

Sub: Occupational Therapy Board of Australia - Proposed mandatory registration standards.

I write the following submissions regarding the exemptions for English language skills.

1.

The proposed Mandatory registration standards state that “the Board may grant an exemption from the requirements where the applicant provides evidence that:

a) They undertook and completed secondary education that was taught and assessed in English in one of the countries listed below, where English is the native or first language; and

b) The applicant’s tertiary qualifications in occupational therapy were taught and assessed in English in one of the countries listed below, where English is the native or first language:

- Australia**
- Canada**
- New Zealand**
- Republic of Ireland**
- South Africa**
- United Kingdom**
- United States of America”.**

I feel this clause is discriminatory as Australia is a multicultural society and people have migrated from all countries of the world.

Moreover, English is not the only native or first language in some of the above the countries. For example in New Zealand Maori and English are the native languages. In South Africa Afrikaans is a native language. In some parts of Canada French is the native language. There are English medium schools and Universities in many of the countries not mentioned above and English is the language used in official business there. Many people have taken their tertiary qualifications from these countries.

So I submit a proposal that instead of clause (a) AND (b), it should be (a) OR (b) as people with excellent command of English cannot obtain an occupational therapy degree from the countries mentioned above.

2.

When a new legislation is made, it should consider staff already working in these places for many years. Without the English language skills, they would not be able to work as occupational therapists in those places. Many of them are working in the managerial positions too. They applied to these positions after going through a rigorous selection process and interviews, clearly demonstrating their English language skills. Hence I submit that all occupational therapists currently working in NSW where there is no OT board and who have more than 2 years of experience and registered with OT Australia NSW should be exempted from demonstrating their English language skills

J. Padinjath