

Media release

16 January 2012

National regulation begins July 2012 for occupational therapists

Registration standards practitioners must meet released today

The Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (the Board) today released the mandatory registration standards that practitioners must meet to register in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, which comes into effect for occupational therapy practitioners on 1 July 2012.

The Board reminds practitioners that:

- national regulation begins 1 July 2012 for this profession
- by this date, practitioners must be registered to practise with the National Board
- the mandatory registration standards that practitioners must meet in order to register were released today
- to register on time practitioners are advised to complete their application by 30 March 2012, and
- only currently unregulated practitioners in NSW, ACT, VIC and TAS will need to submit an application as locally registered practitioners will transfer into the National Scheme on their current registration.

The Board urges occupational therapists across Australia to familiarise themselves with the requirements of national regulation which comes into effect for this profession on 1 July 2012.

Occupational Therapy Board of Australia Chair Dr Mary Russell said mandatory national registration standards that practitioners must meet, no matter where they work in Australia, have now been set and were approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 13 January 2012.

These standards set out requirements in continuing professional development, criminal history, English language skills, professional indemnity insurance and recency of practice. In addition, the Board has also developed a grand-parenting registration standard, detailing how the transition to the new standards will apply.

“I urge all occupational therapists across Australia to visit the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia website to read the mandatory national registration standards in preparation for joining the National Scheme in July,” Dr Russell said.

“The national standards have been set following extensive consultation with practitioners and key stakeholders. All occupational therapists must now take the steps necessary to meet the new national standards to be registered to practise on 1 July 2012,” she said.

While the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) takes effect from 1 July 2012 for this profession and practitioners must ensure that they are registered by this date in order to

practise, the Board strongly recommends that practitioners submit their completed registration application by 30 March 2012. This is to allow enough processing time before 1 July. Early applications will reduce the chance of disruption to their practice.

“The National Board is anticipating a large number of applications from states and territories where registration is not yet required,” Dr Russell said.

Occupational therapists that are registered with existing state and territory registration boards on 30 June 2012 will automatically transfer into the National Scheme on 1 July 2012.

These practitioners will be advised by letter about how their current registration translates into registration under the National Scheme.

Occupational therapy is one of four health professions that will join the National Scheme on 1 July 2012 under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, medical radiation practice and occupational therapy will join the 10 professions already in the scheme.

Under the National Scheme, National Boards set the policies and standards to regulate the professions and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) supports the National Boards in their role to protect the public, providing key services which include registering practitioners and investigating complaints or notifications.

The National Board’s website at www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au is updated regularly and has a host of information to make transition to the National Scheme as easy and as smooth as possible.

“AHPRA staff are also able to help practitioners move towards national registration and can be contacted by phoning 1300 419 495 or by making an online inquiry,” Dr Russell said.

Important dates

16 January 2012	Mandatory registration standards for the four new professions released – these are the standards all practitioners must meet to register and be able to practise next year
February 2012	Registration applications available for downloading from Board websites
30 March 2012	Practitioners urged to have submitted their completed registration application by this date, to allow for processing time
1 July 2012	New professions join National Scheme – all practitioners must be registered with their National Board to practise
30 November 2012 onwards	Registered health practitioner annual renewal date

For more information:

- Visit www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au for a FAQ on transfer to the National Scheme
- Visit www.ahpra.gov.au under *Contact us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200