

Candidate Guide

Qualification and Skills Assessment for Registration in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Disclaimer:

The information contained in this guide, associated forms and documents can be found on the Board's website and is accurate at the date of publication. Small changes that may occur to the content and processes contained within this guide, associated forms and documents are not routinely notified to potential or actual candidates unless they are substantive in any way or alter the process in any significant way.

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1. Introduction

The Podiatrists Board of New Zealand | Te Poari Tiaki Waewae O Aotearoa assesses the qualifications and skills of overseas trained registration applicants as the initial part of the registration process.

1.1 Podiatry in Aotearoa New Zealand

A podiatrist is a registered health professional who deals with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of medical and surgical conditions of the feet and lower limbs.

The conditions podiatrists treat include those resulting from bone and joint disorders such as arthritis and soft-tissue and muscular pathologies, as well as neurological and circulatory diseases. Podiatrists are able to diagnose and treat any complications of the above that affect the lower limb, including skin and nail disorders, calluses and ingrowing toenails. Foot injuries and infections gained through sport or other activities are also diagnosed and treated by podiatrists.

1.2 Migration to Aotearoa New Zealand

All questions relating to migration should be directed to Immigration New Zealand (www.immigration.govt.nz) as this is not an area with which the Board is involved. You are encouraged to visit the Immigration New Zealand website to determine the most suitable visa for your circumstance.

In the case of a skilled occupation such as podiatry, you will require a relevant recognised qualification, which is at, or above, the qualification level on the Aotearoa New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

Successfully migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand as a podiatrist is no guarantee of registration or employment. Requirements additional to those for migration may need to be met to become registered with the Podiatrists Board of New Zealand | Te Poari Tiaki Waewae O Aotearoa.

1.3 Registration in Aotearoa New Zealand

Podiatrists in Aotearoa New Zealand must by law, be registered **and** hold a current Annual Practising Certificate (APC). All first time APC applicants **must hold a Basic Life Support (BLS) certificate (including anaphylaxis)** to be eligible for an APC.

The Board is responsible for performing assessments of the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes of overseas-qualified podiatrists seeking registration in Aotearoa New Zealand, who must operate under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA).

The Board will assess and verify your qualifications, skills, and competence against the requirements it has established.

The qualification and skills assessment are only one component of the registration application process.

1.4 Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act (TTMRA) 1997

The Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act allows for mutual registration of professions between Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Applicants registered in Australia may apply directly to the Podiatrists Board of New Zealand | Te Poari Tiaki Waewae O Aotearoa for registration under TTMRA.

Note: A Cultural Open Book Exam (COBE) was introduced for all TTMRA applicants on 1 September 2024, which must be completed prior to an APC being issued.

2. Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment

The Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment is a paper-based assessment of an applicant's qualifications and skills against the Board's eligibility criteria. Applicants who meet all eligibility criteria of the Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment appropriate to their circumstances will be assessed as "suitable" for registration. Applicants who are not assessed as suitable for registration at the conclusion of the Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment can, in some circumstances, advance to the Stage 2 Practical Assessment (see section 2.3).

2.1 Eligibility

You are required to complete a Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment if you are a podiatrist who obtained an initial entry-level podiatry qualification from an education provider outside of Aotearoa New Zealand. If you received your podiatry qualification from an education provider in Australia, please refer to section 1.4.

To be assessed as suitable for registration, you must demonstrate that you:

- Are **registered and in good standing as a podiatrist** with the relevant authority, or otherwise officially recognised as a podiatrist in the country in which you are currently practicing.
- **Hold a podiatry qualification that is comparable** to a Board accredited entry level podiatry programme in Aotearoa New Zealand in terms of:
 - The education level being comparable to an Aotearoa New Zealand **bachelor's degree or higher**.
 - The duration being a minimum of **six semesters or three years full-time equivalent** study for an undergraduate programme, with prior studies taken into consideration for a graduate entry programme.
 - Supervised clinical practice within the course curriculum including a range of placements and patient situations to develop relevant skills, competencies and show evidence of application of theory to practice.
 - The course curriculum includes clinical, behavioural, and basic sciences, and relevant and sufficiently detailed theoretical and practical content.
 - The course curriculum includes research and scholarly activity to build evidence-based practices and develop student skills and responsibility for life-long learning.
- Have graduated within three (3) years of the date of the application for registration in Aotearoa New Zealand or practised within the past (3) three years of the date of application.

The Board may at its discretion require you to undertake the Stage 2 Practical Assessment to seek further validation of any of the above points. This is generally required for applicants assessed as meeting all criteria except the competent professional practice criterion. Failure to meet the registration and qualification skills criterion will result in your application being assessed as “not suitable.”

2.2 Documentation requirements

You must submit documentary evidence that you meet the Board’s eligibility criteria for the Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment.

Documents in languages other than English must be accompanied by certified English translations.

If the authenticity of the documents cannot be verified, the Board reserves the right to decline to assess your application. The assessment fee will not be refunded in these circumstances.

If you cannot obtain the required documents, you should attach a letter to the application form identifying those documents you cannot obtain and why.

All applicants must submit copies of the following documentation, and these copies must be certified to satisfy the Board that they are true and accurate copies of the original documents:

(a) Personal details

- Personal information page of your passport or your birth certificate.
- Marriage certificate or other document verifying change of name if your name varies between the documents relied upon in your application.

(b) Registration

- Evidence of registration/licensure from all countries where you have been registered as a podiatrist.
- If registration is not required for employment as a podiatrist in countries in which you are currently or have previously been employed within the last three (3) years, evidence of professional practice as a podiatrist during this period must be submitted. A formal letter (signed, dated and on letterhead) from your employer, supervisor or colleague indicating the dates of your employment, your job title and your duties is required).
- New graduates must be registered with the professional registration body for their country if one exists.

(c) Education

- Degree award certificate.
- Transcripts of qualifications completed, which show subjects, credits/hours, marks, and details of practical and clinical education (where practicable).
- If you have completed your qualification but not yet had the award conferred, you must produce a letter from the Head of the School of Podiatry (or equivalent) confirming that you have completed all course requirements and are eligible to have the award conferred.
- Evidence of course content, including the course book and syllabus for each subject and evidence of any practical and clinical training completed.

Note: UK degree qualified and HCPC registered podiatrists do not need to submit evidence of transcripts or course content at the time of application. The Board may request this content if required during processing of your application.

(d) Competent professional practice

Applicants must demonstrate competent professional practice either by demonstrating employment as a podiatrist within three (3) years of the date of application for registration in Aotearoa New Zealand **or** completion of an initial, entry-level podiatry qualification within three (3) years of the date of application for registration.

In the case of a graduate who has qualified within three years immediately before the date of application, undergraduate university studies are considered evidence of competent professional practice, and no further evidence is required to be submitted.

In all other cases the following evidence is required:

- [Applicant Referee Proforma](#) completed and signed by your employer, supervisor, or colleague to cover the three (3) year period prior to applying for a skills assessment. More than one proforma may be used. A podiatrist must have been engaged in professional practice for at least 12 months in the three-year period.
- Signed professional curriculum vitae for the last three years, detailing:
 - The dates of each period of your employment or self-employment.
 - Your employer's name, address, and the nature of their business.
 - Your job title and job description.
 - The nature of your employment or self-employment, including the most important tasks you performed or major projects you completed.

Professional practice means any role in which you use your podiatric knowledge and skills. It includes clinical podiatry, clinical education and placement, administration, study, teaching, or research in the field of podiatry.

Competent professional practice as a podiatrist in Aotearoa New Zealand is based on PBNZ Principles and Standards for the Practice of Podiatry in Aotearoa New Zealand (PSPPANZ) which can be viewed on our website at www.podiatristsboard.org.nz.

(e) English language requirement

All registered podiatrists from overseas (excluding those applying for registration under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (TTMRA), must satisfy the Board of their ability to communicate and comprehend English.

The Board will be satisfied of this where an applicant:

1. Declares that English is their first language, and has completed their undergraduate podiatry training in a country where English is the first language (Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, United States of America); or
2. Has sat an accepted English language test and achieved the minimum results which The Board considers indicate proficiency in English.
3. The results for the test must be valid at the time registration is approved, rather than when the registration application is submitted. This is important for applicants to note as some registration processes can take some time to complete.

The minimum requirements which the Board considers indicate proficiency in English are as follows:

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

- A minimum score of 7 for each band (Writing, Speaking, Reading, and Listening) and an overall band score of at least 7.
- The applicant must sit the Academic module.
- The applicant may use IELTS One Skill Retake for one band only (Writing, Speaking, Reading or Listening).
- The results must be less than three years old from the date the test has been sat by the applicant.

Occupational English Test (OET)

- Grades A and B.
- The applicants may retake one band only (Writing, Speaking, Reading or Listening).
- The results must be less than three years old from the date the test has been sat by the applicant.

TTMRA Applicants

The TTMRA legislation allows those practitioners who are registered and practising as a podiatrist in Australia the ability to register and practise in Aotearoa New Zealand, based on their registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The Board is satisfied that applicants who are applying for registration in Aotearoa New Zealand under TTMRA can communicate and comprehend English to an appropriate standard, based on their registration in Australia and AHPRA's English language skills requirements.

Right of review

The Board reserves the right to review any applicant's English competence at any time.

2.3 Stage 2 Practical Assessment (if required)

The Stage 2 Practical Assessment is an assessment of a candidates professional competence in the practice of podiatry in accordance with the Podiatrists Board of New Zealand Principles and Standards for the Practice of Podiatry in Aotearoa New Zealand (PSPPANZ) and the PBNZ Ethical Codes and Standards of Conduct. It is open to candidates who meet the qualification and registration skills criteria, **but not the competent professional practice criterion** of the Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment (NZ).

However, the Board may at its discretion require applicants to undertake the Stage 2 Practical Assessment to seek further validation of any of the criteria outlined in points 2.2 (a) - (e). Candidates who successfully complete the Stage 2 Practical Assessment will be assessed as "suitable" for registration.

The Board will assist the applicant in making initial arrangements with Auckland University of Technology (AUT), the provider of the Practical Assessment. The applicant must pay the required fee for the Practical Assessment directly to AUT, prior to the assessment.

Further information on the Stage 2 Practical Assessment is available from the Board.

2.4 Professional practice and culture in Aotearoa New Zealand context – Cultural Open Book Exam (COBE)

All applicants must have an understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's culture as it applies to

practising as a podiatrist. Upon successful completion of the Desktop Assessment and Stage 2 Practical Assessment (if required) and payment of the exam fee, the Board will email you the exam paper and study guide links for the COBE. You must read the study guide and satisfactorily pass the COBE for a “suitable” assessment to be issued.

2.5 Lodging your application

All documents for the qualification and skills assessment, if submitted electronically, must be scanned colour copies of the original documents saved preferably as PDF files. The Board will not process your application until the registration application fee has been received and all the requested documentation has been provided both for the registration application and the qualification and skills assessment. In some circumstances, you may be asked to provide further information in addition to your education provider, referees, or certifying officers in other countries.

The information below offers you further guidance in attaching documents to your electronic application:

Compressed files

The Board cannot accept files that have been compressed. A compressed file is a container for documents, programs or other files that have been packaged together and reduced in size. A common example is files compressed with WinZip or with a ‘.zip’ file extension. If the document you are attempting to attach is too large, we recommend that you create a PDF document.

2.6 Notification of outcome of desktop assessment

The Board will assess your application as “suitable” or “not suitable” for the occupation Podiatrist against the established criteria.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the desktop assessment within four (4) weeks of receipt of a completed application. A skills assessment remains valid for three (3) years from the date of issue.

If, for any reason, a skills assessment notification letter needs to be re-issued, a fee will apply.

2.7 Forms

Form S1-F Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment.

2.8 Fees

Fees are subject to change without notice and are non-refundable.

Registration application (includes qualification & skills assessment fee)	\$ 817.00
Cultural Open Book Exam (COBE) fee	\$1,196.00
Cultural Open Book Exam (COBE) fee for TTMRA applicants	\$ 598.00
Cultural Open Book Exam (COBE) fee for return to practice (5 years +)	\$ 598.00

Once registered:

Annual Practising Certificate (APC)	\$ 992.00
Part year APC fee (between 1 January and 31 March only)	\$ 495.50

3. Review/Appeals Process

If you are unsuccessful in the Stage 1 Full Desk Top Assessment you will receive a notification stating which eligibility criteria have not been met and what further action can be taken, including applying for an administrative appeal or an appeal.

You are encouraged to contact the Board before submitting an application for an administrative review or an appeal, as it may be possible to resolve the matter by communication with the Chief Executive/Registrar rather than by an administrative review or an appeal.

All applications for an administrative review or an appeal must be:

- In writing.
- Clearly state why a review of or an appeal against the decision is being sought; and
- Lodged within ten (10) weeks of the date on which the result was issued by the Board.

In the case of an appeal, any additional documentation that you believe supports your application should also be submitted.

(a) Administrative Review

There is no cost associated with an administrative review.

For an administrative review of a Stage 1 Desk Top Assessment (NZ), a Board representative who was not involved in the original assessment will check whether any processing errors have been made and ensure that all relevant information has been collected and considered. You will be notified of the result of the review within four (4) weeks of the date the Board receives the application. The notification will include the Board's reasons for assessing the applicant as suitable or not suitable for registration as a result of the review. If the applicant is still assessed as not suitable as a result of the review, they will be offered counselling by the Chief Executive/Registrar.

Counselling as an advisory tool is essential before progressing to an appeal. Counselling can clarify factors considered in the Stage 1 Desk Top Assessment and explain why the applicant was assessed as not meeting specific criteria.

(b) Appeal

For an appeal of a Stage 1 Desk Top Assessment, the assessment result is reconsidered and any new information you have provided is taken into account. A person who has not been previously involved in your assessment will conduct each appeal.

The Board Chief Executive/Registrar will provide a written report to the appeal assessor describing the outcome of the applicant's assessment, including all documentation submitted in support of the original application and appeal; all communication with you and the reason/s the administrative review was rejected.

You will be notified of the result of the appeal within eight (8) weeks of the date the Board receives the appeal application. The notification will include the Board's reasons for assessing you as suitable or not suitable for registration as a result of the appeal.

4. Further Information

For further information about the assessment process, please contact the Board Chief Executive/Registrar.

Email: registrar@podiatristsboard.org.nz

Website: <https://podiatristsboard.org.nz>