



RACP
Specialists. Together
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Royal Australasian College of Physicians

**Overseas Trained Physicians (OTP)
Guidelines**

Aotearoa New Zealand

This document explains the comparability assessment process which the RACP (“we”) conducts on behalf of the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ), for overseas trained physicians and paediatricians (“you”). This assessment forms part of the application process for provisional vocational registration.

This document does not replace the official MCNZ guidelines, policies, or by-laws. For full details, please refer to the MCNZ website: www.mcnz.org.nz.

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The role of the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ)

The Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) is the regulatory authority responsible for medical registration in Aotearoa New Zealand. Its statutory role is to protect the health and safety of the public in Aotearoa New Zealand by ensuring that medical practitioners are competent and fit to practise medicine.

The MCNZ manages all applications for registration. This means that the MCNZ:

- determines the type of registration for which an overseas trained physician/paediatrician (OTP) is eligible, and
- makes the final decision on whether registration is granted.

A specialist in Aotearoa New Zealand must have vocational registration to practise medicine at the level of an independent consultant. There are currently 36 [vocational scopes recognised by the MCNZ](#).

If you have completed your specialist training overseas, you may be eligible for medical registration to practise as a specialist in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The application process for vocational registration is managed by the MCNZ. The MCNZ may seek advice from a Vocational Education Advisory Body (VEAB) like the RACP on the comparability of an applicant's qualifications, training and experience against standards in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Before applying for registration

Before applying for registration, we recommend that you use the MCNZ's [Registration self-assessment tool](#) to find which pathway to registration is right for you. Please [contact the MCNZ](#) directly with any enquiries regarding your eligibility.

It is also a good idea to review the RACP training curricula, to understand the specialist training standards in Aotearoa New Zealand which you will be compared against. This information can be found at <https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/basic-training> and <https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training>.

How to apply for registration

Please refer to the MCNZ website at <https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/getting-registered/how-to-register/registration-process/> for helpful information about the application process, forms, fees and checklists. For further information, please [contact the MCNZ](#) directly.



The role of the RACP

The RACP acts as a Vocational Education Advisory Body (VEAB) to the MCNZ, by providing advice on applications in the following vocational scopes:

1. Clinical Genetics
2. Dermatology
3. Internal Medicine
4. Occupational Medicine
5. Paediatrics
6. Palliative Medicine
7. Public Health Medicine
8. Rehabilitation Medicine
9. Sexual Health Medicine.

After you have applied for vocational registration with the MCNZ, we may receive a request from the MCNZ to assess your qualifications, training, assessments, post-graduate consultant experience and continuing medical education (CME) / continuing professional development (CPD). The purpose of this assessment is to determine how the combination of your qualifications, training and experience compares with that of an RACP-trained physician registered in the same vocational scope of practice.

The roles and responsibilities of the MCNZ and medical colleges are set out in the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\) between Council and Medical colleges](#) (MoU). The MoU between the MCNZ and the RACP contains information on shared values and principles, such as Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi, and sets the legal framework for collaborative work:

“We each have our own unique values reflecting our purposes. However, there are common principles shared by us all. We remain committed to the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi: tino rangatiratanga; equity; active protection; options; and partnership.”

The MoU also sets the framework within which medical colleges provide advice on the equivalency of an applicant’s qualifications, training and experience.

The RACP acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi and the foundational principles of bicultural partnership, participation, and protection it guarantees. We therefore commit to considering the wellbeing and impact on Māori as tangata whenua in all our policies and upholding the above principles.

The RACP is committed to developing and implementing strategic initiatives that improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Māori, through the following priorities:

- contribute to addressing Indigenous health equity differences
- grow the Indigenous physician workforce
- equip and educate the broader physician workforce to improve Indigenous health
- foster a culturally safe and competent College
- meet the new regulatory standards and requirements of the Australian Medical Council and Medical Council of New Zealand.

The [RACP Indigenous Strategic Framework](#) is a roadmap for the College to address these priorities, through short, medium and long-term strategies, with dedicated support and resources.



The comparability assessment process

If the MCNZ asks us to conduct a comparability assessment of your application, we will review it and provide advice to the MCNZ on your equivalency against training standards in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If you have secured a job in Aotearoa New Zealand, we will also assess whether the position and supervision arrangements are suitable for you.

Our role is to provide recommendations to the MCNZ. The MCNZ will take this advice into consideration when making their decision on the outcome of your application.

There are four possible outcomes of paper-based assessment:

1

Equivalent

The combination of your qualifications, training and experience is assessed to be equivalent to that of a vocationally-trained medical practitioner registered in the same vocational scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If the MCNZ determines that you are ‘equivalent’ to a locally trained specialist, you will be eligible to apply for the **supervision** provisional vocational pathway. Under this pathway, you will likely need to:

- complete 6-12 months of satisfactory supervised practice
- enrol in the RACP’s recertification programme ‘[MyCPD](#)’ (free of charge while you are under provisional vocational registration)
- complete a cultural safety course
- complete a professional development course for supervisors.

2

As satisfactory as

The combination of your qualifications, training and experience is assessed to be as satisfactory as that of a vocationally-trained medical practitioner registered in the same vocational scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If the MCNZ determines that you are ‘as satisfactory as’ a locally trained specialist, you will be eligible to apply for the **assessment** provisional vocational pathway. Under this pathway, you

will likely need to:

- complete 12-24 months of satisfactory supervised practice
- enrol in the RACP's recertification programme '[MyCPD](#)' (free of charge while you are under provisional vocational registration)
- complete a cultural safety course
- complete a professional development course for supervisors
- complete formative or summative assessments as recommended by the RACP.

Additional requirements may include:

- a [vocational practice assessment \(VPA\)](#) - a one-day workplace assessment
- a period at a tertiary centre
- regular outpatient clinics
- a logbook
- continuing professional development courses
- multi-source feedback
- mini-clinical evaluation exercises (mini-CEXs)
- case-based discussions (CbDs)
- direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS)
- self-reflections.

3

Neither equivalent to, nor as satisfactory as

The combination of your qualifications, training and experience is not assessed to be either equivalent to, or as satisfactory as a vocationally-trained medical practitioner registered in the same vocational scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If the MCNZ determines that the combination of your qualifications, training and experience is not 'equivalent' to or 'as satisfactory as' the standard of a vocationally-registered doctor, then the MCNZ will likely decline your application and inform you about other options for registration in Aotearoa New Zealand.

4

Unable to make a recommendation

Based on the documentation provided, it is not possible to make an accurate assessment of whether your qualifications, training and experience are either 'equivalent' to, or 'as satisfactory as' a vocationally-trained medical practitioner registered in the same vocational scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If insufficient details were provided in your application documents, the MCNZ may ask that you attend an interview with the RACP to clarify aspects of your qualifications, training, assessments, examinations, consultant experience and CME/CPD.

Interviews

Interviews are conducted by video conference for approximately one hour.

During the interview, two or three Fellows of the RACP will discuss your qualifications, training, consultant experience and CPD with you, asking questions based on your application documentation. This is not an examination and there are no clinical test questions.

The purpose of the interview is to gather further information about how your experience compares with the scope of practice of a physician or paediatrician in the same specialty in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Interviewers will ask questions based on your application and the following areas:

- basic training
- advanced training
- formative and summative assessments completed during training
- examinations
- consultant practice
- participation in CPD
- quality assurance practices
- attainment of higher qualifications
- contributions to the field of medicine
- your readiness for specialist practice in Aotearoa New Zealand
- cultural competence and safety in Māori health and the Aotearoa New Zealand health system.

At the end of the interview, there will be an opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have about specialist practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

After your interview, the interviewers will provide a report to the RACP Aotearoa New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee. The Committee will discuss your application documentation, including the interview report, and will provide a recommendation on your comparability to the MCNZ.

The MCNZ will then advise you of their decision on your equivalency and next steps.



Provisional vocational registration

The MCNZ oversees the supervision and assessment pathways. While practising medicine under supervision (i.e. while holding provisional vocational registration), you must complete your requirements as set out by the MCNZ. In some cases, the MCNZ may request that you send evidence of assessment or course completion to the RACP for review. The MCNZ will inform and guide you.

Once you have successfully met all your requirements with the MCNZ, you will be eligible to apply for full vocational registration. You will need to apply to change your scope of practice from provisional vocational registration to vocational registration. Vocational registration will allow you to practise as an independent consultant in Aotearoa New Zealand. Further information about completing provisional vocational registration can be found on the [MCNZ website](#).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

In a healthcare context, continuing professional development (CPD) consists of a range of activities undertaken to maintain clinical skills and knowledge, as well as competence in the delivery of patient-centred care.

The MCNZ requires that all OTPs enrol in '[MyCPD](#)', the RACP's accredited recertification programme, while they are practising under provisional vocational registration. Enrolment is free of charge.

To enrol in the MyCPD programme, please contact the RACP OTP Team at OTP@racp.org.nz.

It is not compulsory for you to fulfill MyCPD requirements during your supervision period on provisional vocational registration. However, we recommend that you record your CPD activities to familiarise yourself with the online platform.

You will be required to complete all MyCPD requirements after you are granted full vocational registration by the MCNZ.

If you become a Fellow of the RACP, the fee for MyCPD access is included in your annual Fellowship fees. For more information about MyCPD, please see <https://www.racp.edu.au/fellows/continuing-professional-development>.

Fellowship of the RACP

The MCNZ will notify the RACP when you are granted full vocational registration. We will then invite you to apply for Fellowship of the RACP by completing a Fellowship pre-application form and providing your MCNZ supervision reports to the RACP. You may also need to provide references or other documentation.

If you are qualified in two specialties, e.g. in Infectious Diseases and General and Acute Care Medicine, and have had exposure to both specialties during your supervised practice, you may be eligible for Fellowship in both specialties.

We review eligibility for Fellowship on a case-by-case basis. If approved, our Member Support Centre will contact you to provide advice and answer any questions you have about the Fellowship application process in your specialty.

Fellowship of the RACP provides a number of rights, including professional and regulatory recognition and privileges. See the next page for further benefits.

Benefits of Fellowship with the RACP include:



RACP post-nominal

Use of the relevant [RACP post-nominal](#) in your title, a form of specialist recognition linked to training and specialist practice



RACP Online Learning

Access to [RACP Online Learning](#), which has a wide range of quality resources, curated collections, and self-paced online courses



MyCPD

Access to the accredited RACP recertification programme '[MyCPD](#)', to fulfil your recertification and professional development requirements with the MCNZ



Events

Access to a professional network and [events](#)



RACP membership benefits

Access to [RACP membership benefits](#)



RACP Support Program

Access to the [RACP Support Program](#)



Training and education

Involvement in Aotearoa New Zealand training and education



Advocacy

Involvement in advocacy for your profession

We look forward to welcoming you as a new Fellow.

We're here to help, please contact us at OTP@racp.org.nz if you have any questions.



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Royal Australasian College of Physicians

Professional Practice

Overseas Trained Physicians (OTP) Team

Level 10, 3 Hunter Street

Wellington

Phone: +64 4 472 6713

Email: OTP@racp.org.nz