to clinical practise, they must develop and submit to the Board for approval, a professional development plan that details the activities they intend to do to ensure competence in the new scope of practise. They must not practise in the new scope of practise until the Board has approved the plan. A template for developing a plan for professional development, is available on the Board's website. As a recent graduate, the Board would expect that your employer will ensure that appropriate supervision or mentoring arrangements are in place to support your practise.

So, here's some examples of extending or changing scope of practise. In the first example. Sue has worked for 12 months in a general hospital, in a rotational position. She's now planning to move into an entry level position in a rehab setting where she'll receive supervision and mentoring. In the final example, Jordan has worked in a home modification service for 15 years and is now planning to set up a consultancy company, providing advice on access issues for public buildings. In these cases it is expected that the practitioner will engage in training and CPD to ensure they are competent and safe to practise within their extended scope of practise. Formal approval of the practitioner's development plan by the Board may not be required.

So, here's some examples of where a professional development plan may be required. Jamie, for example, has worked for 20 years in mental health services, but now wants to set up a private practise specialising in medico-legal assessment for people with physical disabilities. Or Denise who has worked in an academic position lecturing in adult physical rehab for six years, following ten years of practise in an adult general hospitaland is now considering setting up a paediatric private practise. In these cases, it's expected that the practitioner would develop and submit a professional development plan and submit this to the Board for approval. The practitioner cannot practise in the new area until this professional development plan has been approved by the Board.

The final registration standard relates to professional indemnity insurance or PII. When you practise as an occupational therapist, you will need to hold professional indemnity insurance, in accordance with the Board's PII arrangement registration standard. This type of insurance covers losses or harms, that might be suffered by a member of public in the course of receiving occupational therapy services. Your PII insurance must provide coverage for all aspects of your practise. This includes all locations where you practise, including practise that you undertake in the public health system, in private, non-government, or other sectors, as well as any voluntary or other practise undertaken, whether you're practising full time, part-time or self-employed, or employed in an unpaid or voluntary capacity, you must have PII to cover all aspects of your practise.

Some occupational therapists will pay for PII from an insurance provider. However, many public hospitals and other public sector employers often provide PII cover for their employees, or have self-insurance arrangements in place. The key thing to note is it's your responsibility as a registered occupational therapist to check that you have appropriate PII arrangements in place for any practise you undertake. If your PII insurance is held by a third party for example, your employer, it's important to note that these insurance arrangements are likely to only cover your practise for that employer. If you undertake additional practise, such as in a voluntary capacity or in private practise, then you're likely to need additional PII to cover these aspects of your practise. There's some guidance in the registration standards about the things you'll need to think about to ensure that you have adequate cover for the risks that arise within the scope of practise. Failure to comply is a breach of the National Law and may lead to disciplinary action.

There's more information, including fact sheets and frequently asked questions about the Board's PII and recency of practise registration standards online on the Board's website. Also, as I mentioned earlier, there's also the revised registration standards webinar and the content of both of these are located and is posted on the Board’s website.

So, now I'd like to briefly touch on the Australian Occupational Therapy Competency Standards. The competencies describe the standards expected for competent practise by occupational therapists for registration and regulation of the profession by the Board. The new competencies include four-core standards of practise, and these are professionalism, knowledge and learning, communication, and occupational therapy practise and process. These standards are supported by number of relevant practise behaviours. The competencies include reference to new evidence, reflective practise and digital literacy. The competencies specifically acknowledge the need for occupational therapists to enhance their cultural responsiveness and capabilities for practise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The new standards came into effect in January 2019, and the Board has developed a range of resources to support effective implementation of the standards. These resources are available on the Board's website. So we'll now take another question break, Vathani.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, we have a question here about how much PII cover should I be getting?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks Vathani. So the amount of cover needs to be enough to cover any liability that is a legal responsibility, any liability to pay compensation if a successful claim is made against you. So the amount of cover for you may depend on a combination of factors including, for example, the practise area where you're working, the service users you work with and the risks associated with your area of practise.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, we have a question here about whether PII can be provided by my employer?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Your employer is likely to have arrangements that will provide cover for your practise and the risks involved in your work. An employer’s PII arrangements may only cover the activities you carry out as part of the duties associated with that employment, not any other work that you undertake. And the range of may vary between different employers. If you're not sure about what is covered by your employers PII arrangements, you should always check with your PII, provider or with your employer.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, we've had a few questions about PII come through today. One question is do we need to have PII before we apply for positions?

**Julie Brayshaw:** You need to have PII in place for any work that you undertake. So that is PII in place for when you actually commence working, When you're working as an occupational therapist, you need to have PII in place.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. Another question about PII, how do we go about getting PII and when can we get it?

**Julie Brayshaw:** There are quite a few PII providers and that information can be sourced from a variety of places. One example is the Professional Association who have an arrangement with one of the PII providers, so that maybe an avenue you could pursue. But if you do a little bit of research on PII providers, you'll find that there are a range of PII providers and then you can explore those and consider those in relation to the practise that you're going to undertake. You can start exploring that now.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, is PII usually outlined in contract of employment, provide by a workplace or is something that I need to ask about as part of the job-seeking process?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, Vathani, that's a good question. You wont often see PII mentioned in an employment contract as such. I would recommend that you liaise directly with your employer. It is not something that would normally be written in, like a job description form or a job advertisement, it's something that you can explore yourself with your employer.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, we probably have time for one more question in this section will I need to complete a recency of practise assessment if I've taken a year off for maternity leave?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thank you. So it would be good to go back and have a look at the information about recency of practise and the recency of practise requirements. So the recency of practise standard requires that occupational therapists demonstrate recency, by completing 750 hours in the previous five years, 450 hours in the previous three years, or 150 hours of practise in the previous 12 months. You use those criteria when planning a break of practise, how much practise you would need to demonstrate as far as meeting recency.

Notifications - IIn the national scheme, we call a complaint about a registered health practitioner a notification. They're called notifications in the law because we're notified about concerns or complaints which Ahpra and the National Boards that manage. Anyone can make a complaint about a registered health practitioner's health. This means the person may have a physical or mental impairment, disability condition or disorder, including substance abuse or dependence that's likely to detrimentally affect the practise of the profession or their ability to undertake clinical training in the situation where we're referring to students. Anyone can make a complaint about conduct and that is the professional conduct of a registered health practitioner may be of a lesser standard that might reasonably be expected by the public or professional peers all about performance, the knowledge skills or judgement possessed or care exercised by the practitioner in the practise of the health profession, maybe below the standard reasonably expected of a health practitioner of an equivalent level of training or experience.

The National Law requires practitioners, employers and education providers to report notifiable conduct to Ahpra in order to prevent the public from being placed at risk of harm. Mandatory notifiable conduct in relation to a registered health practitioner means the practitioner has practised whilst intoxicated by alcohol or drugs, engaged in sexual misconduct in connection with their professional practise, placed the public at risk of substantial harm in the practitioners practise because of an impairment, or paste the public at risk of harm because the practitioner has practised the profession in a way that constitutes a significant departure from professional standards. In relation to a student, an education provider or practitioner is required to make a mandatory notification where the student has an impairment who in the course of undertaking clinical training, may place the public at substantial risk of harm.

In addition to the mandatory notification provision in the National Law, there are a range of circumstances in which any individual or entity can make a voluntary notification about a practitioner. Under Section 144 of the National Law, a voluntary notification can be made about a practitioner on a number of grounds, such as the practitioners professional conduct, the practitioners knowledge, skill or judgement, possessed or care exercised by the practitioner, or the practitioner may have an impairment or the practitioner may have contravened the law or a condition of the registration. In respect of students, a voluntary notification can be made on the grounds that a student has been charged or convicted with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment. The student may have an impairment or the student may have contravened a condition of their registration.

Common types of complaints made about occupational therapists include concerns about the clinical care or treatment provided to a patient, the practitioners health or health impairment, the practitioner engaging in personal or sexual relationships with a patient, the practitioner possibly having broken the law. The practitioner’s communication including somebody being treated rudely, inappropriately or disrespectfully or the practitioners record keeping.

This slide shows the most common types of complaints received about occupational therapists in the 2018/19 year. Professional performance is the most common cause of complaint against occupational therapists. Particular care should be taken in providing information about your assessment, obtaining informed consent, and being clear and courteous in your communication. Contemporaneous clinical records are fundamental to good practise. Notes should include sufficient rationale for assessment choice and intervention decisions and plans. Where the risks are high or clients are vulnerable it is especially important to document steps including the provision of information, informed consent, any concerns or complaints raised and the response to these. An occupational therapist whose practise is sound and maintains high quality clinical records is well placed to account for or defend the conduct in an investigation or in any legal proceedings. Clear and effective communication is fundamental in all areas of practise, particularly in relation to ensuring that consumers or carers feel satisfied with the process or outcomes of care. Conscious focus on really good communication is one of the things that all practitioners can do to reduce risks and strengthen outcomes of care. So we can now have our last question and answer section.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. Our first question relates to CPD and ask, should I develop my CPD learning goals now?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So you should identify your learning goals early in each registration year after you've renewed your registration. You should identify and record your learning needs before you start to plan your CPD activities for the upcoming registration year. Although you can identify your learning goals in advance, you can always update your learning goals at any time during the year and your learning goals might change in response to factors within your individual professional practise, or peer review, or perhaps when a patient presents with a condition that you are unfamiliar with and you need to learn or refresh an approach to your work. Learning goals may also change in relation to factors outside your professional practise, such as when we identify matters from a Board perspective, such as in relation to the importance of education relating to cultural safety.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie, we have a question here about how do I develop my CPD learning goals?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, Vathani. So when identifying your CPD goals it can be helpful to think about your strengths and areas for improvement. Ideally, your learning goals would balance building on your strengths and addressing any weaknesses relevant to your area of clinical practise, and this should help you plan the CPD activities that improve your skills and knowledge, develop your abilities and to link in with learning in relation to your professional practise.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. A question here. How long should I keep my record of CPD learning goals for?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So you must keep a record of your goals and the activities that you have completed. You need to keep these for five years.. And this is for the purposes of audit.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. Is registration with the Board Australia wide and consistent across states. For example, I live in Perth, but intend to move to Brisbane,will that impact on my registration?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So I think one of the significant advantages of the national scheme is thatonce your education provider confirms that you've successfully completed your course, Ahpra will finalise your registration and send you an email confirming that you're registered. At that point, your name will appear on the register of practitioners. Once your name appears, you can begin working as an occupational therapist in any state or territory within Australia.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. When completing the registration form, do we need to put the date of our last assessment or another date on the date completed section of the form.

**Julie Brayshaw:** So your course is considered completed when you've completed all the academic requirements of your course of study and that includes any assignments, examinations, practical experience, etc. Normally most results are ratified at a final Board of Examiners meeting. It's at this point when your results are ratified that your course is completed, because it's at that point that your university program will send through the graduate list to Ahpra. So if you're in doubt, talk with your education provider and they should be able to tell you what date they anticipate that graduate list being forwarded through.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have a question here around renewal, if we apply mid-year initially, will we always be renewing at this time into the future?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So the registration renewal date for all occupational therapists with general or with non-practicing registration is the 30 November. That's the 30 November each year regardless of when you gained your initial registration.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have had a couple of questions about impairments come through today,what types of impairments are needed to be declared for registration purposes?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thanks, Vathani. So I'll go back to the definition of impairment the definition of impairment is defined as a physical or mental impairment, disability condition or disorder, including substance abuse or dependence that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect the person's capacity to practise the profession. A key feature of this definition is determining whether or not its affects your capacity to practise the profession. When you're asked to complete your application, you'll be asked to disclose any impairments that are likely to detrimentally affect your capacity to practise occupational therapy, and to provide any available documents to assist the Board's assessment of your impairment, such as how you're managing your impairment or maybe a letter from your treating practitioner. It's really important to remember that declaring an impairment doesn't automatically mean that you can't practise as an occupational therapist or that the Board will automatically impose some form of restriction on your practise. The Board will decide whether or not your impairment is relevant to the practise of occupational therapy and if so, the Board might impose a condition on your registration to ensure that you're able to practise safely. The Board doesn't define a list of impairments that you would need to disclose, it is really very much dependent on the context of your work and how you manage the impairment.

**Vathani Shivanandan**:Thanks Julie. I have a question here. What point am I officially considered an occupational therapist?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thank you. So once your education provider has sent the graduation list through to Ahpra and Ahpra have matched that information with your complete application, Ahpra will then send you an email to say that your registration has been processed. Your name will then appear on the register of practitioners. At that point, you can be considered an occupational therapist and you can practise as an occupational therapist.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I have a question here around English language test, can I submit my English language test results that were from more than two years ago?

**Julie Brayshaw:** I think it'll be good, because there's so much detail around the English language tests, to go back to the slides about the English language standard and the specifics of the English language standard on the website. This information very clearly provides all the pathways that practitioners can consider in relation to proving their English language competency to practise. This includes the specifics around each of the English language tests, the scores that are required, and the period of time in which those English language test can be submitted. I'd really suggest you go and look at the detail about the English language test on the Board's website.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have a couple of questions about CPD. Do we need to complete 20 hours of CPD prior to applying for initial registration as a new graduate?

**Julie Brayshaw:** No. So when you first apply for registration, as a new graduate, your occupational therapy studies are in effect your CPD. So what you are doing when you complete your application is you are providing a commitment that you will complete 20 hours of CPD in the registration year. And then at renewal, you will need to make a declaration that you have met the CPD requirements.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have a question around CPD portfolios. Do I need to submit my CPD portfolio each time I renew my registration?

**Julie Brayshaw:**  That's a good question. You don't need to submit your CPD portfolio each year. You need to keep all your information relating to your CPD portfolio, and you'll only need to provide that if you are selected for audit. So keep your CPD portfolio for a period of five years. If you are selected for audit, you will need to supply that information. Each year at renewal, you will be required to make a declaration that you have met the CPD standard. If you are audited, then you will be audited against that declaration.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have a couple of questions about international criminal history checks. So the first one is, I obtained an international criminal history check a year ago, can I use that as part of registration application?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So, I'll go back to the criminal history standard information. I'll just read out explicitly the information that's included here. Applicants and registered practitioners who have either declared an international criminal history in their application or who have lived in a country other than Australia for six consecutive months, when aged 18 or over, are required to apply for an international criminal history check. It's important to note that the international criminal history check will then be provided to the applicant and directly to Ahpra. The results of the check are valid for three months.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We have a slightly related question. I have been studying in Australia since I was 17 years old, do I need to get international criminal history check?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thank you. So the criminal history check really relates to people who had lived in a country other than Australia for more than six months when aged 18 years of age or over. So that's the criteria around criminal history, it's six consecutive months when aged over 18.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. We had a couple of questions come through today aboutwhen should I be applying for registration.

**Julie Brayshaw:** So we encourage you to apply now.The application process is now open. And so, this year, we are encouraging you to apply early. And when applying early, complete all of the information required. Attach all of your documentation. So you certainly can apply now. And if not now, applying at least four to six weeks prior to your anticipated graduation. So applying early has the advantage of ensuring you've collected all the documentation required, and that you are submitting that through the correct systems. And the Ahpra have the opportunity to review your application prior to your education provider sending through the graduation list.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I have a question here about how long will it take for my application to be assessed and confirmed that I can be practising?

**Julie Brayshaw:** If you have correctly completed your application and submitted all of the required documentation, after that we will wait for the graduation list to come through from your university, from your education provider. And at that point, Ahpra will then look to match your application information with the graduation list information. That process normally takes a couple of weeks, but just to be aware that Ahpra receive applications from across all of the profession. So would anticipate around 30,000 new graduate applications in addition to all of the health professionals who might be renewing their registration. So the anticipated time is two weeks. However, that can vary a little bit according to the demand at the time..

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I've got a question here about recency of practise. Can recency of practise include voluntary work?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Yes, it can. It's really important that you keep good record of any work undertaken. So the work that you're undertaking if it's occupational therapy practise, or could be considered occupational therapy practise, keeping good records of what that work actually is, and that potentially could be considered in relation to the recency of practise standard. And that also might apply to work that's undertaken overseas. So if you're working overseas, hopefully practitioners will be able to do that again in the future with borders reopening. Keep in mind, keeping good records of any practise undertaken because that could potentially be used to demonstrate recency of practise.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I've got a question about CPD. What is a good way of keeping my CPD record?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Thank you. I think you can identify the best way that suits yourself. The Board hasn't specified a way of collecting your CPD and keeping your CPD records. However, on the Board's website, is a CPD recording tool. Now, having said that, you don't have to use that. However, it is a useful resource because it does cover off on all of the criteria that the Board expects. So you can record according to the Board's CPD template, or you can use another recording form. The most important thing is that you are recording your CPD and that you are keeping records for at least five years.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I have a question here. Is it a requirement to share my CPD learning goals with Ahpra, and what is the process for sharing this?

**Julie Brayshaw:** No. You don't need to share your goals with Ahpra. Perhaps f I can describe the usual process, is that an occupational therapist is developing their learning goals and completing their CPD activities and maintaining their reflections in relation to their learning from that CPD. But these will only be requested if a practitioner is selected for audit. So each year, a practitioner is expected to be making their own CPD plan and developing their learning goals and keeping evidence of the CPD undertaken. But it's only if they're selected for audit that these would need to be provided through to Ahpra through to the Board. At renewal each year, you'll be asked to make a declaration. And the declaration is saying that you have done that, that you have met the registration standard relating to CPD. If you're selected for audit, that's when all your information will be requested, and that information will be assessed against the declarations that you made at renewal.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I have another question here about CPD. For CPD that I completed as a student can these counted towards CPD for registration purposes?

**Julie Brayshaw:** No. The thing is when you're first applying for registration as an occupational therapist, so at least graduate registration, you're not needing to provide evidence of CPD. What you are doing is committing that you will complete CPD in the upcoming registration period. So if we anticipate, for example, that you get registered in December of this year, you will be making a commitment that you will complete CPD in 2021, in time for your renewal in November of 2021. So it's CPD that you will have completed in that registration period. So the CPD that you will have undertaken as a student will precede the registration year that you were making a commitment towards completing CPD for. The CPD is annual. Each year, you are required to complete 20 hours of CPD.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I have a question here about, can I practise as an occupational therapy assistant before I am registered with the Board?

**Julie Brayshaw:** Yes, you can. And sometimes, that's a good route to actually take, to get some experience within the sector before becoming a registered occupational therapist. But the really, really important thing is that you are not presenting yourself as an occupational therapist, you're not referring to yourself as an occupational therapist, that you're not working as an independent occupational therapist. It's about being really clear that the role that you would be undertaking would be as an occupational therapy assistant or therapy assistant. You wouldn't be declaring that you are an occupational therapist. So you can't use the title occupational therapist or present yourself as an occupational therapist until your registration comes through.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I have a question here about international criminal history checks. Do I need to submit one of these checks every time I renew my registration?

**Julie Brayshaw:** No. So the international criminal history check will be on initial registration. And then, each year, you'll be asked to make a declaration as to whether or not there's been any changes in relation to your criminal history, or whether there have been any declarations of criminal history that have not been previously disclosed. So you are providing evidence of your criminal history in relation to all of the countries that you have lived in when you're first applying for registration. And from that point on, you are updating AHPRA and the Board to any changes in criminal history.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I have a question here about CPD. How many CPD learning goals does the Board expect me to have?

**Julie Brayshaw:**  The Board doesn't have a specific number of learning goals, but they should relate to aspects of maintaining your competence and safety and developing your abilities as an occupational therapist in relation to your practise. There's not a prescribed number, but they should be sufficient to ensure that you are making a commitment towards maintaining your currency and competence as an occupational therapist.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I'm just going through the questions. Now, I've got a question around certification of documents. How do I get my birth certificate certified without someone actually writing on my birth certificate?

**Julie Brayshaw:** The certification of documents is an area that is really important to be completed correctly. And what I would suggest doing is having a look at the information on the Ahpra website, because there's actually some examples of how you get your documents certified. This can be an area that graduates have their registration delayed in relation to incorrect certification of documents. I would really carefully follow the information that's on the website and the examples on the website. Because, yes, you are not wanting to actually provide the original, but you are needing to provide all of the evidence to be s submitted as is required.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: We've had a few more questions come in around the timing for applying for registration. So it might be helpful to reiterate when we can apply for registration with the Board.

**Julie Brayshaw:** You can start applying now. We would normally say you can apply four to six weeks before you graduate. And by graduate, what I mean when I say that is that is when your education provider submits all your information puts the graduate list through to Ahpra. But having said four to six weeks, it is important to know that the application process is actually now open. So you can apply now. And we would encourage you to do so as soon as possible so that your application information is checked, and Ahpra have the opportunity to determine whether all the correct information has been submitted. When your education provider has submitted the graduation list through to Ahpra, Ahpra will be working to match that information with your completed application.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. I had a question here about the timing of applications for registration. Can be submitted at any point through the year, or do they need to be submitted at a particular time through the year?

**Julie Brayshaw:** So your education provider will normally submit all of the graduation lists at a specified time, such as they would normally submit a graduation list at the end of the year or mid-year if the cohort is graduating mid-year. But from a practitioner's perspective, a new graduate can submit their application at any stage. And just being mindful that, you know, of when you actually want to commence practising. So a new graduate can submit at any stage up until two years following graduation. If it's later than two years, then there's the different processes I've talked about in relation to applying for registration. But a new graduate application process is what we refer to for students who are graduating in that period up to two post graduation. So you can apply throughout the year. It just depends on when you want to begin practising. Most new graduates, I appreciate, want to apply for registration straight away so that then they have their options open in relation to employment opportunities.

**Vathani Shivanandan**: Thanks, Julie. That was probably as many questions as we could get through today.

Thank you everyone for participating today, and thank you Julie for talking us through the Board's requirements. A factsheet and a recording of this webinar will be published on the Board's website in a couple of weeks. Before you log out or go to webinar, you'll note a short survey will pop up so you can give us your feedback on today's webinar. And tell us about the webinars you would like the Board to consider hosting in the future. More information is always available on the Board's website.

Thanks again.

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