



Towards Updated Competencies for Osteopathic Practice

Consultation Document

October 2022

Overview

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 OCNZ was established by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003). The principal purpose of this Act is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing mechanisms to ensure that health practitioners are competent and fit to practise their profession.

Only osteopaths who are registered with the OCNZ and hold a current practising certificate may use the title of osteopath and legally practise osteopathy in New Zealand. The OCNZ sets the standard required for this practice. This standard must be regularly reviewed to ensure currency in a changing health and professional context. The current required standard was set in 2009, based on an Australian framework, and is described in the OCNZ's *Capabilities for Osteopathic Practice*.

The OCNZ is now reviewing this standard and is seeking feedback on the draft minimum or threshold competencies developed in this review process. The competencies should be read as an integrated whole.

Review process

Stage 1: Analysis of international and national trends

International osteopathic practice standards and regulatory frameworks, and the standards and frameworks of a range of relevant health professions in New Zealand, were analysed to identify current trends applicable to osteopathic registration in New Zealand.

Osteopathic standards: International search

The international search covered North America, Europe, the UK and Australia. ^(1, 2, 3, 4) Regulatory control of osteopathic practice varies widely. The US state licensing authorities do not appear to have regulatory practice frameworks but the American Osteopathic Association's *Code of Ethics* has a degree of overlap with other regulatory frameworks. ⁽¹⁾ In Canada, osteopathy is not yet a regulated profession. In response to the differences in osteopathic education in Europe, the World Health Organisation has taken a strategic role in encouraging standardisation. ⁽⁴⁾ This has influenced a number of European countries to collaborate in the development of a framework for osteopathic education. ⁽⁵⁾ This European framework identifies a range of skills and knowledge necessary for osteopathic practice but does not form a regulatory framework.

Standards of relevant professions: National search

The search of other New Zealand health professions' regulatory frameworks provided a general context of practice standards. The search included occupational therapy, oral health,

physiotherapy, nursing, medicine and pharmacy. (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) Relevant literature was also included. (12)

Analysis

The wide variation across international documents precluded a thematic analysis. However, the frameworks tended to be lengthy, detailed and multi-layered. The New Zealand frameworks showed a degree of consistency in the aspects of practice addressed, although there was variation in the way frameworks were organised. A range of terms were used but there was a trend towards the term ‘competencies’.

Stage 2: Review of current OCNZ framework

The main finding arising from the review of the current OCNZ framework was that it is detailed, multi-layered and complex. It would be beneficial to use a simpler, higher-level and more strategic approach. This would also assist in ‘future-proofing’ the framework by providing a degree of flexibility needed to address continuing changes in the health and professional contexts, while still defining the required minimum or threshold competence.

The key points to be considered are:

- shifting to the general use of ‘competencies’ rather than ‘capabilities’
- reducing the multi-layered approach by changing to two layers: domain and competencies
- simplifying the framework by using a less detailed approach
- using the UK General Osteopathic Council’s themes as the main organising framework. (3)
- highlighting Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities in a separate domain
- strengthening the focus on culture, cultural safety and diversity

Stage 3: Development of draft practice competencies

The current OCNZ framework was revised to reflect the key points arising from Stage 2. The intent and wording of the ‘elements’ in the current framework were retained wherever possible, while reducing repetition, simplifying the overall structure and shifting to a higher level approach.

Stage 4: Consultation

The OCNZ consultation process seeks views from the profession and relevant stakeholders.

While this initial preliminary consultation aligns with the Osteopathic Council Webinar Series, a more detailed consultation process will occur at later date.

Draft Practice Competencies

Overview

This document presents the draft minimum or threshold competencies for osteopathic practice in New Zealand. The competencies are intended to be read as an integrated whole.

The competencies are organised in five domains:

1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership responsibilities
2. Communication and patient partnership
3. Knowledge, skills and performance
4. Safety and quality in practice
5. Professionalism

Domain 1: Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership responsibilities

1.1 Understands the responsibilities of tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and demonstrates a commitment to meeting these responsibilities in the provision of health services

1.2 Understands the factors giving rise to the specific health needs of Māori and applies professional knowledge to work for equitable health outcomes

1.3 Understands Māori models of health, health promotion and health practices

1.4 Ensures the development of working relationships with key Māori stakeholders, where appropriate

Domain 2: Communication and patient partnership

2.1 Considers socio-cultural factors in communication, recognises diversity and practises in an inclusive and culturally safe manner

2.2 Communicates clearly and ensures patient and/or care-giver comprehension

2.3 Ensures that patients are fully informed about the osteopathic clinical encounter, and that appropriate informed consent is gained for all aspects of care

2.4 Demonstrates a commitment to working in partnership with patients and ensures their goals and concerns are identified and integrated into the clinical analysis and treatment plan

Domain 3: Knowledge, skills and performance

3.1 Recognises and acts within the scope of osteopathic practice and personal osteopathic capability

3.2 Understands and appropriately employs and adapts a range of osteopathic knowledge, skills and techniques in practice

3.3 Demonstrates an appropriate level of clinical reasoning, including diagnostic processes, patient management and prognosis

3.4 Maintains an appropriate level of recordkeeping, including communication with other health services or agencies where required

3.5 Uses reputable evidence to inform practice

3.6 Maintains a commitment to the principles of health education, disease prevention, rehabilitation and amelioration of pain

3.7 Monitors and critically reflects on practice, and maintains professional currency and competence through appropriate educational and research strategies

Domain 4: Safety and quality in practice

4.1 Acts with integrity and ensures the provision of care and services in a safe, legal, ethical, sustainable and culturally safe way

4.2 Demonstrates a professional commitment towards patient and/or care-giver trust, confidentiality, dignity and safety, and patient-oriented care

4.3 Maintains an appropriate physical environment for safe provision of services and for patient privacy, comfort and confidentiality

4.4 Ensures care of self and others engaged in provision of services

4.5 Manages risk effectively and responsibly in a way that minimises impact on all concerned

4.6 Ensures awareness of costs associated with healthcare, and the principles of efficient and equitable allocation and use of finite resources

4.7 Provides for continuing professional learning for self and, where appropriate, colleagues

Domain 5: Professionalism

5.1 Practises as part of a network of osteopaths and other providers through respectful, effective and efficient communication, to provide best patient care

5.2 Maintains a multidisciplinary approach through referral and co-management, and intra and inter-professional education

5.3 Maintains a strong understanding and critical review of osteopathic philosophy and professional ethos and its place in general healthcare systems

5.4 Maintains an awareness of regulatory and legal requirements and engages appropriately with regulatory, governmental and other relevant agencies

References

- (1) American Osteopathic Association (AOA), *Code of Ethics*, AOA, Chicago, 2016
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 - (3) General Osteopathic Council (UKGOC), *Osteopathic Practice Standards*, UKGOC, London, 2012
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 - (5) World Health Organisation (WHO), *Benchmarks for Training in Osteopathy*, WHO, Geneva, 2010
 - (6) Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (OTBNZ), *Competencies for Registration and Continuing Practice for Occupational Therapists*, OTBNZ, Wellington, n.d.
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 - (9) Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ), *Competencies for Registered Nurses*, NCNZ, Wellington, 2007.
 - (10) Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ), *Good Medical Practice*, MCNZ, Wellington, 2021.
 - (11) Pharmacy Council of New Zealand, *Competence Standards for the Pharmacy Profession*, Wellington, 2015.
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