

Notes from Information Event 20th April 2012 - National Registration for Occupational Therapists from 1 July 2012

Disclaimer- These notes are intended for informational purposes only and as a summary of some of the information given by the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (OTBA) at the event. They should not be used as a definitive guide for registration purposes. Not all aspects pertaining to National Registration are covered here. For all information concerning National Registration for Occupational Therapists, please see the OT Board of Australia (OTBA) website, the relevant guidelines and documents, and/or contact either OT Board of Australia (OTBA) or Allied Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) direct.

- Dr Mary Russell, Chairperson of the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (OTBA), presented on behalf of the board. The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia's official website has detailed information about the National Scheme and ensuring responsibilities and requirements of OT practitioners who will be nationally registered from 1 July 2012
www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au

There are five mandatory standards (CPD, English language skills, criminal history, recency of practice and Professional Indemnity Insurance) as well as an additional registration standard on grandparenting to provide for additional transitional arrangements for qualifications.

For any questions on the National Scheme, call the
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) on 1300 419 495
or
contact the local WA AHPRA office (Level 1, 541 Hay Street, Subiaco)
Postal Address: GPO Box 9958, Perth, WA 6001

- All registered OTs in WA will automatically transfer into the new scheme as of 1 July 2012. There is no need to lodge an application unless you have never been registered. Student registration is to be included in the new scheme.

All currently registered OTs in WA should receive a letter from AHPRA in May 2012.

Renew your registration with the OT Registration Board of WA (OTBA) **before 30th June 2012** as per usual. The first renewal with the OT Board of Australia (OTBA) will be 30th June 2013 and for a 5 month period only for the first cycle. You will renew again 30th November 2013. The OT Board of Australia (OTBA) registration period will be a regular twelve month cycle ending 30th November each year.

Renewal can be done online. Fee - \$280

TAKE HOME MESSAGE - MAKE SURE YOUR DETAILS ARE CURRENT WITH THE OT REGISTRATION BOARD OF WA TO RECEIVE THE NECESSARY CORRESPONDENCE FOR TRANSITION

- The National Scheme takes a very broad Definition of "occupational therapy" - and includes practice of OT whether remunerated or not and whether providing direct clinical services or not. The example given was of an OT providing advice over the back fence to a neighbour regarding the need for a splint for their child - despite not being paid or employed for that role, that OT must be registered to provide such advice. This also relates to the need for Registered OTs to have appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance. Examples of practitioners not involved in direct clinical services include researchers, educators, managers, administrators or any roles that impact upon the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

There is provision for 'Non-Practicing' registration within the scheme, for example if you intend to go overseas or take time off from practicing.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE - CHECK THE WEBSITE GUIDELINES FOR WHO SHOULD BE REGISTERED OR NOT. ALL OTs, WHETHER REMUNERATED OR NOT MUST BE REGISTERED WITH THE SCHEME.

- Continuing Professional Development - requirement is for a **minimum 30 hrs annual CPD** to prove competence relevant to your area of practice. In the first cycle, you will have until 30th November 2013

to complete 30 hrs of CPD. This requirement does not apply to students or those with 'Non-Practicing' Registration. There is no reduction in CPD requirements for part-time OTs.

Become familiar with the CPD Guidelines on the OT Board of Australia (OTBA) website. There is a possible template to use for the documentation of your CPD and examples of how to complete. CPD can be completed in any of these three areas:

- Formal Learning - max 25 hrs
- Informal Learning - max 25 hrs
- Engagement with the Profession - max 10 hrs (includes provision or supervision).

An Activity Record and documentation of Evidence of Support for your CPD must be retained for a minimum of 5 years, to be produced in the event of an audit. A practitioner can apply for partial exemption from the CPD standard eg parental/maternity leave, sick leave - however, exemptions need to be applied for **BEFORE** the expiry of the registration period, not "after the fact".

TAKE HOME MESSAGE - GET INTO THE HABIT OF DOCUMENTING YOUR CPD REGULARLY AND SYSTEMATICALLY. KEEP SIGNED EVIDENCE AND OTHER EVIDENCE IN A PORTFOLIO. EVERY YEAR WHEN YOU RENEW, MAKE SURE YOUR RECORDS ARE COMPLETE AND KEEP THE EVIDENCE FOR A MINIMUM OF 5 YEARS.

- Professional Indemnity Insurance is compulsory for all Registered OTs - there is no stipulated level of cover for Professional Indemnity (PI), but it needs to be appropriate to your work done as an OT. You need to maintain evidence of your PI, even if provided on your behalf, e.g. by your employer.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE - YOU MUST HAVE AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE COVER.

- Recency of Practice - you must be able to **prove a minimum of six months Full Time Equivalent (based on a 38 hr working week) work as an OT in any 5 year period immediately prior to the commencement of a registration cycle (commencing 1st July 2013)**, as well as 30 hours of CPD in every 12 months as per the CPD requirements. This change to the current OT Registration Board of WA's requirement for proof of having practiced as an OT in the previous 5 years provided much discussion in question time especially for those undertaking their second or third period of maternity leave.

See the Guidelines on the website for Recency of Practice and guidelines for those returning to work as an OT from a period of absence or after holding 'Non-Practicing' registration. Applicants who have not practiced a minimum of six months FTE in the preceding 5 year period or are returning to practice after a period of absence of 5 years or more can hold 'Provisional Registration' whilst undertaking a period of supervised practice of not less than 3 months Full Time Equivalent. The relevant guidelines for 'Supervised Practice' for those returning to practice after a period of absence are currently being developed but should be available within the next few weeks.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE - KEEP EMPLOYMENT RECORDS DETAILING HOURS WORKED AS EVIDENCE FROM YOUR EMPLOYER OR OTHER RELEVANT RECORDS FOR PROOF OF PRACTICE AND KEEP FOR A MINIMUM OF 5 YEARS.

- Criminal History - you must declare any Criminal Convictions whether from within Australia or overseas with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, this includes any 'Spent Convictions', no matter how trivial or irrelevant they may seem. AHPRA will judge on a state-by-state basis as to how relevant the conviction may be to ability to practice as an OT.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE - ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION AND DECLARE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT COULD APPLY. AHPRA WILL MAKE A JUDGEMENT AS TO ITS RELEVANCE AND CAN CONDUCT RANDOM CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS FOR AUDIT PURPOSES.

- Notifications - under the new legislation, practitioners and employers are **MANDATED** by law to report any Notifiable conduct by an OT. This is except in WA if this comes to the attention of an OT as a treating practitioner of a client. Notifiable conduct by an OT includes:
 - practicing while intoxicated by drugs or alcohol
 - engaged in sexual misconduct in connection with professional practice
 - any impairment that would place the public at harm
 - a significant departure from professional standards

TAKE HOME MESSAGE - BE FAMILIAR WITH THE LAWS REGARDING MANDATORY NOTIFIABLE CONDUCT AS A PRACTITIONER OR EMPLOYER

- Advertising - Advertising Guidelines are soon to be completed following the OT Board of Australia's (OTBA) consultation process. At this stage, there is no requirement to register a Business or Practice Name other than your own with the Board, and there are no specific regulations relating to the use/registration of other qualifications in addition to your OT qualification, however you should keep an eye out for the Advertising Guidelines when they come out. Advertising of any regulated health profession under National Law currently includes (but is not limited to):
 - making misleading claims
 - offering an inducement, gift or discount (unless the relevant terms and conditions are included)
 - using testimonials
 - creating unreasonable expectations of beneficial treatment
 - encouraging the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of a service

TAKE HOME MESSAGE- BECOME FAMILIAR WITH ADVERTISING GUIDELINES FOR OTs WHEN THEY BECOME AVAILABLE

- Timeframe for Registration - allow approximately 3-4 weeks if you intend to change registration categories or are re-registering, eg when returning from overseas, and before you can commence work as an OT

To receive regular updates and notifications of changes as they come to hand from the OT Board of Australia (OTBA) - register your details on their website www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au

These notes were taken down by Cathy Thomas at the request of OT AUSTRALIA WA at the Information session for OTs on 20th April 2012.