



**Consultation Paper on Draft Registration
Standard for Limited Registration**

**Submission to the
Osteopathy Board of Australia
by the Australian Osteopathic Association
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Executive Summary

Osteopathy maintains an excellent safety record in Australia. High education standards, thorough assessment criteria and examination processes of overseas trained osteopaths entering Australia have helped maintain that record.

The AOA has some questions regarding the transparency of the consultation process on a Registration Standard as it appears that partial implementation has already occurred and some individuals have already been granted registration.

The AOA would like to clarify what education strategies the OBA intends to undertake to ensure registrants have a good understanding of the proposed registration standard.

The AOA offers its full support for the proposed limited registration standard for postgraduate training, or for educational seminar provision.

The AOA offers its full support for limited registration to enable the clinical component of the Australian and New Zealand Osteopathic Council Assessment.

The AOA has concerns relating to individuals, with limited registration, practicing osteopathy prior to completing appropriate and thorough examinations.

The AOA considers the guidelines lack specificity on:

- Supervisor eligibility or training standards;
- Conflict of interest issues related to being the employer/business owner and supervisor;
- Professional Indemnity requirements
- Prevention strategies to prevent misuse of the Registration Standard for working holidays
- Accurate and timely information to supervisors or applicants via AHPRA.

This submission

The Australian Osteopathic Association (AOA) appreciates this opportunity to further comment on the proposed draft Registration Standard for Limited Registration; however, it does have concerns that the statutory regulator is proposing a registration standard that may compromise public safety.

The AOA has concerns that components of this proposal will compromise public safety standards

Osteopathy has an excellent safety record in Australia. High education standards among nationally trained osteopaths and thorough examination processes for overseas trained osteopaths entering Australia have helped maintain that record. The AOA works hard with our members, regulators, insurers and educators on standards to ensure osteopathic practice is safe and reliable; particularly, as any inappropriate conduct by an individual damages the osteopathic profession as a whole.

The AOA is concerned that parts of this proposal will allow “*non-accessed*” individuals to practice osteopathy in Australia. As such, we believe such a proposal places the public at greater risk of practitioner misconduct or injury.

Implementation of requirements

To reiterate our comments made in connection with the OBA’s other consultation papers, is the OBA able to provide a timetable for when the standard is expected to come into effect and when and how will the OBA communicate this new standard and its requirements to registrants? Will the OBA undertake any educational activities to ensure supervisors and/or registrants are aware of their obligations?

The Draft Registration Standard appears to have been implemented and granted to individuals prior to public consultation and/or Ministerial Approval.

The AOA has some questions regarding the transparency of a consultation process on a Registration Standard that appears to have already been (in-part) implemented and granted to individuals in Australia.

Limited Registration for Post Graduate Training

The AOA offers its full support for the proposed limited registration standard for postgraduate training, or for educational seminar provision, due to the specific requirement which prohibits the registrant from practising in any capacity outside of their clinical training program.

Limited Registration for ANZOC Clinical Assessment

The AOA offers its full support for limited registration to enable the clinical component of the Australian and New Zealand Osteopathic Council Assessment to be properly instigated and managed; this support comes with the specific proviso that limited registration will only be for the period necessary for prospective registrants to undertake the ANZOC Assessment.

Safety concerns regarding Limited Registration that allows practice, even under supervision

Despite AOA support for limited registration for postgraduate training, and the Australian and New Zealand Osteopathic Council Assessment, we have concerns regarding limited registration for supervised practice.

The AOA finds the introduction of this registration standard at odds with the OBA role in protecting the public by ensuring only competent and credentialed osteopaths are registered to practice within Australia.

We offer the following comments with a view to further improving the understanding and intent of this component of the standard.

Supervision Training and Guidelines

The AOA acknowledges the considerable work by the OBA on templates to assist in supervision requirements; however our concern is that the vast majority of osteopaths will have no experience in providing structured training and supervision.

Currently, the *Guidelines for Supervised Practice* provides us with sufficient detail of the administrative requirement; but little or no information on how to supervise effectively.

The AOA requests that the OBA develop guidelines to assist and educate supervisors on their role and responsibilities regarding clinical education and supervision; mentoring; registration standards and codes of conduct; the Australian health care system and particularly any conflicts of interest.

The AOA considers that structured training, provided by the OBA as an online education module, should be compulsory prior to any supervision being undertaken.

The Guidelines for Supervised Practice states that a supervisor may take leave of their supervising role for a period of up to one month, as long as they appoint a replacement supervisor, all without having to notify the Board. It does not however make any comment on any minimum eligibility requirements or minimum standards required of the replacement supervisor while the nominated supervisor is on leave, i.e. must they also have a minimum of 5 years experience or can they just delegate

the job to their associate with 1 years experience while they are on leave for up to a month.

Conflict of interest – Principle/Supervisor:

Although the standard highlights the conflict of interest that can occur between friends, relatives; being the employer and supervisor places most supervisors immediately in a conflict of interest between the staffing needs of their business and the requirements of supervision and reporting. For many (particularly in areas where recruiting may be difficult) the result of reporting misconduct equates to losing your associate and the money supervisors may have already invested in their employment, training and induction.

Professional Indemnity Requirements: The AOA is aware that insurers are highly likely to have concerns regarding risk management and their ability to offer Professional Indemnity Insurance for those who have not undergone proper assessment of competency.

Working holidays /short term options: The AOA is concerned that those seeking limited registration for supervised practice may be doing so as an option to avoid the full cost or scrutiny of thorough competency assessment. This category of registration will (for the first time) allow those who wish to practice in Australia for a short term working holiday the potential to do so and then leave prior to completing full assessment of their competency.

By the time any conduct complaint, or indemnity claim, has been lodged against the limited registrant they may have left the country with little or no consequence to them individually; however the consequence to the public or the supervisor could be profound.

Can the OBA explain how it will safeguard the public by ensuring systems prevent such abuse of limited registration to practice?

Ability of OBA/AHPRA to answer queries or offer advice: As you already know, the AOA receives a high number of calls each week asking for an interpretation of the current OBA guidelines or registration standards.

Under best practice in regulation is it generally acknowledged that if guidelines are to be effective and enforceable they must be clearly understood, directly applicable to those being regulated and not be open to varied interpretation.

We envisage that *supervised practice* will lead to many pre-registrant and prospective supervisor enquiries. If the OBA does not intend to develop training modules for supervisors, AHPRA staff will need to have significant knowledge of the supervision requirements and osteopathic registration standards in order to provide accurate answers.

In summary

The AOA has strong concerns relating to individuals, with limited registration, practicing osteopathy prior to completing appropriate and thorough examinations due to the risk it places on unsuspecting members of the public.

Without further compliance requirements, advice or guidance, the AOA consider this component of the standard actually reduces current standard and therefore increases the potential for harm to the public.