



RACP
Specialists. Together
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Royal Australasian College of Physicians

Overseas Trained Physicians (OTP)

Guidelines

Aotearoa New Zealand

January 2023

This document provides overseas trained physicians and paediatricians (“you”) with information about the different types of comparability assessments that the RACP conducts to provide advice to the MCNZ as part of the process of application for provisional vocational registration. This document does not supersede MCNZ guidelines, policies and by-laws. Further information can and should be sought on the MCNZ website: www.mcnz.org.nz

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Registration to practise medicine in Aotearoa New Zealand

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 practice medicine.

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

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

If you have completed your specialist training overseas, and you wish to practise as a consultant specialist in Aotearoa New Zealand, you may be eligible for medical registration. Before applying for registration, you should contact the MCNZ to find out which pathway is best for you. There are several registration pathways available, which can be found on

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/getting-registered/registration-pathways/>

A specialist in Aotearoa New Zealand must have **vocational registration** to practise medicine as a specialist. There are 35 vocational scopes recognised by the MCNZ:

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/scopes-of-practice/vocational-and-provisional-vocational/>

The vocational registration application process is managed by the MCNZ. Once an application for vocational registration fulfills the MCNZ initial criteria, the MCNZ seeks advice from a Vocational Education Advisory Body (VEAB).



The role of the RACP

The RACP acts as a Vocational Education Advisory Body (VEAB) to the MCNZ by providing advice on applications to seven types of vocational registration. When the MCNZ requests advice from the RACP, your qualifications, training, assessments, post-graduate consultant experience and continuing professional development (CPD) will be assessed by the RACP. The purpose of this assessment is to determine if the combination of these will enable you to practise medicine at the level expected of an Australasian trained specialist working in the same field as you.

The roles and responsibilities of the MCNZ and the medical colleges is 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 of the collaborative work. This includes the roles and responsibilities of the RACP when conducting the comparability assessment to provide advice to the MCNZ:

“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 in which medical colleges provide advice on the equivalency of overseas-trained specialists’ qualifications, training and experience as part of applications for provisional vocational registration.

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 that all our policies will consider the wellbeing and impact on Māori as tangata whenua and ensure that our policies uphold the above principles.

Important information to consider before applying for registration

Before applying for registration, you can contact the MCNZ on enquiry@mcnz.org.nz to find out which pathway is best for you.

It is also a good idea to review the RACP training curricula to understand training in Australasia. This information can be found on <https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/basic-training> and <https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/advanced-training> .

When the RACP carries out the comparability assessment of your qualifications, training, assessments, post-graduate consultant experience and continuing professional development (CPD) to provide advice to the MCNZ, the RACP will take into consideration the following guidelines:

1. If an overseas trained physician or pediatrician has limited experience at the level of a consultant specialist, they should have successfully completed a minimum of four years of accredited (i.e., formally recognized) overseas specialist training.
2. If an overseas trained physician or pediatrician has completed less than four years of accredited (i.e., formally recognized) overseas specialist training, they should have at least three years of post-graduate consultant experience at the level of an Australasian trained physician or pediatrician in the same specialty.

Applying for vocational registration with the MCNZ

The first step in the process of applying for registration is to contact the MCNZ on enquiry@mcnz.org.nz to find out whether the vocational registration pathway is suitable for you.

The MCNZ website contains useful information on the registration process:

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/getting-registered/how-to-register/registration-process/>

You can also find information on forms, fees and checklists on

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/forms-fees-and-checklists/>

For further information on registration, please contact the MCNZ on registration@mcnz.org.nz



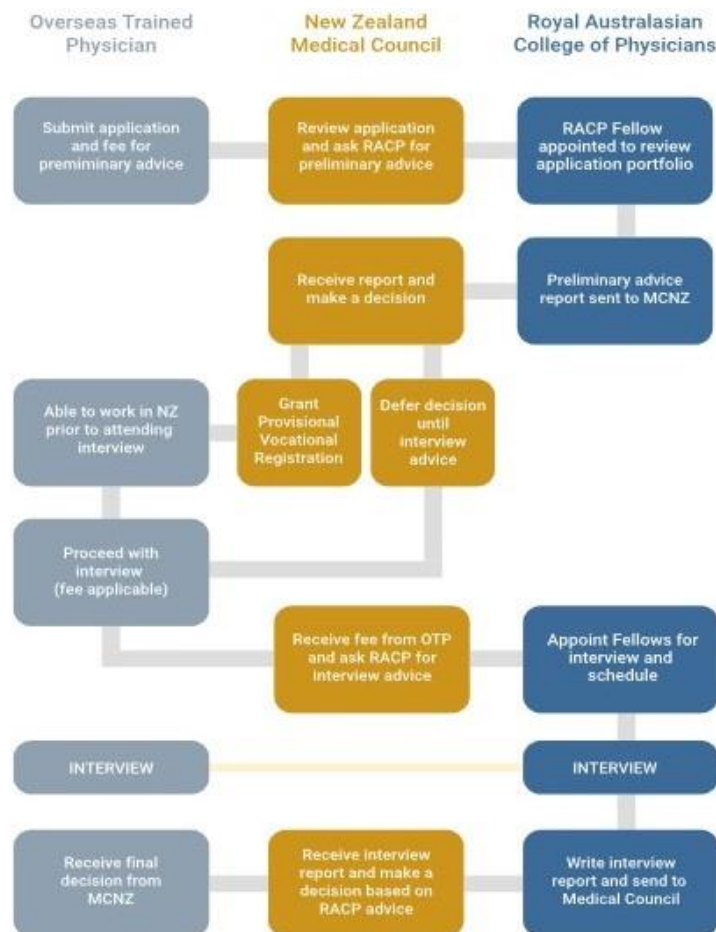
The comparability assessment process

The MCNZ may ask the RACP to conduct a comparability assessment. The role of the RACP is to provide advice to the MCNZ on whether your qualifications, training and experience are “equivalent to” or “as satisfactory as” those of a New Zealand vocationally-trained doctor registered in the same vocational scope and if so, whether you will be able to reach the required standard for vocational registration within a maximum period of 18 months of supervised practice and assessments. To do so, the RACP conducts a comparability assessment to determine if the combination of your qualifications, training, assessments, post-graduate consultant experience and continuing professional development (CPD) are at the level expected of an Australasian trained specialist working in the same specialty.

There two types of comparability assessments:

- Preliminary advice: paper-based assessment
- Interview-based advice: Interview assessment

The flow chart below shows the standard comparability assessment process:



Preliminary advice

Depending on the circumstances, MCNZ may ask the RACP to conduct a preliminary advice assessment before the interview-based comparability assessment.

The preliminary advice is an initial paper-based assessment of the overseas trained physician or pediatrician to establish the equivalence compared to an Australasian trained specialist. The preliminary advice report provides an indication of the potential decision and assessment requirements that you will be required to undertake if you decide to progress to the interview assessment.

The outcome of the preliminary advice may be:

1. Equivalent;
2. As satisfactory as; or
3. Unable to make a recommendation

Scenario A: *Equivalent or As satisfactory as*

If the preliminary advice indicates that your qualifications, training, assessments, post-graduate consultant experience, and continuing professional development (CPD) are *equivalent* or *as satisfactory as* those of an Australasian trained physician or pediatrician, you may be granted provisional vocational registration by the MCNZ. This will enable you to practise medicine under supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand whilst progressing to the interview-based assessment.

Scenario B: *Unable to make a recommendation*

The RACP may determine that the information in the documentation you provided to the MCNZ is insufficient to make a recommendation for a preliminary advice and, therefore, the outcome in the preliminary advice report will be *unable to make a recommendation*. The MCNZ may offer you to apply for an interview-based assessment to clarify some aspects of your qualifications, training, assessments, post-graduate consultant experience, and continuing professional development (CPD) that were not clear in the documentation you submitted. In these cases, the MCNZ requests the RACP to conduct an interview. If this is your case, the RACP will contact you to schedule the interview.

To avoid the outcome *unable to make a recommendation*, you should ensure that your documents contain all the relevant information that will allow the RACP assessors to make an informed decision. This includes detailed information about your training (such rotations and level of supervision) as well as information about your post-graduate consultant experience: workload, type of patients, cases seen, and administrative and managerial responsibilities (including any teaching duties).

Interview advice

In the interview, the RACP will obtain further information on your qualifications, training, assessments, post-graduate consultant experience and continuing professional development (CPD).

Interviews are not designed to examine you, but rather to gather information and clarify any differences in training and/or experience compared to a locally trained physician or paediatrician in the same specialty.

Interviewers prepare questions based on the documentation you provided.

The interview questions cover the following areas:

- Basic or core training
- Advanced or specialist training
- Formative and summative assessments completed during and after training
- Specialist practice
- Participation in CPD/CME (continuous medical education)
- Quality assurance practices
- Attainment of higher qualifications
- Contributions to the field of medicine
- Readiness for specialist practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

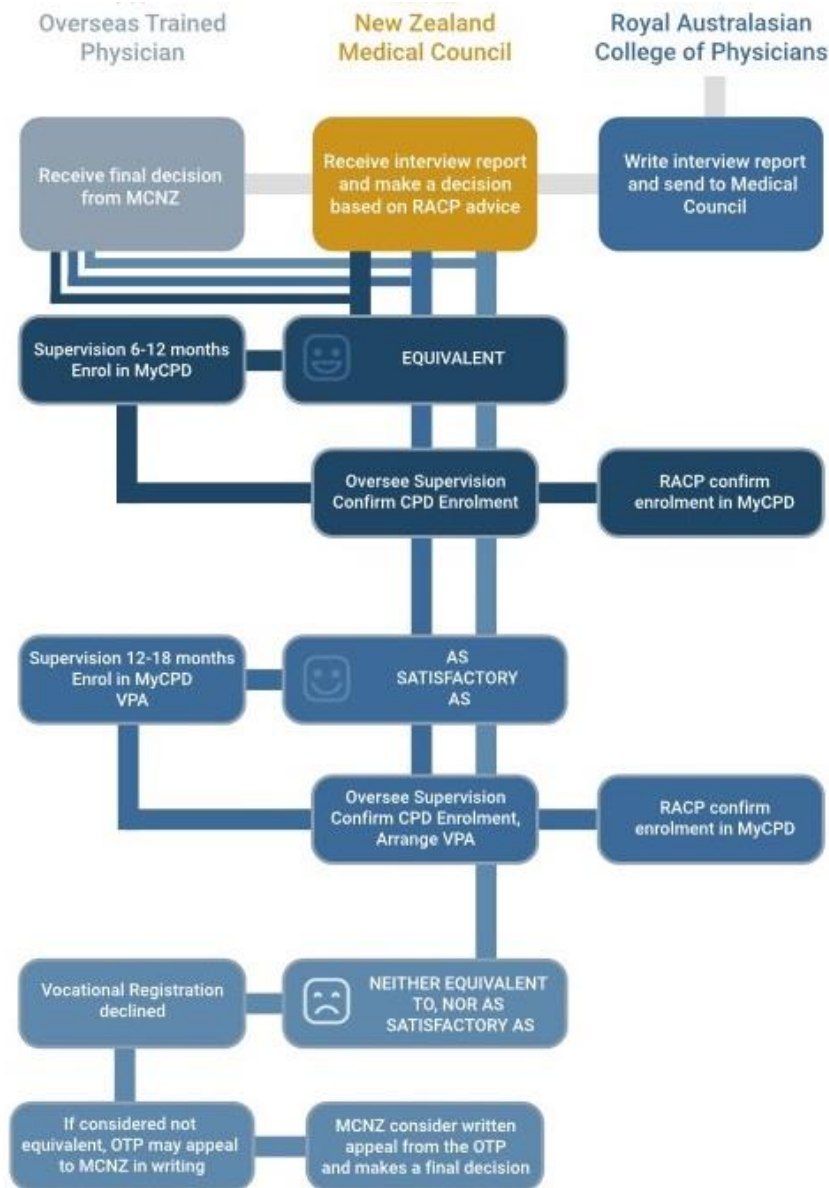
Interviews are conducted online, and they have a duration of 60 minutes approximately. The interviewers write an interview report (RGR7) with a recommendation, for the Aotearoa New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee to consider and discuss. The Committee reviews all the documentation you provided as well as the interview report. Your interview report is sent to the MCNZ once the Aotearoa New Zealand OTP Assessment Committee has agreed on the recommendation. Following this, the MCNZ makes a decision on your application for registration.



The outcome of the interview advice may be:

1. Equivalent;
2. As satisfactory as; or
3. Neither equivalent to, nor as satisfactory as

The flow chart below shows the standard comparability assessment process:



The MCNZ will advise you via email of their decision on your application for provisional vocational registration and the requirements you must complete to obtain vocational registration. You will also receive a copy of the interview report with the recommendation made by the RACP.

The final decision made by the MCNZ will be one of the following:

Supervision Pathway: Equivalent (6 to 12 months of supervision + requirements)

If your qualifications, training and experience are found *equivalent to* those of an Australasian trained physician or paediatrician, the MCNZ will inform you of your supervision requirements. One of these requirements may be to enrol in the RACP CPD program. To enrol, please send an email to mycpd@racp.org.nz.

Once you have obtained provisional vocational registration, and once the MCNZ has approved your proposed employment and supervision arrangements, you can start working as a specialist in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Assessment pathway: As satisfactory as (12 to 18 months of supervision + assessments)

If your qualifications, training and experience are found *as satisfactory as* those of an Australasian trained physician or paediatrician, the MCNZ will inform you of your supervision and assessment requirements. One of these requirements may be to enrol in the RACP CPD program. To enrol, please send an email to mycpd@racp.org.nz.

You will be required to complete one or more assessments during the supervision period, which is mandated and overseen by the MCNZ. Assessments may include procedural logbooks, completion of specific courses, Mini-Clinical Evaluation Exercises and Cased-based Discussions, among others.

You may also be required to undergo a vocational practice assessment (VPA) at the end of your supervision period. You can find more information on VPAs on <https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/getting-registered/registration-policy/policy-on-vocational-practice-assessments/>

Vocational registration declined: Neither equivalent to, nor as satisfactory as

If your qualifications, training and experience are found *neither equivalent to, nor as satisfactory as* those of an Australasian trained physician or paediatrician, the MCNZ will give you the option to request a re-evaluation of your application, for which you will need to submit evidentiary documentation with new information (i.e., not previously provided).

There may be other possible forms of registration for you to practise medicine in Aotearoa New Zealand. Please contact the MCNZ to find out about your options.

Applying for a change of registration: from provisional vocational registration to vocational registration

The MCNZ has oversight of the supervision and assessment pathways. While practising medicine under supervision, you must complete your requirements as set out by the MCNZ. In some cases, you might be requested to send evidence of completion of your requirements to the RACP for sign-off. The MCNZ will inform you whether this is your case.

The MCNZ will advise you when you have met all your requirements successfully and you are eligible to apply for vocational registration. You will then need to complete an application for a change in your scope of practice from provisional vocational registration to vocational registration.

You can find more information here:

<https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/getting-registered/registration-pathways/pathways-to-registration-in-a-vocational-scope/provisional-vocational-registration/>

Fellowship of the RACP (FRACP)

Once you have been granted vocational registration, the MCNZ will inform the RACP. The RACP will contact you to advise you that you are eligible to apply for Fellowship and to inform you of the application process.

The RACP will request your supervision reports (which you submitted to the MCNZ while you were working under provisional vocational registration) as evidence of satisfactory completion of your requirements. It is recommended that you keep an electronic copy of all your supervision reports for your Fellowship application.

The RACP may also request references from RACP Fellows who have been working with you during your practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. The RACP will advise you via email if this is required from you.

During the Fellowship application process, you will need to demonstrate that:

- your supervised practice included exposure to the specialty (and the subspecialty, if applicable) you would like to gain Fellowship in,
- your supervisor's specialty was the same as yours, and
- this supervisor can provide references on your practice and performance in the specialty.

If you are qualified in two specialties (e.g., in Cardiology and General and Acute Care Medicine) and during your supervised practice, you have had exposure to both specialties, then you might be eligible for applying for Fellowship in both specialties.

If you cannot demonstrate that your supervised practice covered both specialties, you will need to complete a one-year peer review in this specialty. To do this, you will need to complete the peer review application form that the RACP will email you in order to obtain approval. The peer review application must include your position description with the workplace letterhead and must be signed by your two nominated supervisors.

Becoming a Fellow of the RACP

Membership of the College confers a number of rights, including professional (and regulatory) recognition and privileges.

Continuing Fellows of the College have the right to use the 'FRACP' post-nominal and/or any other applicable Faculty or Chapter post-nominal or nomenclature of the College, based on their training pathway.

This right and privilege of membership is dependent maintaining continued membership of the College, as set out in the College Constitution.

Post-nominals are awarded to Fellows upon their admission to Fellowship.

For more information on FRACP, please visit: <https://www.racp.edu.au/about/membership/fellowship>

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The MCNZ normally requires overseas trained physicians/pediatricians who hold provisional vocational registration to enrol in MyCPD, the RACP CPD programme.

If you hold provisional vocational registration and you are practising medicine under supervision, you can enrol in MyCPD free of charge. To enrol in the MyCPD programme, please contact the RACP CPD Team at mycpd@racp.org.nz.

Once you are enrolled, it is not compulsory for you to fulfill the RACP CPD requirements during your provisional vocational registration. It is recommended, however, that you complete some CPD activities.

Once you have been granted vocational registration by the MCNZ, and you become a Fellow of the RACP, you will be required to complete all MyCPD requirements.

The fees for MyCPD are included in your Fellowship fees. For more information on MyCPD, please visit: <https://www.racp.edu.au/fellows/continuing-professional-development>



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