

National Registration for Occupational Therapists

What is National Registration?

In 2010 a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) for health professionals commenced, with ten health professions included. In 2012 a further four professions will join the national scheme, including Occupational Therapy.

Why the move to National Registration?

The new arrangements will help Occupational Therapists move around the country more easily, reduce red tape, provide greater safeguards for the public and promote a more flexible, responsive and sustainable health workforce. For example, the new scheme will maintain a public national register that will ensure that a professional who has been banned from practising in one place is unable to practise elsewhere in Australia.

How will this affect me?

In 2012, OTs will cease to be registered in separate Australian states and territories, and will instead be registered nationally, allowing registered OTs to practice in all states or territories.

To be entitled to practice as an OT in ANY state or territory in Australia from 1 July 2012 you MUST be registered with the National Board (Occupational Therapy Board of Australia). You will do this through The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), the organisation that supports the National Boards and carries out the process of registering practitioners. There is an AHPRA office in each state and territory.

What do I have to do?

- **If you are currently registered in a state or territory**, and if that registration will still be current on 30 June 2012, your registration will automatically transfer to the new scheme (so you won't have to *apply* for national registration). You will then have to re-register each year as you currently do, but the renewal date will probably be different from your current one.
- **If you are not already registered**—for example, you work in a state or territory that does not currently require registration—you may either:

Apply for national registration as soon as it becomes available for OTs in early 2012, allowing enough time for your application to be processed and finalised by the commencement date (1 July 2012). If you leave this until the last minute, you may not be processed in time!

OR

Apply for registration as soon as possible in Qld, WA, SA or NT, the places that currently register OTs. Your registration will then simply transfer to the national scheme on 1 July 2012.

If you are an OT student, you will also need to be registered by 1 July 2012. Further information will be provided prior to this date. OT students already registered in a state or territory will automatically transfer to the new scheme.

You are encouraged to share and disseminate this information to colleagues, managers and OT work places.

More information and updates:

For more information and to keep up to date with national registration for Occupational Therapists, visit the NRAS 2012 website at <http://nras2012.ahpra.gov.au/>

The AHPRA website is at <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/>. Here you will be able to register online, and you can view the current register of practitioners, and access the current National Board websites.