



Osteopathy registration: what you need to know

2020

Why should you care?

- No registration, no job as an osteopath
 - cannot use the title ‘Osteopath’
 - restricted practice: one of only four professions legally able to manipulate the cervical spine
- REMINDER: you cannot work as an osteopath if you are not registered and can be prosecuted for claiming to be an osteopath if not registered (just like you cannot drive without a valid driver’s licence).

What is the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme?



- A single, national regulatory system for registered health professions
- 15 health profession boards
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)
- [Accreditation](#)

Regulated health professions



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice

Chinese medicine

Chiropractic

Dental practice

Medical

Medical radiation practice

Nursing

Midwifery

Occupational therapy

Optometry

Osteopathy

Pharmacy

Physiotherapy

Podiatry

Psychology

Paramedicine

The National Scheme



- **Mobility:** registered osteopaths are able to practise across Australia
- **Uniformity:** consistent national standards – registration and professional conduct
- **Efficiency:** streamlined, effective
- **Collaboration:** sharing, learning and understanding between professions
- **National online registers:** showing current conditions on practice (except health)
- **Includes notifications**
- **Protects the public**

Who does what?



Osteopathy Board of Australia

- Sets national standards, codes and guidelines for osteopathy
- Decides who is registered to be a osteopath
- Approves accredited programs of study
- Oversees assessment of overseas trained practitioners
- Deals with notifications

What is Ahpra?

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)

- Provides support and administration services to National Boards and Committees
- Operates one national office with shopfront in each State and Territory
- Employs staff, owns property and enters into contracts on behalf of Boards



Key features of registration

- Mandatory standards that must be met to remain registered:
 - Criminal history
 - Continuing professional development
 - Recency of practice
 - Professional indemnity insurance
 - English language skills
- Ahpra audits the first four every year

Five mandatory standards

1. English language skills – IELTS 7

- if you are in doubt you need to check early and do an IELTS test before it expires or your visa expires.

2. Criminal history – including current students who must notify

- every convictions for an offence
- every plea of guilty or finding of guilt by a court of the practitioner for an offence, and whether or not a conviction is recorded for the offence
- every charge made against the practitioner for an offence, and
- international criminal history check when registering for the first time.

You must notify Ahpra within seven days if:

- you have been charged with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more

Five mandatory standards . . .

- you have been convicted or subject to a finding of guilt for an offence punishable by imprisonment.

3. Recency of practice:

- at least 450 hours of clinical practice in the previous three years in order to maintain recency of practice in the clinical domain (pro rata for new graduates)

4. Continuing Professional Development (CPD):

- 25 hours per year including four hours mandatory CPD activity (pro-rata for new graduates – six hours for every three months of registration remaining)
- plus current senior first aid certificate

Five mandatory standards . . .



5. Professional Indemnity Insurance:

- no set minimum of cover and to be organised before you start practicing.

You must keep records of having met all of these standards for five years

The National Law bans specific types of advertising



- makes misleading claims
- offers an inducement such as a gift or discount (unless the relevant terms and conditions are also included)
- uses testimonials, and/or
- creates unreasonable expectations of beneficial treatment, or encourages the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of a service

Advertising guidelines

Care must be taken when using certain words in advertising, such as:

- Cure
- Can help/improve
- Safe
- Effective
- Non-invasive

Use of the title 'Dr'

- There are no provisions under the National Law that prohibit an osteopath from using the title doctor.
- *If practitioners choose to adopt the title 'doctor' in their advertising and branding, and they are not a registered medical practitioner, then (whether or not they hold a Doctorate degree or PhD) they should make it clear that they do not hold registration as a medical practitioner: Dr Nikole Grbin (Osteopath)*

Social media – your footprint



- The use of [social media](#) is not prohibited under the National Law but be mindful that interactions and content can remain in cyberspace for a long time
- Social media is seen as advertising too so be mindful of patient privacy and consent
- Examples such as illegal activity, derogatory comments about people treated in clinic and impairment affecting practice could be problems

Key features of registration

- [Student registration](#)
- Initial registration application upon qualification, then apply to renew every year
- Public online [register of osteopaths](#)
- Notifications (complaints)
 - health, performance and conduct
 - mandatory notifications, and
 - more at www.ahpra.gov.au/notifications

Why register?

- Registration is a legal requirement
 - main purpose: public protection
 - only suitable persons with approved qualifications, who meet requirements of registration standards, are eligible
- If you want to practise as an osteopath you must be registered
- Qualification is not registration

Why are osteopaths registered?



You must not practise unregistered:

- Fines of up to \$60,000
- Up to 3 years in prison

What constitutes practice?

Practice is any role where health practitioner skills and knowledge are used whether remunerated or not.

Not restricted to direct clinical care – includes working in:

- nonclinical relationship with clients
- management and administration
- education and research
- advisory, regulatory or policy roles
- any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession and/or use professional skills

When things go wrong

- You will be held to account against the Registration Standards and the [Osteopathy Code of Conduct](#)
- Common complaints:
 - communication
 - boundary issues
 - behaviour
 - clinical care
 - documentation.

Voluntary notifications



Anyone may make a notification about an osteopaths **performance, conduct or health** in writing, on-line or by phone.

Mandatory notifications

Practitioners and employers must report osteopaths if they have reasonable direct knowledge or evidence they have engaged in notifiable conduct:

- practising while intoxicated by drugs or alcohol
- engaging in sexual misconduct in professional practice
- placing the public at risk of substantial harm through a physical or mental impairment affecting practice
- placing the public at risk of harm through a substantial departure from accepted professional standards

Becoming registered

- Graduation does not mean automatic registration
- You must [apply](#) for registration at Ahpra
- [Applications](#) can be made online in October (early)
- The university provides the information to Ahpra
- Pay application and registration [fees](#)
- You must meet registration requirements
- Annual renewal by 30 November each year

What are applicant obligations?

- Ensure all information provided is **true and correct**
- **Up-date any changes** to principal place of practice, postal address, name changes during application process
- If you are unsure whether to disclose information – disclose anyway or call Ahpra for more information

Serious penalties may apply if an applicant is found to have provided false and/or misleading information, including the application being refused.

After registration

Ongoing practitioner responsibilities ...

- **Annual renewal** by **30 November** (online renewal encouraged)
 - late fee or reapplication (with all documentation) will be required
- **Declare:**
 - change of contact details
 - principal place of practice
 - criminal proceedings
 - health issues likely to impact on practice

After registration

Ongoing practitioner responsibilities ...

- Minimum 25 hours CPD each year including 4 hours mandatory CPD activity: record and reflect
- Current senior first aid certificate
- Recency of practice: 450 hours over three years
- Adhere to standards
- Mandatory notification requirements

Other osteopathy organisations



- Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council
 - assesses and accredits osteopathy education programs leading to eligibility for registration as an osteopath in registration
- Osteopathy Australia
 - peak body representing the interests of osteopaths
- Osteopathy Council of NSW
 - manages notifications (complaints) about the conduct, performance or health of osteopathy practitioners and students in New South Wales

How do I stay informed?

- FAQs:
 - check website for information
- www.osteopathyboard.gov.au
 - this is your main source of information, make sure to check back regularly for changes affecting your profession
 - if you would like to receive email updates for important changes, make sure to supply your email address when registering
 - online enquiry form
- Call 1300 419 495

How do I stay informed? . . .



- Osteopathy Board of Australia
Ahpra
G.P.O Box 9958
Melbourne VIC 3001
- 'Like' or 'follow' Ahpra on Facebook and Twitter