Registering with the Medical Council of New Zealand

Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa, known as the MCNZ. For doctors who trained outside New Zealand, from resident doctors to consultants and SMOs.

YOUR REGISTRATION BODY

Medical Council of New Zealand
Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa (MCNZ)

Checked against the Council's own pages, mcnz.org.nz, on 26 October 2026. If anything here differs from what the Council says, the Council is right, and the Council makes every registration decision.

Every application is assessed individually, and the board makes every registration decision. The latest version, with questions that work out your likely route, is at ethicareresourcing.com/guides/new-zealand-registration-mcnz. Ethicare never charges candidates. This is general information, not immigration advice.

Every route

ROUTE 1 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

VOC1 or VOC2

Vocational scope

✓ An approved New Zealand or Australasian specialist qualification.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Confirm your qualification is the approved New Zealand or Australasian one**

VOC1 if you already hold general scope registration; VOC2 if you do not.

3 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

4 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

Start this first. The Council cannot begin until verification is under way, and it runs at the pace of your medical school.

5 **Verify your postgraduate qualification through EPIC**

Needed for a vocational scope, in the same way as your degree.

6 **Order certificates of good standing**

From every authority you have been registered with.

7 **Brief your three referees**

On the Council's referee report form. A slow referee is a slow application.

8 **Check the Council's English language policy**

Find out whether you need a test before you book one.

9 **Download the Council's checklist for your pathway**

Tick off the Council's own list as well as this one.

10 **Request a PIN and create your myMCNZ account**

11 **Your employer completes the approval of position and supervisor form**

It names your post and your Council-approved supervisor.

12 **Submit a complete application with the fee**

The clock starts only when the application is complete.

13 **Answer any request from the Council quickly**

Speed of reply is the biggest factor you control.

14 **Eligibility for registration letter**

It confirms to Immigration New Zealand that you can be registered, and sets out your registration meeting.

15 **Your visa health and police checks**

Separate from registration, for Immigration New Zealand. If you're coming for more than 12 months, expect a medical by one of its panel physicians and, in most cases, a chest X-ray, for everyone on the application. The certificate must reach Immigration New Zealand within three months of being signed, and you'll need police certificates too. General information, not immigration advice: our visa guide.

16

Attend your registration meeting

It happens in New Zealand, after you arrive. Bring what the Council has asked for.

17

Pay for your practising certificate

The Council issues it about three days after the meeting. Do not practise until you hold it.

ROUTE 2 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

VOC4: the fast-track

Vocational scope

✓ A qualification on the VOC4 list, with 24 months' recent experience in a comparable country.

You'll need a job offer before you apply, at consultant or specialist level.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Check your qualification on the Council's approved list**

The list is by specialty. Your degree can be from anywhere; the postgraduate qualification and your recent experience count.

3 **Check your experience**

24 months in the past five years at 0.5 FTE or more in that area, including 12 within the last 18, in a comparable health system.

4 **Secure a job offer at consultant or specialist level**

5 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

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6 **Verify your postgraduate qualification through EPIC**

Needed for a vocational scope, in the same way as your degree.

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Your visa health and police checks

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Attend your registration meeting within two weeks of your start date

It happens in New Zealand, after you arrive.

18

Pay for your practising certificate

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19

Work under your Council-approved supervisor

Apply for a variation at least 20 working days before any change of post, supervisor or place.

20

Complete the Council's requirements, then apply for vocational scope

You apply on the COS5 form through myMCNZ.

ROUTE 3 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

VOC3: provisional vocational

Vocational scope

✓ A specialist qualification assessed on its merits by the relevant New Zealand college.

Your qualification is on the list, but VOC4 also needs the recent experience, so VOC3 is the route for now.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Gather evidence of your specialist training and recent practice**

The relevant New Zealand college makes a paper-based comparison with a New Zealand-trained specialist, and may ask for an interview.

3 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

4 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

Start this first. The Council cannot begin until verification is under way, and it runs at the pace of your medical school.

5 **Verify your postgraduate qualification through EPIC**

Needed for a vocational scope, in the same way as your degree.

6 **Order certificates of good standing**

From every authority you have been registered with.

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12 **Submit a complete application with the fee**

The clock starts only when the application is complete.

13 **Answer any request from the Council quickly**

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14 **Choose the pathway the college advises**

Supervision pathway or assessment pathway. The college advises which, if you are found equivalent.

15 **Eligibility for registration letter**

It confirms to Immigration New Zealand that you can be registered, and sets out your registration meeting.

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Your visa health and police checks

Separate from registration, for Immigration New Zealand. If you're coming for more than 12 months, expect a medical by one of its panel physicians and, in most cases, a chest X-ray, for everyone on the application. The certificate must reach Immigration New Zealand within three months of being signed, and you'll need police certificates too. General information, not immigration advice: our visa guide.

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Attend your registration meeting

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Pay for your practising certificate

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Work under your Council-approved supervisor

Apply for a variation at least 20 working days before any change of post, supervisor or place.

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Complete the Council's requirements, then apply for vocational scope

You apply on the COS5 form through myMCNZ. The college may need to sign off.

ROUTE 4 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

VOC3: provisional vocational

Vocational scope

✓ A specialist qualification assessed on its merits by the relevant New Zealand college.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Gather evidence of your specialist training and recent practice**

The relevant New Zealand college makes a paper-based comparison with a New Zealand-trained specialist, and may ask for an interview.

3 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

4 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

Start this first. The Council cannot begin until verification is under way, and it runs at the pace of your medical school.

5 **Verify your postgraduate qualification through EPIC**

Needed for a vocational scope, in the same way as your degree.

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Work under your Council-approved supervisor

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Complete the Council's requirements, then apply for vocational scope

You apply on the COS5 form through myMCNZ. The college may need to sign off.

ROUTE 5 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

VOC3: provisional vocational

Vocational scope

Check your qualification against the Council's VOC4 list. If it's there and you have the recent experience, the faster VOC4 route may be yours instead.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Gather evidence of your specialist training and recent practice**

The relevant New Zealand college makes a paper-based comparison with a New Zealand-trained specialist, and may ask for an interview.

3 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

4 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

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Your visa health and police checks

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Work under your Council-approved supervisor

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Complete the Council's requirements, then apply for vocational scope

You apply on the COS5 form through myMCNZ. The college may need to sign off.

ROUTE 6 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

Competent Authority

General scope

✓ Your medical degree and internship were in the UK or Ireland.

You'll need a job offer before you apply.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Confirm you meet the Competent Authority criteria**

Primary medical degree from the UK or Ireland and internship completed there.

3 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

4 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

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5 **Order certificates of good standing**

From every authority you have been registered with.

6 **Brief your three referees**

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Pay for your practising certificate

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Work under your Council-approved supervisor

Apply for a variation at least 20 working days before any change of post, supervisor or place.

18

Apply to move on from the provisional scope

It is applied for, not automatic.

ROUTE 7 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

UK general registrant

General scope

✓ PLAB 1 and 2 in the last five years, full GMC registration and 12 months of UK practice.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Confirm PLAB 1 and 2, full GMC registration and 12 months of UK practice**

PLAB within the last five years. The 12 months can be Foundation Year 1, FY2 stand-alone, or 12 months in an Approved Practice Setting.

3 **Hold current ACLS certification**

Progression needs ACLS within the last 12 months.

4 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

5 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

Start this first. The Council cannot begin until verification is under way, and it runs at the pace of your medical school.

6 **Order certificates of good standing**

From every authority you have been registered with.

7 **Brief your three referees**

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10 **Request a PIN and create your myMCNZ account**

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13 **Answer any request from the Council quickly**

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15 **Your visa health and police checks**

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Pay for your practising certificate

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Work under your Council-approved supervisor

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19

Apply to move on from the provisional scope

It is applied for, not automatic.

ROUTE 8 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

Australian general registrant

General scope

✓ AMC exams passed and registration with Ahpra.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Confirm AMC exams passed and current Ahpra registration**

3 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

4 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

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Apply to move on from the provisional scope

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ROUTE 9 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

Comparable health system

General scope

✓ 33 of the last 48 months in a comparable country, with registration there.

You'll need a job offer before you apply.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Check your country is on the Council's list of 29**

Then count your months: 33 in the 48 before you apply, at 20 or more hours a week, in a similar area and level to the New Zealand post.

3 **Hold current full or general registration in that country**

4 **Secure a job offer**

The pathways most international doctors use need one, and your employer completes part of the application.

5 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

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ROUTE 10 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

Examinations

General scope

✓ A recognised exam passed in the last five years.

The Council confirms your pathway when you apply, so run its self-assessment tool first.

The steps

1 **Run the Council's self-assessment tool**

It confirms the pathway you may be eligible for before you collect a single document.

2 **Confirm your exam is accepted and within five years**

NZREX Clinical, PLAB Parts 1 and 2, or the AMC exams.

3 **Secure a PGY1 job offer in accredited clinical attachments**

With an accredited training provider, leading into the two-year prevocational training programme.

4 **Start primary source verification through EPIC**

Start this first. The Council cannot begin until verification is under way, and it runs at the pace of your medical school.

5 **Order certificates of good standing**

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Apply to move on from the provisional scope

It is applied for, not automatic.

ROUTE 11 OF 11

YOUR ROUTE

Examinations

General scope

None of the faster routes fits yet, so the route is through an exam: NZREX Clinical, PLAB or the AMC exams, passed within five years, then a PGY1 post in accredited clinical attachments.

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Questions people ask

SUPERVISION AND MOVING ON

Will I work under supervision?

Almost certainly at first. Every provisional general, provisional vocational and special purpose scope is supervised by a Council-approved supervisor. Supervision is paid work in your new job, not a wait. Australian graduates who completed an internship in Australia, and holders of approved Australasian postgraduate qualifications, may not need it.

How long does supervision last?

It depends on your route. Competent Authority: at least six months full-time equivalent and two consecutive satisfactory reports. Comparable health system and UK general registrants: 12 months, three satisfactory reports covering the last nine months and your supervisor's recommendation (UK registrants also need ACLS). VOC3: 6 to 12 months on the supervision pathway, or 12 to 18 on the assessment pathway. VOC4: the Council sets the requirements for you.

Is moving to the full scope automatic?

No. You apply for it once you've met the requirements. If you haven't met them within 12 months, you continue under supervision until you have.

Can I change job or supervisor while I'm provisional?

Yes, but apply for a variation at least 20 working days before anything changes, and wait for approval. Your practising certificate names your employer, supervisor, position and location.

Will my general scope be limited?

It's limited to the area of medicine you worked in while provisional, unless that was general practice. An unlimited general scope needs six months in medicine and six in surgery

during the provisional period, with no more than three months of the medicine in emergency medicine.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

Do I need a job offer first?

For Competent Authority, comparable health system and VOC4, yes, and your employer completes part of the application. On VOC3 you can be assessed first, but your post and supervision must be approved before you're registered.

What is EPIC verification, and why start it first?

The Council needs your medical degree, and your postgraduate qualification for a specialist scope, verified directly with the institution through ECFMG's EPIC service. It won't start on your application until verification is under way, and it moves at the pace of your medical school, so start it before anything else.

Do I need an English test?

Check the Council's English language policy before you book anything. Every applicant must show they can communicate effectively in English at work, and the policy sets out the routes and when a test is needed.

What do the comparable months have to look like?

At least 33 of the 48 months before you apply, at 20 or more hours a week, in a similar area of medicine and at a similar level to the New Zealand post. Locum weeks or a different specialty may not count.

SPECIALISTS

I'm a consultant in the UK but trained elsewhere. Can I use VOC4?

Yes, if your postgraduate qualification is on the Council's approved list for your specialty. It's the qualification and your recent experience that count, not where you did your medical degree.

I have a CESR or came through the GMC Portfolio Pathway.

It isn't on the VOC4 list, so the fast track isn't the application to make. VOC3 is, and it assesses you as the completed specialist you are.

Is radiology on the VOC4 list?

No, and nor are surgery, ophthalmology, palliative medicine, public health medicine, rehabilitation medicine or urology. Specialists in those go through VOC3, assessed by the relevant college, which takes about three months.

Do some specialties need extra information?

Yes: obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry and anatomical pathology. The first two have forms to complete. For anatomical pathology the Council contacts you directly.

ARRIVING AND STARTING WORK

When am I actually registered?

After a registration meeting in New Zealand, once you've arrived. It confirms your identity and supervision. Your practising certificate follows about three days later, and you can't practise until you hold it, so don't let a first clinical day fall in the week you land.

Is registration the same as a visa?

No. The Council decides your registration and Immigration New Zealand decides your visa. The Council's eligibility letter confirms to Immigration New Zealand that you can be registered. Our visa guide explains the visa side.

I’m only coming for a year or less.

Look at the special purpose scope for locum tenens, for 12 months or less. It’s temporary and doesn’t convert into a permanent post.

ETHICARE

Does Ethicare charge candidates?

No, never. This guide and My Move are free to anyone. If we’re representing you for a role, we can also help you plan the order of your registration and relocation steps.