



## **Recruiting Overseas Trained Osteopathic Graduates**

This is a complex and lengthy process and you will need to plan ahead if you wish to recruit an overseas trained osteopathic graduate. There are two elements to consider:

- (1) **Skills Assessment for Migration.** All overseas trained osteopaths, other than those registered with the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand, require a skills assessment. The osteopath will need to undergo an assessment to determine if their qualification is acceptable for skilled migration purposes and registration with the Australian Health Practitioner's Regulation Agency (AHPRA) / the Osteopathy Board of Australia (OBA).

The assessment of overseas osteopaths is carried out by the Australian and New Zealand Osteopathic Council (ANZOC). There are several components to the assessment and the written and clinical exams are held twice a year.

- (2) **Immigration Processes.** Once the applicant has been assessed as eligible for skilled migration / registration then the immigration process can begin.

The employer, the position being offered, and the applicant must meet the criteria of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). Your business will need to demonstrate that it has the turnover to sustain an additional salaried position, that as an employer you meet certain quality standards and the contractual arrangements being offered are for employment not self-employment. This may not apply if the overseas trained osteopath is an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or the osteopath is not the primary applicant for a visa (such as the partner of an Australian / New Zealand citizen).

*It takes at minimum of 9 months to complete the process – from the time the individual is deemed eligible for assessment by ANZOC through to completing the clinical assessment. At that point visa applications can commence. As an employer there may be policies and management information systems you will need to put in place to be eligible to sponsor a skilled migrant.*

## **The Australian & New Zealand Osteopathic Council's Overseas Assessment**

The ANZOC has been appointed by the DIAC and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as the migration assessing authority for the osteopathic profession.

Under the National Health Practitioner Regulation National Act (2009) ANZOC is appointed as the accreditation agency for the osteopathic profession. In the Act the term accreditation means accrediting training courses that lead to registration in a regulated health profession and assessing overseas trained health practitioners to determine their competency for registration.

The ANZOC overseas assessment process has 4 stages:

- (1) **Eligibility Review.** Prospective candidates must have a qualification in osteopathy that is deemed at least equivalent to an Australian bachelor's degree. If the applicant's first language is not English or their qualification was not studied through the medium of English they are required to pass an English language proficiency test.
- (2) **Written Exam.** There is a 3 hour written exam paper. This primarily tests clinical reasoning skills. Along with other Australian health professions, the exam is delivered by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC). The APC offers a service to other professions to allow potential migrants undergoing skills assessments to sit the written component overseas in September and March of each year. There are venues in all Australian capitals, Auckland, London and various Asian and Middle Eastern cities. **Applicants must express interest and be deemed eligible to sit the exam 3 months before the exam date.**
- (3) **Portfolio.** If the candidate passes the written exam they are then allocated an assessor / supervisor and are required to submit a portfolio. There are guided exercises to allow the osteopath to demonstrate their competence in a range of capabilities. The portfolio will ordinarily be completed over 3 – 6 months. Ordinarily the portfolio will be completed in practice in the applicant's home country.

*The candidates require limited registration with AHPRA / OBA in order to sit the clinical exam and ought to apply in plenty of time. AHPRA require at least 6 weeks to process an application.*

- (4) **Clinical Assessment.** These are held in February and August. The assessment is composed of 6 patients, 2 case based discussions and 2 direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS) – such as systems examination (cardiovascular, respiratory, abdominal or neurological)

In order to pass the assessment the candidate is required to demonstrate competency across a wide-range of capabilities. Successful candidates are then eligible to apply for registration with AHPRA / OBA

Details of the assessment, deadlines for applications and the Capabilities for Osteopathic Practice are to be found on the ANZOC website:

<http://www.anzoc.org.au/>

## Immigration Processes

In the seven years prior to July 2010 only 7 visas were granted to osteopaths under skilled migration programmes. The New ANZOC process will hopefully establish itself as a fair and robust assessment and help encourage growth of the profession through skilled migration.

Australia's immigration processes are involved and often protracted. Please remember that the processing time for visas is in addition to the time required for the ANZOC assessment. Osteopathy is currently on the shortage occupation list. It is generally held that there is a shortage of osteopaths at present. The AOA is supportive of the profession remaining on the shortage list. The DEEWR have mechanisms to determine which occupations are on the shortage list. The AOA will monitor demand for recruitment of osteopaths amongst its members to ensure that the professions interests are safeguarded.

*Other than sign-posting members to information, the AOA is unable to offer advice on immigration matters.*

## Employer Sponsorship (Subclass 457) Temporary Business (Long Stay)

The Sub class 457 visa allows an overseas trained osteopath to work in Australia for up to 4 years. At present osteopathy is an eligible nominated occupation. This is probably the quickest route to employing an overseas osteopath. It may not be an attractive visa from the perspective of the applicant as it does not give permanent residency status, although if eligible the holder may apply for a visa that gives permanent residency. The osteopath is only able to remain in Australia whilst in that employment (they may seek permission to change employers from the DIAC).

The DIAC require that the job offer salary meets the market rate for the profession. The minimum threshold for this visa category is \$49 330 per annum. The DIAC may require evidence that the actual salary level offered is at the market rate for the particular profession. One test they may apply is to review the terms of an existing Australian employee in the same skilled employment with the employer. If the salary on offer is over \$180,000 (the current threshold for upper level of income tax) the DIAC will not seek assurance that the salary meets the market rate. The employer must apply to be a sponsor, nominate the position, and then the applicant applies. **Stated processing times is 1 - 3 months.**

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/skilled-workers/sbs/>

## Employer Nomination Scheme (Subclass 121/856)

This visa allows its holder, and any dependent family members included in the visa application, to live as permanent residents in Australia and apply for citizenship after a qualifying period. As with Employer Sponsorship visas the employer and the contract offer have to meet minimum requirements, including market rate salary rates. Once the visa is granted the osteopath is free to change jobs or contractual arrangements without requiring permission from the DIAC. **Stated processing times is 6 - 9 months, highly variable.**

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/skilled-workers/ens/eligibility-employer.htm>

## Training Benchmarks for Established Employers

The DIAC have a benchmark for employers wishing to sponsor skilled migrants. They require evidence that the employer has made a commitment to training its employees. Their stated

guidelines are that 1% of payroll needs to be spent on training. It is likely that as an employer you may need to formulate a staff training and development plan and then provide evidence of how you meet your stated goals. Remember to include the training needs of administrative / reception staff. Your business funding annual first aid / CPR training, training resources, membership of the AOA, attendance at conferences / CPD events will assist with meeting the benchmark. Details of the training benchmark are given at this link:

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2009L03512>

### General Skilled Migration

The osteopathic profession is on the skilled occupation shortage list. Overseas osteopaths may apply under the general skilled migration route. This does not require a job offer. The applicant must pass the points test. If an osteopath has been granted a visa under this scheme they may take up an offer of employment on a self-employed basis.

General skilled migration visas do not require prospective employers to take any action. The points requirement changes depending on the demand for visas and market conditions. Osteopaths that do not have sufficient points for general skilled migration may be eligible for Employer Sponsorship (Subclass 457) or Employer Nomination (Subclass 121/856). General skilled migration is not the Government's favoured route for migration as it does not necessarily match skilled migrants to job vacancies and is thus less effective at meeting the economies needs. **Stated processing times is 12 – 15 month highly variable.**

<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/points-test.htm>

### Migration Agents

Many potential skilled migrants / employers use the services of migration agents. The AOA does not recommend any particular migration agents, we would suggest that you seek recommendations from others who have used a migration agent if you plan to use their services. There is no requirement to use an agent and it is possible to lodge applications oneself on line.

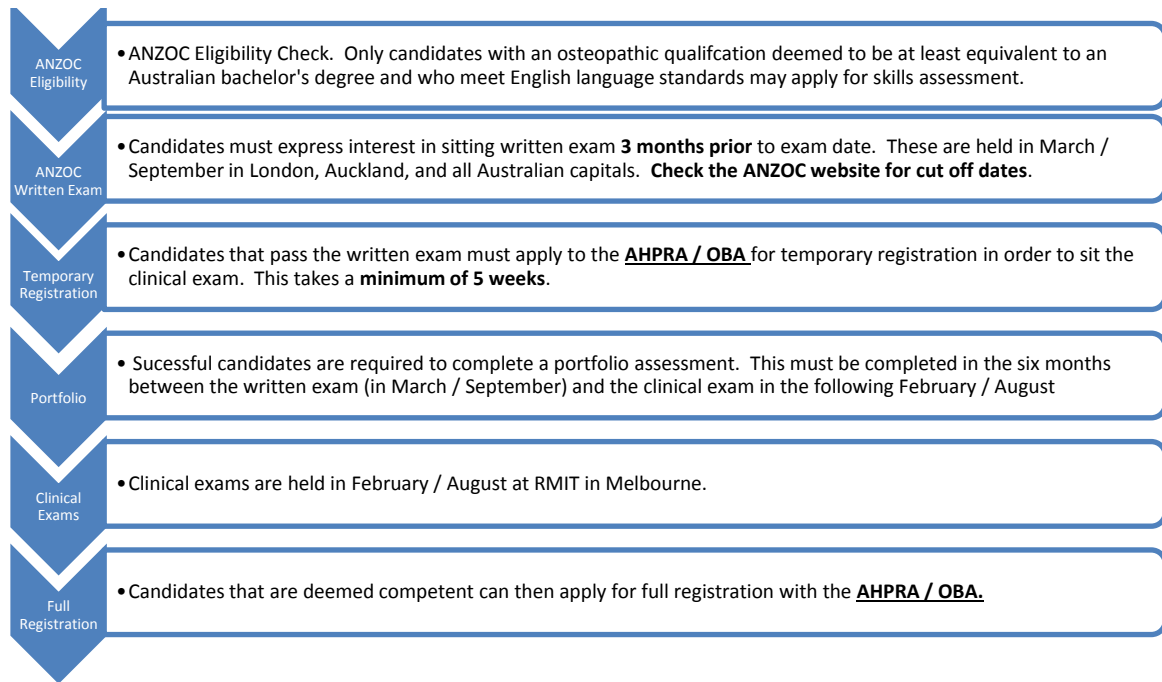
### New Zealand Registrants

New Zealand is an exception. The Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement allows for registrants that are in good-standing in one jurisdiction to have practice rights in the other, so overseas trained osteopaths that are registered with the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand (OCNZ) are eligible to apply for registration with AHPRA / OBA without undergoing an assessment. The AHPRA / OBA recognise qualifications from Unitec for direct registration in Australia.

New Zealand citizens are able to take up employment in Australia with minimal formalities. Subject to complying with character and health requirements they are automatically granted a 'special visa' when they present at the border. This allows them to live and work in Australia indefinitely without conferring residency status. They are required to pass the points test and so on if they wish to gain residency.

**Overseas trained osteopaths registered with the OCNZ who are not Australian or New Zealand citizens must comply with all Australian immigration requirements**

## Skills Assessment



## Immigration Processes

