



**DRAFT**  
**Continuing Competence Programme  
For Osteopaths**

**Effective from 1 April 2021**  
*(Approved by Council [date])*

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## Introduction

1. The Osteopathic Council of New Zealand (Council), is required by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 to protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring that osteopaths are fit and competent to practise their profession.
2. Among other responsibilities set out in section 118 of the Act, Council must recognise, accredit and set programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of osteopaths. In order to meet this obligation, Council has set a new recertification programme (Continuing Competence Programme (CCP)) under section 41(3)(f) of the Act, requiring all osteopaths who hold a practising certificate to actively engage in continuing professional development (CPD) in accordance with the requirements set out in this policy.
3. During 2019 and 2020, Council undertook extensive research into current thinking on quality continuing competence practice, and consulted with the profession. As a result of that process, Council decided to update the requirements of its CCP to encourage all osteopaths to engage in CPD that is:
  - High quality
  - Relevant to their individual learning needs
  - Appropriate to their practice
  - Likely to improve both their knowledge and their practice.

## What is CPD, and why must I do it?

4. A relevant qualification provides an osteopath with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter the profession, but it is not the final step of any osteopath's educational process. For the safety of their patients, osteopaths are obliged to remain current on advances and trends in delivery of healthcare services. This is achieved through career-long participation in CPD.
5. Council defines CPD as a range of learning activities that maintain, enhance and develop an osteopath's practice throughout their career. CPD may include learning and development relevant to clinical, managerial, social, ethical, cultural and personal skills required for the safe practice of osteopathy in New Zealand.

## Council's philosophy on continuing competence

6. The CCP is an opportunity for Council to ensure that its philosophy on continuing competence is clearly understood by osteopaths, and enables osteopaths to broaden their own views of what constitutes continuing competence. Three key principles underpin Council's philosophy on continuing competence.

**Principle 1: Continuing professional development opportunities exist in everyday practice.**

**Principle 2: Learning with peers creates valuable opportunities for practice insights and improvements**

**Principle 3: Working within an appropriate learning framework helps to embed knowledge, skills and attitudes in practice**

*Principle 1: Continuing professional development opportunities exist in everyday practice.*

7. Council is of the view that most - if not all - osteopaths will easily meet the requirements of the CCP if they continue to do what they have always done – provided that they document their learning process.
8. For example, a conversation with a colleague about how to manage a difficult case (regardless of whether you are the osteopath asking for input or providing input) is likely to provide a learning opportunity for both parties to the conversation. If this is followed up with an email from the treating osteopath to the colleague they consulted, which sets out the outcome of the treatment, and any lessons learned, that email will constitute a record of a continuing competence activity for both participants.

*Principle 2: Learning with peers creates valuable opportunities for practice insights and improvements*

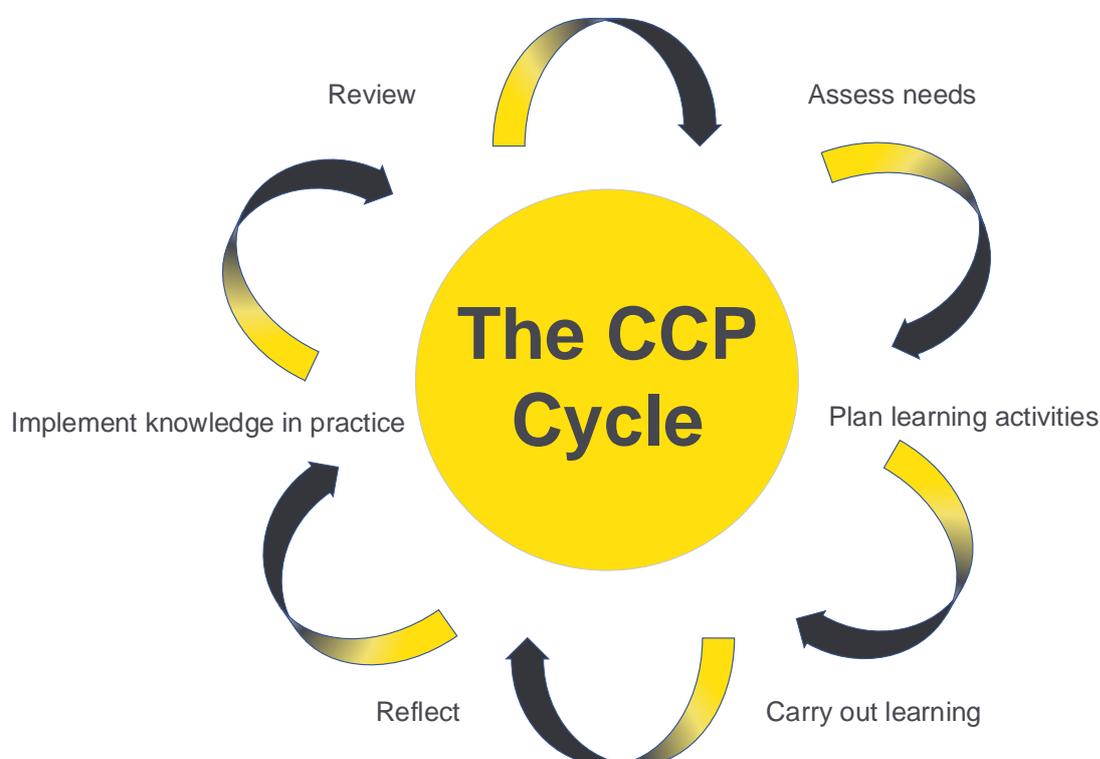
9. Council recognises that, as a profession, osteopathy tends to be practised in more isolation than many other health professions. Council is also aware that professional isolation can be a risk factor for poor performance.
10. With this in mind, Council is of the view that osteopaths should engage in peer review as part of their CCP activities (whether with another osteopath, or in a multi-disciplinary environment). Council strongly encourages osteopaths to engage in some form of peer review as part of their CCP.<sup>1</sup>
11. Importantly, Council expressly supports osteopaths engaging meaningfully with other health practitioner colleagues, with a view to building strong professional networks that ensure quality patient care and safety.

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<sup>1</sup> Council has developed guidance on peer review and self-reflection to assist osteopaths with these processes.

*Principle 3: Working within an appropriate learning framework helps to embed knowledge, skills and attitudes in practice*

12. Council believes that for the best results, osteopaths need to put time into:
- assessing their learning needs;
  - planning their CPD to address those needs
  - carrying out the learning;
  - reflecting on what they have learned and what it might mean for their future practice;
  - if appropriate, implementing those learnings into their practice; and
  - reviewing how their practice has changed as a result of the learnings.
13. This is a cyclical process as set out in the diagram below.<sup>2</sup>



## Continuing Competence Programme - requirements

### Core requirements

14. Council has set the following core requirements for the CCP.
- All osteopaths who hold a practising certificate must engage in at least 50 points (1-point equating to 1 hour of learning) of CPD in every two-year recertification cycle. The first recertification cycle under this policy begins on 1 April 2021 and ends on 31 March 2023.

<sup>2</sup>Council has developed guidance to assist osteopaths with planning and completing the CCP cycle.

- A minimum of 10 hours must be completed in each year; however, Council expects that osteopaths will plan their CPD activity in such a way that it is relatively evenly spread throughout the cycle.
- As part of each cycle, each osteopath must:
  - Assess and record their learning needs, demonstrating that they have considered their learning needs with reference to the Council's Capabilities for Osteopaths, Code of Ethics and other relevant standards and policies;
  - Plan their learning activities, and document their plan;
  - Carry out the learning, and retain evidence of that learning;
  - Reflect on what they have learned, and document their reflections
  - Implement relevant changes in their practice; and
  - Review the impact on their practice following implementation, and document the results.
- Council will monitor compliance by periodically auditing a random sample of evidence requested from a random sample of osteopaths. Each selected osteopath will be asked to submit their learning plan and specified documentation relevant to activities undertaken.
- CCP activities must be recorded in Council's online CCP platform. *(At the time of consultation, this platform is under development. Guidance will be provided on using the platform).*

### Exemptions

15. Under section 41(5) of the Act, Council may exempt any practitioner, or class of practitioner, from all or any of the requirements of a recertification programme. Council has exempted all registered osteopaths who do not hold a current practising certificate (non-practising osteopaths) from all requirements of the CCP. However, Council strongly recommends that non-practising osteopaths intending to return to practice continue to participate in the CCP.
16. There is no exemption or reduction in requirements for osteopaths in part-time practice. All practising osteopaths must meet the required standards of competence, regardless of the number of hours they work.
17. Council may consider a request from an individual osteopath for exemption from some or all requirements of the CCP where there are exceptional circumstances that limit the osteopath's ability to meet requirements. Any request for an exemption should be made as soon as the individual osteopath becomes aware that they may have difficulty meeting requirements.

### **Pro-rating of points**

18. Where an osteopath obtains a practising certificate part way through a CCP cycle, their points requirement will be pro-rated to the end of the cycle as follows:

Practising certificate issued	Points required
Year 1: March to May	50
Year 1: June - August	44
Year 1: September - December	38
Year 1: January to March	32
Year 2: March to May	24
Year 2: June - August	18
Year 2: September - December	12
Year 2: January - March	0

## Verification of participation

19. At both the mid-point and the end of the CCP cycle, Council may ask a random sample of osteopaths to supply documentation to support their CCP records. The purpose of this is to:
- Assure Council that osteopaths are completing the requirements of the CCP (including staying up to date with recording their activities); and
  - Identify whether there is a need to develop further resources to help osteopaths to meet requirements.
20. If, following a mid-point verification, an osteopath's CCP record appears to be inadequate, Council will advise the osteopath of any concerns identified and refer the osteopath to Council's guidance documents so that the osteopath can decide how to remedy the issue. Council is likely to re-verify that osteopath's records at the end of the cycle to satisfy itself that the concerns have been addressed and that the osteopath's continuing competence practice has improved.

### Non-compliance

21. The CCP is a critical aspect of Council's role in assuring the competence of osteopaths, so Council needs to be assured that osteopaths are genuinely engaging with requirements. Council acknowledges that most osteopaths will make a genuine effort to engage in quality CPD that is relevant to their practice and learning needs.
22. Osteopaths who appear to have made a genuine effort but whose CCP does not meet Council's expectations will be provided with advice and education to assist them in improving their continuing competence practice.
23. However, there may be circumstances where Council takes a more serious view of an osteopath's non-compliance with CCP requirements. These circumstances include (but are not limited to):

- There is a significant deficit in the number of points required for the cycle;
  - The osteopath is unable to provide documentation to support a significant number of activities recorded; or
  - The osteopath has previously been provided with advice and education from Council and has not made improvements to their continuing competence practice.
24. In such cases, under section 43 of the Act, Council may order that:
- The osteopath's scope of practice is altered by the inclusion of conditions, or by changing the health services they are permitted to perform; or
  - The osteopath's registration is suspended.
25. When considering whether to make orders under section 43 of the Act, Council will invite submissions from the osteopath, and will consider the individual facts of the case before deciding how to proceed.

## Recording CCP

***This section is to be completed when Council has further detail on the structure of its online CCP platform (currently under development)***

26.

## Further guidance

Council has developed a guidance document that sits alongside this policy. The aim of the guidance document is to help osteopaths to engage in quality CPD. Osteopaths are not obliged to follow the guidance. [Click here for the document \*Continuing Competence Programme Guidance for Osteopaths\*](#)