



## Consultation

by: The Osteopathic Council of New Zealand | Kaunihera Haumanu Tuahiwi o Aotearoa

for: Proposed Competencies for Western Medical Acupuncture and Related Needling Techniques

Consultation released:

**18 DECEMBER 2024**

Deadline for submissions:

**5PM 31 JANUARY 2025**

Submissions to:

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Osteopathic Council

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# Proposed Competence Standards for Western Medical Acupuncture and Related Needling Techniques

The Osteopathic Council of New Zealand | Kaunihera Haumanu Tuahiwi o Aotearoa (the Council) is seeking feedback on its proposed competence standards for Western Medical Acupuncture and Related Needling Techniques used in osteopathic practice in New Zealand.

## Background

The Osteopathic Council New Zealand (OCNZ) registers osteopaths and prescribes the qualifications and standard of ongoing competence required for osteopathic practice in New Zealand.

The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 imposes a duty on health care regulators in New Zealand to determine scopes of practice and mechanisms to ensure health practitioners are competent and fit to practice their profession. This duty was the driver for the Osteopathic Council developing the Western Medical Acupuncture and Related Needling Techniques Scope of Practice (WMA Scope), which, after extensive consultation with stakeholders, and the support of the Ministry of Health, was gazetted in 2009.

At the time, Council recognised that osteopaths were commonly using needling techniques, however no standards of training were determined leading to competency in practice and no sustainable means of developing and delivering training programmes existed.

Although comprehensive data on osteopaths and dry-needling adverse events is not available, dry-needling and acupuncture related techniques can, and do, result in serious injury and, at times, death. At the time the WMA Scope was developed there were no available competency frameworks for dry needling / western acupuncture related techniques for allied health professionals in the regulatory space.

The Council is currently considering a review of the prescribed qualification for the Western Medical Acupuncture Scope of Practice. As part of this work, the Council is looking to establish a competency framework for Western Medical Acupuncture and related needling techniques within osteopathic practice.

In 2023, the Council engaged a research team to lead development of this competency framework and conduct the necessary research to ensure these would be underpinned by current literature and osteopathic practise in New Zealand. As there is an existing community of practice of osteopaths that currently hold the WMA scope and utilise these techniques in practice, engagement with this community was a core activity in developing these standards.

As a regulatory authority, independent from the Crown, the Council also has a responsibility to work with iwi and Māori to give effect to and realise the promise of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As such, this work included appropriate consideration of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as described in the Osteopathic Council Code of Conduct and incorporates advice and feedback from Te Mana Tautoko, the Māori advisory group to the Council.

## Consultation

The Council is now seeking feedback on the draft minimum or threshold competencies developed in this review process.

The proposed standards can be found in the document ***Proposed Competencies for Western Medical Acupuncture***.

Details of the research project underpinning these proposed standards can be found in the document ***Research Report: Competencies for the Extended Osteopathic Scope of Practice for Western Medical Acupuncture***.

The proposed competency statements generated by this project were then revised to align with the Osteopathic Council's Competencies for Osteopathic Practice, with input from the original research team.

These competencies have also been designed to reflect the unique context of osteopathic Western Medical Acupuncture practice in New Zealand, with input from Te Mana Tautoko, the Māori advisory group to the Council.

For each of the Domains presented, we invite you to answer the following questions:

1. Do you agree with the draft Domain and associated competencies?
  - a. If so, why? If not, why not?
2. Do you think that the draft Domain will help ensure osteopaths meet their clinical and professional responsibilities when providing Western Medical Acupuncture, or related needling techniques?
3. If you consider that the draft Domain needs to be more effective and/or applicable to osteopathic practice, what changes would you suggest?
4. Do you have any other comments regarding the proposed competency framework?

Please email any feedback to us at [oste.admin@osteopathiccouncil.org.nz](mailto:oste.admin@osteopathiccouncil.org.nz)

## Review Process

Establishing a competency framework for the WMA Scope is an important first step in establishing the expected competencies and level of education required for safe practice, and for reviewing both the WMA scope and the prescribed qualification required for registration.

After the current request for consultation feedback has been completed, the Council will consider any submissions made on the proposed standards. This may lead to approval of the draft standards, or further development work and/or consultation, depending on the feedback received.

Once the Council has established a set of competence standards for Western Medical Acupuncture, the required educational standards can be considered and, by extension, the prescribed qualification(s) for registration in the scope can be reviewed. This will typically include (but not necessarily be limited to) consideration of such factors as:

- **Programme of study** – including consideration of the expected level of education, content, learning outcomes and minimum hours of learning and/or clinical experience.
- **Academic governance and quality assurance** – including consideration of institutional processes for monitoring, review and improvement of the educational programme.
- **Assessment** – including expectations around the use of validated assessment tools and moderation procedures.

These requirements may be aligned with, or supplementary to, the Osteopathic Council's *Accreditation Standards for Education Programmes leading to Registration as an Osteopath*.

Development of these educational standards, and any subsequent review of prescribed qualifications, will draw on available evidence and international best practice, and will include opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback on any proposed changes.