



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

New Zealand

**Adult Medicine Division
Paediatrics & Child Health Division**

**ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS-TRAINED PHYSICIANS AND PAEDIATRICIANS
ON BEHALF OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND
(Applicants for Vocational Registration)**

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 *Who is eligible for assessment?*

Overseas-Trained Physicians (OTPs) who hold qualifications that allow practice and recognition as a specialist physician/paediatrician in the country of training or elsewhere overseas may apply to the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ), to have their specialist training and experience assessed by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), with a view to gaining registration within a vocational scope of practice in New Zealand.

The process is one in which the training, supervision and assessments undertaken by the applicant are compared to those of an Australasian trained Consultant Physician or Paediatrician.

This document is designed to provide as much information as possible relating to this process. If this document does not answer your queries, further information can be obtained from the RACP.

1.2 *What is the application procedure?*

Vocational Registration

An OTP who holds a primary qualification from outside of Australia or New Zealand, and is specialist registered (or eligible) may apply via the MCNZ for assessment for registration within a vocational scope of practice in New Zealand. The MCNZ refers applications to the RACP for assessment and advice. **Applications cannot be made directly to the RACP.**

2. OUTLINE OF PROCESS

Please Note: This is a MCNZ procedure in which the RACP is a branch advisory body (BAB) to the Council. These are advisory notes only that have been prepared by the College. If you require additional information about the Medical Council process, you should refer to the Council website: www.mcnz.org.nz

2.1 Review of Application

Upon receipt of an application by the RACP, a review of the documentation is undertaken to ensure that all relevant information has been supplied. If further information is required, the College will contact MCNZ who will seek the required information. If the applicant is overseas, the MCNZ will generally ask for a preliminary assessment based on the papers provided. The papers will be reviewed by the relevant Specialist Advisory Committee. A Specialist Advisory Committee (SAC) is a committee comprised of members who are specialists in their particular field of medicine. To enable a final recommendation to be made, an interview, as outlined below, must be conducted.

2.2 Interview

All applicants are interviewed by RACP.

Interviews are arranged in major New Zealand cities subject to the availability of the interviewing panel.

The interview panel will normally comprise at least two Fellows of the College, at least one being from the relevant subspecialty.

The interview provides an opportunity for Fellows of the RACP to:

- (i) explain the assessment process;
- (ii) clarify the qualifications, training, experience, and nature of an applicant's specialist practice;
- (iii) explain the Australasian training system; and
- (iv) answer the applicant's questions.

The interview panel may discuss the possible outcomes of the assessment for guidance to the applicant only. It will be emphasised that the decision is that of MCNZ.

Following the interview, the panel submits a report to the New Zealand Overseas-Trained Physicians (OTP) Assessment Committee.

2.3 Consideration by the New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee

Following the interview, a report will be submitted to the next meeting of the NZ OTP Assessment Committee for consideration. The Committee will review the applicant's documentation, the interview report and any other documentation, including referees' reports, and determine whether the applicant is suitable for options A, B or C:

Option A (Supervision Pathway)

- The applicant has qualifications, training and experience equivalent to a medical practitioner vocationally registered in the same vocational scope.
- Registration within a vocational scope of practice will be appropriate after 12 months supervised practice and on receipt of satisfactory supervisor's reports, as well as enrolling in MyCPD.

Option B (Assessment Pathway)

- The applicant has qualifications, training and experience nearly equivalent to a medical practitioner vocationally registered in the same vocational scope and is expected to reach the standard of competence required for registration within a vocational scope of practice within 12 - 18 months of supervised clinical experience and assessment (a vocational practice assessment - VPA) or a written/and or clinical exam may be required). Council will advise the branch advisory body when the doctor is considered to have reached the standard for registration within a vocational scope of practice.

Option C

- The applicant's training, qualifications and experience are not equivalent to that of a medical practitioner vocationally registered in the same vocational scope.

The College will provide advice to MCNZ.

Applicants should note that the College is an advisory body only to the Council and does not make the final decision regarding registration within a vocational scope of practice.

2.4 Assessment of Medical Competence

2.4.1 Provisional Registration within a Scope of Practice

Where MCNZ accepts the OTP Assessment Committee's recommendation of Option A, or B, provisional vocational registration will normally be awarded. The purpose of this registration is to provide an opportunity for the applicant to work under supervision for a period of a minimum of 12 months in an approved position and with appropriate supervision, to ensure that the OTP is capable of practising at a level equivalent to an Australasian-trained consultant physician/paediatrician.

Under Option A & B the provisional vocational period **must** be:

- undertaken in New Zealand;
- approved by the New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee;
- a minimum of 12 months duration;
- undertaken at a Consultant level (or in some specified circumstances Registrar level) in a hospital or community based setting.

Under Option A (Supervision Pathway): it is expected that the designated supervisor will meet with the OTP on a regular basis to discuss his/her progress and to implement remediation programmes if the need arises. Reports will be required by MCNZ at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months.

Under Option B (Assessment Pathway): it is expected that the designated supervisor will meet with the OTP on a regular basis to discuss his/her progress and to implement remediation programmes if the need arises. Reports will be required by MCNZ at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months. These reports are also sent to the College. Where there are concerns, further reports may be sought from the supervisor. The New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee may also recommend that an applicant undergo additional assessments. The additional assessments available are:

1. a vocational practice assessment (VPA); or
2. the RACP written and /or clinical exam.

These further assessments may be required where:

- the OTP Assessment Committee determines that an applicant has not undertaken written and/or clinical assessments equivalent to those undertaken by Australasian trainees; or
- where the OTP Assessment Committee determines that the assessment process did not include external input or a centrally administered examination and include a clinical component; or

- the OTP Assessment Committee is unable to determine the equivalence of the OTP's training and experience with that of an Australasian trained consultant physician/paediatrician; or
- an applicant has not progressed satisfactorily during the period of provisional vocational registration;

These additional assessments may be stipulated by MCNZ at the commencement of the provisional registration year or later when the applicant has not progressed satisfactorily and achieved the required standard during the period of vocational registration.

The period of provisional registration within a scope of practice may be extended by MCNZ where the applicant has not reached a standard equivalent to that of an Australasian consultant physician/paediatrician.

2.4.2 Vocational Practice Assessment (VPA)

The VPA, which is arranged by MCNZ, would generally take place during the second half of the year of provisional registration or during any period of the extension of that year.

The visit would be undertaken by two Fellows of the College nominated by the Medical Council of New Zealand and agreed to by the Chairs of the appropriate subspecialty committees.

The format of the visit would be outlined in advance and communicated to the applicant. It would usually consist of direct observation of the applicant in practice conducting a ward round and an out-patient clinic.

2.4.3 OTP Written and/or Clinical Examinations

The New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee may recommend that an applicant successfully complete examinations.

- a. If the applicant is required to complete both the written and clinical examinations, the Written Examination must be successfully completed before the applicant is eligible to attempt the Clinical Examination.
- b. Applicants for specialist registration, who have not completed an equivalent written examination as part of their training and assessment overseas, will be required to successfully complete the RACP Written Examination prior to attempting the Clinical Examination.
- c. An equivalent written examination is one that tests knowledge base and clinical application in general medicine and subspecialty medicine. The examination must have taken place within the training programme and after completion of at least 18 months of training (post intern or pre-registration year). The written examination must be set and marked by a Board of Examiners which is external to the trainee's training environment. Examinations to enter a training programme will not be regarded as an equivalent examination. (The applicant is responsible for providing evidence that previous exams completed are equivalent).
- d. Applicants who are required to complete the RACP Written Examination as part of their requirements for specialist registration will sit the same examination undertaken by College trainees at the completion of Basic Training. This examination assesses a broad range of clinical knowledge.

- e. Applicants for specialist registration who have not completed an equivalent clinical examination as part of their specialist training programme may be required to undertake a clinical examination.
- f. An equivalent clinical examination is regarded as one which has real patient encounters and tests candidates' ability in the following areas:
 - Comprehensive history taking including an appreciation of the patient's social and home circumstances
 - Accuracy of physical examination
 - Development of a diagnostic synthesis and prioritisation of issues
 - Plan of investigation and management for the patient

The clinical examination must have been conducted on patients who are unknown to the candidate and assessed by examiners who are external to the candidate's training environment. (The applicant is responsible for providing evidence that previous exams completed are equivalent).

- g. The RACP Clinical Examination requires candidates to undertake two (2) long cases and four (4) short cases in one day during the annual examination period (approximately June of each year).
- h. Applicants who are required to successfully complete the Clinical Examination must do so within their period of probationary vocational registration with the NZ Medical Council.

2.5 Completion of requirements

Once the requirements of the NZ Medical Council and the OTP Assessment Committee have been completed, the applicant will be eligible to apply for Fellowship of the RACP.

3. CORRESPONDENCE AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- (i) All correspondence with the RACP should be addressed to:
Education Officer
New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee
Royal Australasian College of Physicians
P O Box 10 601
Wellington
New Zealand
- (ii) Telephone contact with the RACP should be through:
Education Officer - OTP
Phone: (04) 472 6713
Fax: (04) 472 6718
Website: www.racp.edu.au

(iii) Contact details for the Medical Council of New Zealand are:

Medical Council of New Zealand

P O Box 11 649

Wellington

New Zealand

Phone: (04) 384 7635

Fax: (04) 385 8902

e-mail: mcnz@mcnz.org.nz

Website: www.mcnz.org.nz

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