

## **What you should know if you are considering employing an Overseas Trained Dietitian (other than an Australian APD)**

*The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act) requires that: All Dietitians must be registered with the Dietitians Board, and hold a current New Zealand practising certificate, to legally practise dietetics in New Zealand.*

**For all overseas trained dietitians, except those trained in Australia and who are eligible for 'Mutual Recognition'**

Registration of an overseas trained dietitian (OTD) usually follows this process:

- a. If the country does not have comparative training and education in dietetics the application may not proceed.
- b. Education and training equivalency assessment (this is an assessment of the applicant's dietetic training prior to qualification as a dietitian).
- c. If successful, and upon application/payments, the Board will enter the applicant's name on the register and grant an Interim Practising Certificate (IPC) with supervision and study conditions. This is conditional on an appropriate job offer and designated workplace supervisor. The applicant can now commence work.
- d. All applicants are then required to sit and pass either the whole or part Overseas Candidates Registration Examination (OCRE).
- e. After passing the examination, the Board grants an Annual Practising Certificate (APC), with or without conditions limiting their area of practice.

### **More details**

#### **The equivalency assessment process:**

- Assessment of the training country/university. If a dietitian has trained in a country other than Australia the employer may wish to ask the Dietitians Board, what the likelihood is that there may be comparative training and education in dietetics.
- If an applicant has trained in a country where the training is usually near equivalency to the New Zealand training and education in dietetics, he/she will be asked to supply specific documentation for Equivalency Assessment. Upon application for equivalency assessment, payment, receipt of two satisfactory references and all the required documentation, including a current Certificate of Professional Status/Good Standing, the Registrar will send the documentation to the Board's Assessors. The process is only able to be started when the appropriate information has been received.

The applicant should provide information regarding the number of hours (lecture, practical, tutorial hours) that the applicant undertook in all his/her training, including information on his/her placements. In many cases, the assessment process has had to be halted, whilst the applicant is asked to provide further information. Further assistance will soon be available from a number of NZDA representatives who have been trained in the process by the Dietitians Board, which will assist the Board and the applicants.

- Once assessment has been completed, the Board meets to decide on the pathway to registration (or not).
- Applicants whose first language is not English, must provide evidence of a pass in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); that is an overall pass of 7.5, with a pass of 7.0 in all bands, before their application is accepted.

The assessment process takes 8-12 weeks, depending on various factors, including whether further information is required from the applicant.

**The equivalency assessment outcome from the Dietitians Board will result in one of the following outcomes:**

- The Board will agree to grant registration, upon application and payment of \$250. The applicant is then able to apply for an interim practising certificate. Upon payment and granting of an interim practising certificate, he/she may commence working as a dietitian in New Zealand prior to sitting the next available whole/part Overseas Candidates Registration Examination (OCRE). He/she will have study and supervision conditions on his/her practising certificate.  
OR
- The Board will recommend he/she self-studies and sits the whole/part OCRE prior to commencing work as a dietitian in New Zealand.  
OR  
The Board will recommend he/she completes further study prior to sitting the whole/part OCRE. This may involve enrolment in a paper through the University of Otago, which is usually, but not always, a distance learning paper.  
IN EITHER OF THE ABOVE  
The Board will require a successful examination pass before the applicant will be able to commence working as a dietitian in New Zealand. .  
OR
- The Board will advise the applicant he/she is ineligible to proceed for registration in New Zealand.

**Please also note:**

- The Board will grant an Interim Practising Certificate not an APC, until the applicant has successfully completed the whole/part OCRE.
- An IPC also costs \$450 and is valid for up to one year, from when he/she commences in a dietetic position. It may be able to be renewed for a second year. An IPC does not follow the same timeline as an APC.
- If the applicant successfully sits the part OCRE (Clinical or Food Service Management/Service Management), he/she would be granted an APC limiting his/her area of practice to a Clinical or Food Service Management/Service Management area of practice, until such time, if any, that he/she passes the whole OCRE.
- All overseas trained dietitians must provide a copy of the job offer/job description to the Board for approval, and the name of the workplace supervisor, prior to an Interim Practising Certificate being able to be granted. The applicant would be limited to working in that position or area of practice, at least until an APC has been able to be granted.

Conditions on the IPC always include:

- workplace supervision;
- undertaking cultural competency;
- familiarisation with the Treaty of Waitangi (it is in the overseas trained dietitian's best interests to do a Treaty course before sitting the OCRE);
- undertaking self study as recommended/required by the Board;
- familiarisation with the NZDA Clinical Handbook and NZ Food Safety legislation;
- and to participate locally\* in the Board's Continuing Competency Programme (CCP).

Employers should be prepared to assist the overseas trained dietitian to comply with the Board's requirements and recommendations and preferably to allow them time off to study prior to the examination.

- The OCRE is held in early July and December every year, is conducted only in New Zealand and is a written and oral examination.
- Ideally the overseas trained dietitian will be examined within 3-6 months of his/her start date.
- Only those applicants whose education and training is deemed to be equivalent, or close to equivalency, to the New Zealand education and training, are eligible for an Interim Practising Certificate.
- An applicant may sit the OCRE examination before or after he/she has been granted registration and an Interim Practising Certificate.
- All Board decisions are made on a case by case basis.

### **Supervision and participation in the Continuing Competency Programme**

Overseas trained dietitians must be formally and informally supervised, at least until they have passed the OCRE. Supervision guidelines and a supervision agreement are on the home page of the website.

Overseas trained dietitians must participate locally\* in the Continuing Competency Programme, using an appropriate dietitian as their mentor, who may be their workplace supervisor. This means that although they attend local activities where possible, they do not need to send details of CCP participation to the Board, whilst on an IPC.

The supervisor/mentor needs to assist them write a learning plan, before the signed Section One of the Supervision Agreement is sent to the Board (within a fortnight of starting).

Overseas trained dietitians who pass the whole/part OCRE before being granted registration and an APC, with/without conditions, will still need to be supervised for the first 3-6 months of practice in NZ.

For more information, please refer to the policy in the '*Handbook of Information on Registration Procedures for Overseas Trained Dietitians Intending to Practise Dietetics in New Zealand*', (pages 3-7), (with the flow chart on page 12), which is located on the "Registration: Qualified Outside New Zealand?" website page.