



New Zealand Dietitians Board

Te Mana Tohunga Matai Kai

Changes to the New Zealand Registration and Certification of Overseas Trained Dietitians

The Board recently reviewed the policy for granting registration and practising certificates to overseas trained dietitians.

Although the number of overseas-trained dietitians being registered in New Zealand in any one year is less than 4% of the active workforce of dietitians, the Board recognises the value of overseas trained dietitians bringing beneficial experiences into the profession in New Zealand.

Many overseas trained dietitians coming to New Zealand have qualifications (education and training) that may lack equivalency with the full range of competencies required in the New Zealand Dietetic Training Programme. The Board would prefer that dietitians from overseas comply ultimately with the wider New Zealand standards, because of the generic nature of the role in New Zealand, which contrasts with the larger, specialist markets of comparable overseas countries.

Currently, to achieve this the Board has been authorising overseas trained dietitians to practise in New Zealand under restrictions with interim practising certificates, until they have demonstrated that they are up to speed with the standards for New Zealand trained dietitians, by passing the Overseas Candidates Registration Examination (OCRE). The policy requiring study for the Board's OCRE in all respects of dietetics, has been difficult for some individuals who would only be working within a specific area of practice in New Zealand.

The Board has therefore decided to change its policy applying to overseas applicants for registration and certification.

The revised policy is:

- Overseas trained dietitians wishing to practise dietetics in New Zealand will continue to be assessed according to the fitness, qualifications and competency requirements of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.
- The assessment of qualifications and competency of overseas trained applicants will focus on equivalency of education and training with New Zealand education and training required for registration in New Zealand. The Board in assessing the equivalency in individual cases, will in future, also take into fuller account an individual's relevant work experience.
- Following assessment, all overseas applicants will be required to sit an OCRE.
- The Board may now in individual cases, limit the area of practice of an applicant to his/her area of dietetics, by imposing conditions to that effect, and the OCRE questions that the applicant would sit would be limited to that area. His/her eligibility to sit whole/part of the OCRE would be decided by the Board.

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For example, someone being registered to practise only in the area of clinical dietetics, or of food service management/service management, would sit the relevant OCRE questions in that topic only. Or, where the Board does not propose to place limits on the area of practice, the applicant would sit the full OCRE, as now.

- Pending sitting the OCRE, the candidate would be registered with an area of practice limited by conditions and would be issued with an interim practising certificate (IPC).

These conditions will include the requirements that all candidates undertake Board approved learning to ensure cultural competency and are familiar with relevant New Zealand food safety legislation.

- On gaining a pass in the OCRE, the candidate would be issued with an annual practising certificate (APC) and authorised by the Board to practise with or without conditions, as appropriate to the individual, limiting him/her to work in his/her area of practice.

If at some future time the overseas trained dietitian, who is registered to practise in a limited field of dietetics, wishes to practise beyond his/her authorised area of practice, he/she would need to be examined by the Board in the wider field of dietetics.

The Dietitians Board reserves the right to determine any study required to be undertaken by the candidate, the appropriate OCRE examination and the date the candidate will sit OCRE, on a case-by-case basis.

This Board policy decision concerns overseas trained applicants only, and not applicants trained within New Zealand.

The Board is currently working on the details of implementation, including the revision of website information and all documentation.

Overseas trained dietitians currently working in New Zealand under IPC's, will be informed individually of any relevant changes that may affect them.

APC Renewals / Audit

The Registrar wishes to thank dietitians who in the main, sent in their applications for APC Renewals with the documents completed, signed and on time.

There are still 16 dietitians who held an APC valid until 31 March 2007, who have not either informed the Registrar in writing that they do not wish to practise in the 2007/08 year, or who have not yet renewed their APC's.

Dietitians are reminded of their legal obligation to hold an APC, to enable them to continue to practise as dietitians in the 2007/08 year.

A reminder: The Registrar looks forward to receiving the audit documentation from the 'selected' dietitians in the next fortnight.

Barbara Ryan

Barbara Ryan
Chairperson

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