



## Fact sheet

December 2013

### Fact sheet: Supervision in the competent authority pathway

This fact sheet has been developed to inform overseas trained osteopaths being supervised through the competent authority pathway and their supervisors registered with the Osteopathy Board of Australia (the Board). It provides a summary of obligations for supervision under provisional registration. More detailed information can be obtained from the Board's [Guidelines for supervision](#) and [Framework: pathways for registration of overseas trained osteopaths](#).

Supervision under the competent authority pathway is designed to ensure that osteopaths entering through the competent authority pathway are safe practitioners oriented to the Australian health care system.

#### Background

Osteopaths are regulated by the Osteopathy Board of Australia (the Board) with support from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

The competent authority pathway is a pathway to general registration in Australia, available from 2014. It will apply to a subgroup of overseas trained osteopaths who qualified in the United Kingdom after 2000. Based on work by the Australasian Osteopathic Accreditation Council (AOAC), the Board considers that these practitioners have the clinical skills and knowledge for practice in Australia.

To apply for registration through this pathway, the overseas osteopath needs to apply to the Board's accreditation authority – the [AOAC](#). The AOAC will undertake a desk-top assessment of the osteopath's qualification to determine their eligibility for either the standard assessment pathway or competent authority pathway.

#### Provisional registration for overseas osteopaths

Once the AOAC determines that a person is eligible to be assessed under the competent authority pathway, it will undertake a familiarisation to Australian practice assessment. More information about this second assessment is available in the *Information on the practice of Osteopathy in Australia: A guide for graduates trained overseas* (the Guide), which is published on the AOAC's [website](#).

AOAC will formally advise applicants when they successfully complete the competent authority pathway desk-top and Guide assessments.

Once an overseas trained osteopath has received AOAC's advice that they have successfully completed the assessments, they can use this formal advice as evidence to apply to the Board for provisional registration for supervised practice.

There are several practical steps that the overseas qualified osteopath must then take:

1. Locate two supervisors in Australia – who either work in the same clinical setting as the overseas trained osteopath, or a separate setting. The supervisor can be the Principal of the practice where they will work.
2. Download the relevant provisional registration and supervision [forms](#) and fill them out with the supervisors' details and signatures, attaching all relevant documentation. Send the completed forms to AHPRA in Australia with the specified [fee](#).
3. Allow at least six weeks for the application to be processed. The osteopath cannot practice in Australia until their application for provisional registration under supervised practice has been approved by the Board. Timing of approval will depend on a number of factors including the completeness of the application, and whether further information is needed for the application to be processed by AHPRA. The Board then considers the decision to grant provisional registration at its next monthly meeting.
4. If provisional registration is granted, the osteopath's name will appear on the public Register of Osteopaths, which means that the osteopath can commence practice. Some information about the supervision arrangements will also appear on the register.
5. The supervisor must provide reports to the Board after three months and six months supervision.
6. As each overseas qualified osteopath will have two supervisors, if a supervisor needs to be replaced, there is already a second supervisor who must provide continuity of supervision and a new supervisor must be found immediately in order to have continuity of two supervisors for practice under supervision. If there is a gap in continuity of supervision, then the overseas trained osteopath must stop practising immediately.
7. If there are any changes to the supervision arrangements approved by the Board, both the overseas qualified osteopath and the supervising osteopath must inform the Board immediately. If there are no supervisors as a result, even for a short period, then practice must cease.
8. The supervision requirement is six months full-time equivalent work which includes half the annual standard leave entitlements, to be completed in the period of registration as published on the Board's website.
9. Provisional registration can be renewed twice by the Board, if necessary. Reasons why the initial period of supervision may need to be extended to complete the supervision requirements include:
  - a breakdown of supervisor/supervisee relationship;
  - ill health; unemployment; or
  - the supervisor recommends that the osteopath is not suitable for general registration.There is a renewal form for provisional registration on the Board's website.

### General registration for overseas osteopaths

Once the osteopath has successfully completed six months of supervision with provisional registration, and their supervisor has submitted two satisfactory reports to the Board, they can apply for general registration (without supervision). The form for general registration is found on the Board's website and there are application and registration fees payable for changing registration type.

Practice under supervision with provisional registration can continue after the application form is submitted pending the Board's decision to grant general registration.

### What this means for supervisors

It is important that supervising osteopaths are aware of their supervision obligations.

The position of supervisor is available to those who have been registered for five or more years and have no conditions on their registration. While the Board does not provide training or payment to supervisors, there is a range of possible sources of information about supervision, which include undertaking supervision courses as part of CPD, resources developed by Health Workforce Australia, and online supervision training. It may also be useful to organise access to another health practitioner who has also provided supervision as a source of guidance and advice. Supervisors could also draw on any experience supervising osteopathy students on clinical placements. This is an honorary position which takes a leadership role within the profession.

If the supervision relationship breaks down, the supervisor must notify AHPRA and provide a report to the Board on the period during which they have been the supervisor including an explanation of the reasons for the change in supervision arrangements. If the supervision relationship breaks down, it would be helpful if the supervisor could identify another potential supervisor. AHPRA or the Board are not able to mediate in any disputes. A supervisor has a professional responsibility to the Board to provide supervision in accordance with the *Guidelines for supervision of osteopaths*.

The Board expects greater involvement by the supervisor and closer supervision in the initial period until the supervisor is clear that the supervisee is able to effectively manage all areas of independent and safe practice expected of an osteopath in the Australian health care system. Each supervisor would assess the supervision needs of the supervisee and develop a plan that addresses the specific circumstances and experience of the supervisee and familiarisation with the local health care system.

The initial level of supervision appropriate for overseas trained osteopaths is an individual judgement based on a risk assessment. Most supervision arrangements will then move to a level where the supervisee takes full responsibility for their practice, including individual patients within the supervisor's general oversight.

#### *For more information*

- Visit [www.osteopathyboard.gov.au](http://www.osteopathyboard.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)

Edit: From August 2014 ANZOC became known as AOAC (Australasian Osteopathic Accreditation Council)