# Registering with the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand

Te Poari Whakaora Ngangahau o Aotearoa (OTBNZ). For occupational therapists who trained outside New Zealand.

YOUR REGISTRATION BODY

**Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand**
Te Poari Whakaora Ngangahau o Aotearoa (OTBNZ)

Checked against the Board's pages in October 2026. If anything here differs from what the Board says, the Board is right, and it 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-otbnz. Ethicare never charges candidates. This is general information, not immigration advice.

# Every route

### Trans-Tasman mutual recognition

Currently registered with Ahpra.

Generally faster, and no Recertification Programme.

### Abridged pathway

A WFOT-accredited qualification from the UK, Ireland, Canada or South Africa, and registered there now.

Lighter evidence, the same standard.

### Standard overseas pathway

Trained anywhere else.

Closer scrutiny of your course, and a competence self-assessment.

ROUTE 1 OF 3

YOUR ROUTE

## Trans-Tasman mutual recognition

✓ Current registration with Ahpra in Australia.

A different and generally faster process, and you don't do the Recertification Programme.

The board makes the final decision when you apply.

## The steps

1

### Apply under mutual recognition

Under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act, with your current Ahpra registration.

Follow the Board's trans-Tasman page, and ask us if anything isn't clear.

2

### Your practising certificate

NZ$588, levy included. You need it before you work.

Apply alongside registration through the portal. The year runs 1 April to 31 March, so your first may be a part year.

3

### Your visa health and police checks

Separate from registration.

If you're an Australian citizen, you don't apply for a work visa. 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, children included. 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.

ROUTE 2 OF 3

YOUR ROUTE

## Abridged pathway

✓ A WFOT-accredited qualification from the UK, Ireland, Canada or South Africa, and registered there now.

The evidence is lighter (certificate and transcript rather than the full syllabus), but the standard is the same.

The board makes the final decision when you apply.

## The steps

1

### Gather your qualification documents

Certified certificate and transcript.

Plus two forms of identity, one with a photo, certified, any name-change evidence, and certified translations of anything not in English.

2

### Good standing and criminal checks

From every authority you've been registered with, and every country you've lived in for over six months in ten years.

Declare any disciplinary action or convictions in full, with a note. A conviction isn't an automatic bar, but leaving it out is treated far more seriously.

3

### Choose three referees

One must be an occupational therapist you've worked with for six months or more in the last two years.

Each over 18, known you for over a year, not a relative and not living with you.

4

## Show your English

Exempt if your OT qualification and schooling were taught in English in a recognised country.

Those countries are New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Ireland, South Africa and the UK. Otherwise OET (occupational therapy version, grade B in each part) or IELTS Academic (7.0 in each band). Results can be combined within twelve months, and must be under two years old. Check the Board's current policy.

5

## Apply on MyOTBNZ

NZ$1,265, which includes the competence evaluation.

Then complete the portal steps: your CV and the Ngā Paerewa Te Tiriti course. Your file isn't processed until they're in.

6

## Post the hard copies

Several documents must go by post or courier as well as being uploaded.

Your certified ID, qualification certificate, transcript, good standing certificates and criminal-history check. Allow postage time.

7

## Your practising certificate

NZ$588, levy included. You need it before you work.

Apply alongside registration through the portal. The year runs 1 April to 31 March, so your first may be a part year.

8

## Plan for the Recertification Programme

Fortnightly supervision and Te Rito in your first practice here.

Everyone new to practice in New Zealand does it, including overseas-qualified registrants, so factor it into your first year and your choice of employer.

## 9 Your visa health and police checks

Separate from registration.

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, children included. 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.

ROUTE 3 OF 3

YOUR ROUTE

## Standard overseas pathway

The Board looks closely at your course content to judge equivalence, and you complete a competence self-assessment.

The board makes the final decision when you apply.

## The steps

1

### Gather your qualification documents

Certified certificate, full transcript and a detailed course syllabus.

Plus two forms of identity, one with a photo, certified, any name-change evidence, and certified translations of anything not in English.

2

### Good standing and criminal checks

From every authority you've been registered with, and every country you've lived in for over six months in ten years.

Declare any disciplinary action or convictions in full, with a note. A conviction isn't an automatic bar, but leaving it out is treated far more seriously.

3

### Choose three referees

One must be an occupational therapist you've worked with for six months or more in the last two years.

Each over 18, known you for over a year, not a relative and not living with you. Your OT referee also confirms your competence self-assessment.

4

### Show your English

Exempt if your OT qualification and schooling were taught in English in a recognised country.

Those countries are New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Ireland, South Africa and the UK. Otherwise OET (occupational therapy version, grade B in each part) or IELTS Academic (7.0 in each band). Results can be combined within twelve months, and must be under two years old. Check the Board's current policy.

5

## Apply on MyOTBNZ

NZ$1,265, which includes the competence evaluation.

Then complete the portal steps: your competence self-assessment with specific examples, your CV and the Ngā Paerewa Te Tiriti course. Your file isn't processed until they're in.

6

## Post the hard copies

Several documents must go by post or courier as well as being uploaded.

Your certified ID, qualification certificate, transcript, good standing certificates and criminal-history check. Allow postage time.

7

## Your practising certificate

NZ$588, levy included. You need it before you work.

Apply alongside registration through the portal. The year runs 1 April to 31 March, so your first may be a part year.

8

## Plan for the Recertification Programme

Fortnightly supervision and Te Rito in your first practice here.

Everyone new to practice in New Zealand does it, including overseas-qualified registrants, so factor it into your first year and your choice of employer.

9

## Your visa health and police checks

Separate from registration.

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, children included. 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.

# What it costs

| | |
|---|---|
| **Registration, overseas qualified** | NZ$1,265.00, including the evaluation of competence |
| **Practising certificate, up to 12 months** | NZ$588.00, with the disciplinary levy included |

GST included. Fees Notice 2025, effective 27 February 2025, checked 17 October 2026. Add criminal-history checks and any primary source verification.

# Questions people ask

## SUPERVISION

### Will I work under supervision?

Yes, through the Recertification Programme when you first practise here: fortnightly supervision and Te Rito. Trans-Tasman registrants don't take part.

## YOUR APPLICATION

### Is there a faster route if I trained in the UK?

Often. A WFOT-accredited qualification from the UK, Ireland, Canada or South Africa, with current registration there, uses the abridged pathway.

### What makes a good self-assessment?

Specific, evidenced examples mapped to each competency. General statements rarely satisfy the assessors.

### Why do I have to post documents?

The Board needs certain documents in hard copy as well as uploaded, so allow time for postage.

### Might the Board verify my qualifications?

It may ask for them to be confirmed directly with the issuing institution, at your cost, after it assesses your application.

## Does Ethicare charge candidates?

No, never. If you're moving with us, ask whether your package covers your practising certificate.