



Accreditation Standards
for Education Programmes leading to
Registration as an Osteopath
November 2021



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Overview

The Osteopathic Council New Zealand (OCNZ) is a Health Regulatory Authority established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act). The OCNZ's accreditation function under Section 118 (a) of the Act is:

to prescribe the qualifications required for scopes of practice within the profession, and, for that purpose, to accredit and monitor educational institutions and degrees, courses of studies, or programmes.

Accreditation standards are used to assess whether a programme of study and the education provider delivering the programme provide graduates with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practise the profession in a competent and ethical manner. All programmes and education providers accredited by OCNZ are assessed and monitored against these accreditation standards.

The accreditation standards identify the minimum expected requirements and are designed to be read as an integrated whole. They are reviewed on a five-year cycle to ensure continuing public safety. This document is the culmination of the OCNZ review process undertaken during 2021.

Review process

Stage 1: Analysis of national and international trends

International osteopathic education policies and standards, and accreditation standards used by relevant health professions in New Zealand and Australia, were analysed to identify current trends applicable to New Zealand osteopathic education.

Osteopathic education: International search

The international search covered North America, Europe, the UK and Australia. It included the strategic involvement of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in osteopathic education and the combined effort of European countries towards standardisation. This is a response to the broad variation in programmes, the increase in globalisation of education and professional mobility and the resulting need to have a more reliable way to recognise qualifications across countries.^(1, 2, 3) The most relevant documents were from Australia.^(4, 5, 6)

Health professional education: New Zealand and Australia

The search of New Zealand and Australian education standards for other health professions provided a general context of health education standards. The search included nursing, medicine, dentistry, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. The most relevant documents were from nursing, physiotherapy and dentistry.^(7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

Analysis: Trends

Comparison of WHO, European and UK documents with those from Australia and New Zealand indicate a marked shift away from a focus on course content and outcomes to more strategically-focused accreditation standards in the second group.

A high degree of cross-linking is evident among health professions' accreditation standards in New Zealand and Australia. Some are jointly developed;^(12, 13) others appear to be based on those of another profession,⁽⁶⁾ or draw from those of the same profession in Australia.⁽¹⁰⁾

Analysis: Key themes

Analysis of all selected osteopathic and other health professional education documents revealed seven significant themes:

- the shift to 'higher level' accreditation standards, rather than prescriptive course content and curriculum outcomes. The most straightforward examples typically relate to five strategic domains – public safety, governance and quality improvement, programme of study, student experience, and assessment
- 'future-proofing' standards by simplifying them, enabling innovations in education design and delivery and timely responses to changing health and education contexts
- the need to address the importance of culture – for example, the inclusion of 'cultural safety' and the need to support culturally diverse students in their education experience
- in New Zealand professional education, the importance of recognising te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities, engaging with Māori in course design and review, and including te Ao Māori and Māori health in programmes
- the inclusion of evidence-based practice and research (research knowledge, scholarly activity and sometimes a dissertation or project)
- preparation for the independent yet inter-professional context of osteopathic practice, including ethics and, in the UK example, the inclusion of skills and ethics relating to business
- the need for continual learning, including graduate mentoring and continuing professional education and pathways

Stage 2: Review of current OCNZ accreditation standards

Themes identified in Stage 3 formed the framework for reviewing OCNZ's existing accreditation standards and process guide.

Review summary

The main points arising from the review that indicated areas to be considered in revising the standards were:

- shifting to fewer, higher level, more strategic standards to provide flexibility while maintaining quality
- future-proofing standards through simplification, enabling ease of use, flexibility, programme innovation and timely response to changing health and education contexts
- strengthening the focus on culture, cultural safety and support for a diverse student group, throughout the revised standards
- highlighting Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities by combining these in a separate standard

Stage 3: Development of draft accreditation standards

Accreditation standards were developed to reflect national and international trends, and to harmonise with the draft revised accreditation standards of the Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council,⁽⁶⁾ and with the Nursing Council of New Zealand's education standard relating to Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities.⁽⁸⁾

Stage 4: Consultation

The OCNZ consultation process sought views from the profession and relevant stakeholders, who were invited to complete a questionnaire in response to the draft standards. The consultation was conducted over October and November 2021. Seven responses were submitted.

Most respondents supported the draft accreditation standards. The main points from the analysis of responses were:

- Agreement that all education providers in Aotearoa New Zealand have responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and that most were already fulfilling these. One respondent expressed the opinion that the standards should emphasise diversity rather than a divisive focus only on Te Titiri o Waitangi and Māori.
- Extending some standards to ensure active recruitment of and support for Māori, provide clear processes to support students during clinical experience, emphasise the need for quality programmes that are evidence-informed and that encourage critical self-reflection and lifelong learning, and ensure timely assessment feedback to students.
- Clarifying some terms and requirements.

Stage 5: Approval of accreditation standards

OCNZ considered the information from its consultation process. Some alterations to draft standards were made in response to this process, while other points raised by respondents were considered to be already addressed elsewhere in the standards or did not relate to the need for flexibility and durability in higher level standards. The OCNZ now confirms its revised accreditation standards.

Accreditation Standards

The Accreditation Standards

The accreditation standards identify the expected requirements for education programmes leading to registration as an osteopath and are used for the purpose of programme accreditation.

The standards currently required for education programmes leading to registration as an osteopath in Aotearoa New Zealand are outlined below.

The OCNZ accreditation standards address six areas:

1. Te Titiri o Waitangi partnership responsibilities
2. Public safety
3. Academic governance and quality assurance
4. Programme of study
5. Student experience
6. Assessment

The accreditation standards require that all programmes must prepare students to meet the OCNZ Capabilities for Osteopathic Practice, and OCNZ Code of Conduct.

The Capabilities for Osteopathic Practice outline the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes required of osteopaths at the point of completion of an entry-level programme of study. The Capabilities for Osteopathic Practice highlights the nature of osteopathic practice and have been arranged within 6 domains. These reflect the model that professional capability is an expression of integrated skills, knowledge and attributes.

The domains are not listed hierarchically or linearly but are designed to be reviewed as an integrated whole.

Accreditation Standards

Standard 1: Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities

1.1 The education provider is committed to its Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership with Māori

1.2 The education provider has policies and processes that assist it to assess its institutional culture and responsiveness to Māori, and takes action to address racism and unconscious bias within its institution

1.3 The education provider has authentic and active partnerships with Māori that support the co-design, co-delivery and co-review of the programme of study

Accreditation Standards

Standard 2: Public safety

2.1 Public safety is a key guiding principle of the programme of study, learning outcomes and students' clinical learning experience

2.2 The programme delivery prepares graduates for safe, legal and ethical practice and their professional responsibilities as a registered osteopath

2.3 Students demonstrate knowledge and skills required for safe practice before providing supervised client care during their clinical learning experience

2.4 Clients give informed consent to student provision of supervised care during students' clinical learning experience

2.5 Suitably qualified and experienced practitioners, who are prepared for their supervisory role, supervise and assess students during their clinical learning experience

2.6 Services and practices providing student clinical learning experience have appropriate health and safety, client safety, and quality policies and processes and meet all relevant regulations

2.7 The education provider has effective processes to identify and manage student impairment that might place the public at risk during student clinical learning experience

Accreditation Standards

Standard 3: Academic governance and quality assurance

3.1 The education provider meets all requirements of the relevant higher education authority

3.2 The education provider has robust academic governance arrangements for the programme of study, including systematic monitoring, review and improvement

3.3 The education provider's academic governance structure ensures the head of the programme of study is an osteopath registered with the OCNZ, with no conditions or undertakings on their registration relating to performance or conduct, and holds a current Annual Practising Certificate and a relevant postgraduate qualification

3.4 Student, client, service, Māori, academic, professional and other relevant stakeholder evaluations contribute to the design, management and review of the programme of study

3.5 Curriculum review processes ensure timely, evidence-based and effective response to contemporary developments in health and professional education

Accreditation Standards

Standard 4: Programme of study

4.1 The programme develops students' understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi's principles and their application to health and osteopathy

4.2 The education provider promotes and actively supports the recruitment, retention and completion of the programme by Māori and Pasifika

4.3 Coherent osteopathic and educational philosophies inform the programme's design and delivery

4.4 The programme's content and learning outcomes embed culture, diversity, inclusion, and cultural safety for all people

4.5 The programme's learning outcomes effectively prepare graduates for competent, culturally safe, ethical, evidence-informed and self-reflective osteopathic practice in a range of settings

4.6 The programme's design, delivery, environment and resources enable achievement of learning outcomes

4.7 The programme reflects contemporary osteopathic practice and responds effectively to changes and priorities in health and healthcare, evidence-based research, and professional education

Accreditation Standards

4.8 The programme fosters intra-professional and inter-professional collaborative learning and practice

4.9 The programme develops research literacy and capability relevant to the programme's level and supports integration of research evidence in practice

4.10 The programme includes a minimum of 1000 hours of clinical learning experience, exclusive of simulation and of sufficient range and quality to ensure graduates are competent to practise across the client lifespan and across osteopathic practice settings

4.11 The programme provides opportunities for students to undertake clinical learning experiences with Māori.

4.12 Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to deliver their educational responsibilities and use learning and teaching methods designed to support student achievement of learning outcomes

4.13 Contractual arrangements with relevant clinical services ensure access to quality clinical learning experience

4.14 The programme meets all requirements of the relevant higher education authority

Accreditation Standards

Standard 5: Student experience

5.1 Programme information is clear, relevant, timely, transparent and accessible
5.2 Admission and progression requirements, policies and processes are fair and transparent
5.3 The education provider identifies and provides support to meet students' academic learning needs and a quality educational experience
5.4 Students are informed of and have access to effective grievance and appeals processes and personal support services by qualified personnel
5.5 Students have effective representation in the programme's advisory and decision-making processes
5.6 Equity, diversity, inclusion and cultural safety principles are observed and promoted in the student experience
5.7 The education provider actively supports and encourages Māori students' participation, experience and achievement in the programme of study
5.8 The student experience is regularly evaluated and informs the programme's continual quality improvement

Accreditation Standards

Standard 6: Assessment

6.1 The programme's theoretical and clinical assessment of student learning is comprehensive, fair, valid, reliable and embodies principles of equity and cultural safety

6.2 The programme's learning outcomes and assessment strategies are clearly aligned and the scope of assessment is comprehensive

6.3 Multiple validated assessment tools, modes and sampling are used and include direct observation in the clinical setting

6.4 Moderation procedures are appropriate, robust, fair, consistent and transparent

6.5 Assessments enhance learning, provide clear, appropriate and timely feedback to the student, and inform student progression

6.6 The education provider exercises ultimate accountability for student assessment in relation to students' clinical learning experience

References

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