

FAQs – Overseas Educated Applicants

Frequently asked questions for overseas applicants

Contacting the Board	1
Registration in New Zealand	1
Competencies for Registration	4
Applying for Registration	7
Student clinical placement	9
Miscellaneous	10

Contacting the Board

How can I contact the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand?

Phone: +64 4 471 2610
Fax: +64 4 471 2613

Address: Level 8
108 The Terrace
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

PO Box: PO Box 10 734
Wellington 6043
New Zealand

Website: <http://www.physioboard.org.nz>

Registration in New Zealand

Do I need to be registered in New Zealand in order to work as a physiotherapist?

Yes, unless you are registered as a physiotherapist by the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand it is illegal to work as a physiotherapist in any capacity in New Zealand (including voluntary work), or to call oneself a physiotherapist in New Zealand

Any person who does practice physiotherapy whilst not registered commits an offence and is liable to a fine of up to \$10,000.

Where can I find information about the process to apply for registration as an overseas qualified physiotherapist in New Zealand?

Try our website first (www.physioboard.org.nz/registration_overseas.asp). All the information you should require, including the current application form, is available to be downloaded. If you would like more information, contact the Board.

Are there different routes to registration in New Zealand?

There are two routes to get registered in New Zealand.

- 1) Australian registered physiotherapists currently registered with FULL registration and holding entitlement to practise (in a state OTHER than Western Australia as Western Australia has not signed the relevant legislation), are entitled to seek registration in New Zealand under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition (TTMR) Act 1997

- 2) All other overseas qualified physiotherapists must seek registration under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA).

What is the fee for overseas qualified physiotherapists applying for registration in New Zealand?

The fee is NZ\$600.00 for applicants applying under the HPCAA.

What method of payment does the Board accept?

The application fee is payable by bankdraft or money order and must be in New Zealand dollars only.

What happens when my application package arrives at the Board office?

- You will be notified by letter that your application package has arrived at the Board's office.
- Applications are kept in date order of receipt and checked by Board staff to ensure that all the paperwork that is required has been provided and in the format specified.
- If your application is found to be invalid/incomplete it will be returned to you.
- If your application is accepted for processing we will formally acknowledge receipt by letter.
- If any further documentation/clarification is required prior to the assessment of eligibility you will be contacted by letter.

What is meant by "assessment of eligibility"?

Assessments of eligibility for registration are undertaken by Board appointed Registration Assessors, all senior physiotherapists, who evaluate applications on a case-by-case basis and provide recommendations to the Board.

The assessment process will take at least four weeks from the date of the letter notifying you of your application's progression to this stage. Dependent on the complexity of the information provided some assessments can take several months.

Outcomes

Following assessment of your application the Registration Assessors may recommend any of the following:

1. That you meet all required criteria and recommend that you be granted registration.
If so, we will write to you following the grant of registration.
2. That you provide additional evidence of your competence.
If so, we will write to you detailing the requirements.
3. That you do not meet the Board's criteria on the basis of insufficient or inappropriate qualifications and/or experience.
If this is the case, we will write to you indicating; that the Board proposes to decline your application and provide a detailed report. You will have an opportunity to respond and provide a submission before the Board formally considers at a Board meeting the proposal to decline your application.

How long does it take to process an application for registration?

If an application is complete and all documents are present then the process will take approximately nine weeks.

All applications are treated equally and there is no fast track or priority system.

What can I do to minimise delays in processing my application?

Ensure that you:

- Submit a complete application including all documentation required by the Board.
- Comply with Board documentation requirements (refer Applying for Registration section) for every piece of paper included in your application package.
- Submit official English translations of non-English documents.
- Keep the Board informed of your current contact details.

Does an offer of employment affect my application?

No. The Board currently recommends that applicants should not accept an offer of employment or finalise travel arrangements until confirmation of registration is received. Not all applications are approved.

Does the Board operate an accreditation system for applicants applying under the HPCA Act?

The Board does not operate any accreditation system whereby applicants from a particular country, training institution or registration authority are automatically granted registration.

I am registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC) in the United Kingdom. Is there a reciprocal agreement whereby I am eligible for registration in New Zealand automatically?

No, the Board does not operate any type of reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom. Applicants from the UK must apply as an overseas qualified physiotherapist under the HPCA Act.

What are the requirements for overseas qualified physiotherapists applying for registration in New Zealand under the HPCA Act?

Please visit our website www.physioboard.org.nz/registration_overseas.asp

All applicants for registration are measured against the registration competencies set by the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand and on which the current New Zealand four year degree programmes in physiotherapy are based. Applicants must meet all competencies and other legislative requirements before registration is granted.

The assessment of eligibility for registration is undertaken by a pool of senior physiotherapists appointed by the Board to evaluate applications on a case-by-case basis and report back to the Board.

The assessment process will take several months. The time taken will depend on the workload of the assessors and the quantity and quality of information you have provided.

Competencies for Registration

Where can I find the competency requirements for physiotherapists in New Zealand?

Current registration competencies are those competencies set by the Physiotherapy Board in March 1999 and contained in 'Registration Requirements: Competencies and Learning Objectives', 2nd edition, 1999. This is freely available on our website or from the Board at a cost of NZ\$20.00 each.

I have obtained a copy of the Competency Chart from 'Registration Requirements: Competencies and Learning Objectives' and I am still uncertain as to whether I meet the eligibility requirements to submit an application and how to compile my portfolio.

Please refer to the information on the application for registration process available on the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand website www.physioboard.org.nz specifically the detailed guidance on provision of a portfolio Pages 12-16. No sample portfolio is available.

Please take the time to reflect on your own abilities and learning and whether or not these meet the competency requirements. Please self evaluate as to whether you can provide clear evidence in a portfolio to the Board that you have met within the last 10 years, all the required competencies 1-10. This includes showing evidence of autonomous evidence-based practice in the three clinical areas of cardiopulmonary, musculoskeletal and neurology for competencies 1,2,3,4 and 10. For example techniques used, conditions treated, clinical environment and any areas of responsibility.

All applicants must meet the current entry level requirements for registration. There is NO specialist registration in New Zealand, therefore you can not be registered in one particular area of clinical practice. You must be competent in all areas of clinical practice.

Evidence- based knowledge & clinical practice

If you identify any potential deficiencies in your evidence based knowledge & clinical practice you are strongly encouraged to upskill in those areas, in your current country of residence, prior to submitting an application to this Board. This would enable you to provide evidence of your current competence/evidence based knowledge and practice.

Is my current Continuing Professional Development (CPD) file adequate for the assessment process?

No. Your portfolio should be prepared specifically for your application for registration in New Zealand.

Preparing Your Portfolio

Your portfolio is your opportunity as an applicant to make a case to the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand as to how you as an individual meet the New Zealand competencies.

Do NOT write about the competencies as if you are answering an exam question.

The portfolio must be clearly referenced to:

- your own undergraduate education programme including your clinical placements
- your post registration experience in clinical areas
- your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Providing Evidence

It is vital that you include relevant evidence (refer p14 of the Reading Material accompanying the application form) of your post registration experience etc

If you are confident that you can provide evidence of meeting the Board's requirements and wish to apply, ensure that you send a complete application. This means that you must include all the documents the Board requires in the correct format (refer Applying for Registration section).

The Board does not accept, for assessment purposes, items downloaded from websites, E-Mail correspondence, printed literature i.e.: from professional bodies. Please rather provide signed reflective statements detailing how this information impacts on your professional and clinical practice.

Do NOT send your portfolio papers in bound copy or in any type of file/folder/plastic sleeve.

Please ensure that the papers you send

- are numbered
- consistent with the references in your document explaining how you meet the New Zealand competencies
- Include a detailed, cross referenced, contents list.

What are the common problem areas with the portfolios submitted by overseas qualified physiotherapists?

- Evidence-based practice and research is not clearly evidenced in the portfolio. Applicants must ensure they include activities relating to the last ten years of practice.
- Lack of sufficient documented evidence to support the applicant's claim to competency in the three core areas of physiotherapy: musculoskeletal, neurological and cardiopulmonary.

You need to supply evidence to support your competency in cardiopulmonary medical and surgical, musculoskeletal and neurological and research/evidence-based practice during the last ten years.

Competency in cardiac rehabilitation alone is not sufficient. The evidence can be demonstrated within the curriculum document of the physiotherapy qualification, through undergraduate supervised clinical practice placements and through postgraduate clinical experience.

Surgical cardiopulmonary physiotherapy experience can be gained in areas of acute care; for example general surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, orthopaedics, paediatrics, obstetrics, gynaecology and neurosurgery.

Cardiopulmonary medical physiotherapy can be demonstrated through experience in acute care, in outpatients or in community settings; for example on acute medical wards, in medical intensive care units, running pulmonary rehabilitation programmes (hospital or community based), cardiopulmonary outpatients or as a community physiotherapist.

I have not 'done' any research since my undergraduate course so what evidence could I supply?

The following types of evidence may be used to support the research activities you have undertaken in the last ten years.

- Identifying any research needs as a reflective clinician
- Evaluating scientific information/critical appraisal of journal papers
- The formulation of a research proposal, perhaps in discussion with colleagues, or having participated in any form of research or practice audits or surveys
- Analysis of statistical data or drawn any conclusions from this data, possibly from reading and critiquing research papers

- Scientific writing in the way of a paper or a presentation to peers that included reference to the current literature; or a case study presentation; or a critique of published papers at a journal club, in relation to the three core areas of practice.

Are all applicants required to undertake an examination as part of the application for registration process?

There is no mandatory examination set by the Board.

I have been granted registration under a Postgraduate Physiotherapy Student Special Scope of Practice; will this enhance my chances of eventually gaining registration under the general scope of Physiotherapist?

In assessing eligibility for the general scope, the Board takes into account each individual applicant's course of undergraduate study, postgraduate experience and/or training. The Board can not indicate at this stage how your postgraduate study will affect your chances of gaining registration under the general scope.

Remember, when assessing an application for registration with the General Scope of Practice the Board will be looking for evidence of current competence in all three areas of musculoskeletal, neurological and cardiopulmonary physiotherapy.

Does the Board accept applications from new graduates of 3 year physiotherapy degree programmes?

New graduates of 3 year physiotherapy degree programmes do NOT currently meet the eligibility criteria to apply for registration in New Zealand.

You would be eligible to submit an application for registration when you have completed and can provide verified evidence of:

1) A minimum of twelve months clinical experience as a registered physiotherapist, either paid or unpaid, elsewhere than in New Zealand (e.g. in the country where you have gained your qualification),

and/or,

2) Further postgraduate physiotherapy education (i. e. postgraduate diploma).

Does the Board accept applications from new graduates who hold a qualification from a graduate entry programme as their primary physiotherapy degree?

If you have a two year graduate entry masters qualification as your primary physiotherapy degree, where the minimum entry requirement for this graduate entry qualification must be a related bachelor degree i.e. science, health science or sports science, you will usually require a minimum of twelve months postgraduate physiotherapy experience to be considered eligible for registration. Please contact the Board for current eligibility criteria.

Does the Board accept applications for applicants who do not hold a degree in Physiotherapy?

Applicants who apply with a Diploma of Physiotherapy awarded after 1995 require their diploma and additional physiotherapy education to the minimum of degree level to be able to be considered for eligibility for registration in New Zealand

If you have a primary undergraduate physiotherapy qualification of less than three years you will not be considered eligible for registration without an additional postgraduate physiotherapy qualification.

What English language assessments does the Board accept?

The Board requires test results in either:

- The Academic level of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Applicants must obtain an overall band score of 7.5 (with a score of no less than 7.0 in each band) in the Academic IELTS; OR
- A pass in Language Australia's Occupational English Test (OET) with a minimum of a B pass in all four sections.

I completed my physiotherapy training in India, how likely am I to gain registration in New Zealand?

The Board has received many applications from physiotherapists trained in India. To date very few physiotherapists trained in India have satisfied the Board that they meet the required competencies and been granted registration in New Zealand.

I completed my physiotherapy training in the Philippines, how likely am I to gain registration in New Zealand?

The Board has received many applications from physiotherapists trained in the Philippines. So far no physiotherapist trained in the Philippines has satisfied the Board that they meet the required competencies and been granted registration in New Zealand.

Applying for Registration

Can I send photocopied documents with my application?

No. Only photocopies that comply with the Board's specific requirements, as detailed below, will be accepted. The onus is on you to supply information (including all items of evidence submitted) in the correct format. If you do not supply all the relevant information your application will not progress.

Certification of Documents

If you choose to supply certified copies instead of originals it is essential that your documents be certified in accordance with criteria set by this Board.

Any official who certifies documents must have the **legal** authority to certify documents, and be able to provide evidence of that authority.

When approaching an official i.e. Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Oaths, Solicitor or Notary Public to certify your documents please ensure that authorising official complies with all of the following:

- Signs the copy;
- Prints his/her name under the signature;
- States his/her position or designation;
- Endorses the copy with his/her official seal (where applicable);
- Provides his/her postal address to enable the Board to seek verification, and;
- Ensures that the certified copy being provided to this Board includes the statement, *"Certified true copy of original document sighted"*.

Physiotherapists do not have the legal authority to certify documents as true copies of originals.

Certification of large documents

Certification of large documents such as a research dissertation is acceptable in the following format.

The front page is certified with the stamp, seal and signature etc of the authorising official and INCLUDING a reference made by the official on the front page to the entire number of pages in the document (so the Board can be assured no pages have been added or removed).

Verification of study/work history

If you are including copies of your own personal presentations given as in service presentations to your colleagues please provide the Board with either correctly certified copies (i.e. certified by an official with legal authority to certify documents) or papers that have been appropriately verified/confirmed as your own work and countersigned by a supervisor/senior physiotherapist (who has, for instance, observed your presentations).

If you are including copies of your own personal appraisals please provide the Board with either correctly certified copies (i.e. certified by an official with legal authority to certify documents) or copies that have been appropriately verified and countersigned by your appraiser.

If you are including any copies of your work as a university student please provide the Board with either correctly certified copies (i.e. certified by an official with legal authority to certify documents) or copies that have been appropriately verified/confirmed as your own work and countersigned by a member of the academic staff of your educational institution and/or endorsed with the official school stamp.

Here is an example of the verification/validation requested by the Board from your manager/supervisor/ senior physiotherapists if you provide a copy of an IST presentation you gave:

- 1) A brief written statement by your manager/senior, including their name & signature, on the paper example of presentations you are sending to New Zealand in support of your application, confirming that this item is your own work and that they were personally present when you gave the presentation to staff.
- 2) It will be helpful if the same manager/seniors, who make a signed statement on your photocopies, also provide a completed "Validation of Work History" form making clear reference to IST undertaken & list presentations you have given.

Validation of work history

To assist you in meeting the Board's requirements, the Board has developed a form "Validation of Work History". You must include evidence of your work history in support of your application. Download the form from the website ([CLICK HERE](#)). Complete the relevant sections and then forward the form to your manager/referee. They must validate your employment history including your clinical experience and mail the form directly to the Board.

I have received the information pack and application form but I am unable to provide all the documents listed on the checklist?

There is nothing the Board can do. Registration is a legal process and so incomplete applications will not be assessed.

My documents are not in English, what should I do?

If your documents are not in English you need to have them translated.

You are required to provide the Board with:

- The original (or certified copy of the original document) in the original language. Photocopies that have not been certified will not be accepted.
- A full English translation prepared by an official translation service. The translations must be on official translation service letterhead and bear its signature/stamp.

My physiotherapy school no longer holds the syllabus/curriculum information from when I completed my course of study. However, the School tells me that the document currently available has not changed since I completed my course. Can I submit the currently available document?

You may submit the current document on condition that it is accompanied by a covering letter from your training school confirming that the syllabus/curriculum provided relates to your specific physiotherapy training programme.

What is the Board's confidentiality policy?

The Board does not accept agent or third party involvement (including family members). It is Board policy to deal solely with the applicant at all times.

Once I have lodged my application for registration can I communicate with the Board by email?

The application for registration process is a formal process under legislation and all written correspondence will be conducted by mail or fax. Because we require signatures on all correspondence, we cannot accept email.

Can I use a friend or family member's address for correspondence while I am still overseas?

The Board can use a nominated contact address if you wish. However, the Board can only act on a request for information if it is sent directly from you with your signature.

Student clinical placement**I am currently a physiotherapy student overseas and I am seeking a clinical placement/work experience in New Zealand, how should I go about this?**

Overseas physiotherapy students in New Zealand must abide by the laws of New Zealand.

Overseas physiotherapy students seeking clinical placements as part of their physiotherapy qualifications are required to do this through one of the Schools of Physiotherapy in New Zealand. NO other type of arrangement is permissible.

If an overseas student is accepted by a New Zealand School to undertake a clinical placement, that individual for the period of their placement in New Zealand, is considered a student of the New Zealand School under the direct supervision of the New Zealand School and their clinical placement is arranged and assessed by the New Zealand School. Contact details for schools are shown below.

Miscellaneous

I am interested in undertaking further physiotherapy study in New Zealand, what are the contact details for the two Schools of Physiotherapy in New Zealand?

Auckland University of Technology:

Head of School: Peter Larmer

Address: School of Physiotherapy
Auckland University of Technology
Private Bag 92006
Auckland 1020
New Zealand

Phone: +64 9 917-9999
Fax: +64 9 917-9620
Website: www.aut.ac.nz/schools/rehabilitation_and_occupation_stu

University of Otago:

Professor & Dean: David Baxter

Address: School of Physiotherapy
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin
New Zealand

Phone: + 64 3 479 7460
Fax: + 64 3 479 8414
Website: www.otago.ac.nz/physiotherapy

Is veterinary physiotherapy recognised in New Zealand?

Under the HPCAA 2003 the practice of physiotherapy in New Zealand is limited to people. The prescribed General Scope of Practice: Physiotherapist is shown below (with emphasis added). *Physiotherapists are registered healthcare practitioners educated to apply scientific knowledge and clinical reasoning to assess, diagnose and manage **human** function. They promote mobility, health and independence; rehabilitate; and maximize potential for **human** activity.*

Does the Board provide information on employment, housing or general social and economic conditions?

No, the process for applying for registration as a physiotherapist in New Zealand is quite separate from the process for applying for residency in this country. Applicants who require this kind of information should contact their nearest New Zealand Embassy or Consulate. For more information refer to www.immigration.govt.nz.

Questions which relate to employment issues may also be directed to the New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists.

Is the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand the same as the New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists?

No, the Board is a registration body whose first responsibility is protection of the public; the New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists is a professional association with voluntary membership.

What are the contact details for the New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists?

Address: New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists
P O Box 27 386
Wellington
New Zealand

Phone: + 64 4 801 6500

Fax: + 64 4 801 5571

Website: www.physiotherapy.org.nz