

Purpose

The principal purpose of the Health Practitioner's Competence Assurance Act (HPCAA) is to protect the health and safety of the public. As the regulator for Occupational Therapy under the Act, the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (OTBNZ) is responsible for ensuring that all occupational therapists are, and remain, fit and competent to practise.

The OTBNZ has elected to ensure monitor and assure the competence of occupational therapists in Aotearoa New Zealand through the ePortfolio process.

Scope

This policy applies to all occupational therapists who are registered in the General Scope of Practice as an occupational therapist and holding a practising certificate in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Competence

The specific areas of competence required of occupational therapists in Aotearoa New Zealand are defined by the [Competencies for Registration and Continuing Practice \(2021\)](#).

Competence incorporates the individual's ability to consistently apply professional knowledge, skills, judgment, and diligence in response to ever-changing situations in the workplace. Competence is not a state that is reached and then does not change, rather it is fluid and dynamic, a state that is ongoing and ever-evolving across a practitioner's career. Competence indicates sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations.

The ePortfolio is designed to allow occupational therapists to record and demonstrate their ongoing professional development in the competency areas.

ePortfolio

The OTBNZ mandates participation in the ePortfolio as a recertification programme for all practising occupational therapists under section 41 of the HPCAA.

The ePortfolio provides the OTBNZ with assurance about practitioners' maintenance of their continuing competence through the appropriate engagement in professional development activities, evidenced in the ePortfolio.

The ePortfolio has been defined as: "A purposeful collection of information and digital artefacts that demonstrates development or evidence learning outcomes, skills, or competencies. The process of producing an ePortfolio (writing, typing, recording etc.) usually requires the synthesis of ideas, reflection on achievements, self-awareness

and forward planning; with the potential for educational, developmental or other benefits” (Cotterill, 2007).

The ePortfolio is a 2-year cycle, based on ongoing critical self-reflection against each of the five competencies for registration and continuing practice.

Oversight of ePortfolio

The OTBNZ has oversight of the ePortfolio at several different levels.

Declarations

Each time an occupational therapist applies for a practising certificate they are required to declare their intention to engage in the ePortfolio process.

Third party attestation

Occupational therapists who have been recently practising in Aotearoa New Zealand are required to nominate another practising occupational therapist who views their ePortfolio and attests that the engagement is appropriate.

Supervision

Each occupational therapist is required to nominate a supervisor who will have oversight of their ePortfolio. Supervisors are required to make statements regarding participation in the ePortfolio process once every 2-year cycle.

Auditing

The OTBNZ undertakes a structured annual auditing process. The criterion for this process is detailed in the [ePortfolio Audit Policy](#).

Monitoring

The OTBNZ monitors ePortfolio participation and supervision at various stages throughout the cycle.

Other

The ePortfolio of an individual occupational therapist may be viewed any time by the OTBNZ.

Overall audit

The OTBNZ conducts overall audits of each ePortfolio cycle. These are conducted on an anonymised basis with the aim of quality improvement and identifying areas for future development. The audit is conducted using an ethical framework and the results published by the OTBNZ.

Concerns and unsatisfactory results

In general, concerns about an occupational therapist's ePortfolio may be raised or identified by:

- a notification from a third party or supervisor
- referral from an audit process
- routine monitoring by OTBNZ
- a notification
- OTBNZ staff.

Concerns may be in the form of:

- failure to engage with the ePortfolio
- concerns about the content of the practitioners ePortfolio
- problems in achieving a required standard in their ePortfolio
- compliance issues are identified during an audit.

Where concerns or unsatisfactory results are identified these will be managed according to the ePortfolio escalation process.

The process may begin at any step, and steps may be included or excluded depending on the circumstances. Unsatisfactory progress will be managed by the OTBNZ Board under section 43 of the HPCAA.

Where the content of an ePortfolio raises a question about the competence, conduct, or fitness of an occupational therapist, this will be managed as a notification in accordance with OTBNZ Notification Policies.



Figure 1: Escalation process for ePortfolio

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