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Recognition of Podiatry Qualifications in Australia

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Introduction

This booklet has been prepared by the Australasian Podiatry Council for the information and guidance of overseas trained podiatrists who are resident in Australia and seeking recognition of their skills, and for those considering, or being considered for, migration to Australia.

Australia has a federal system of government and is divided into six independently-governed States and two Territories. As in most countries, the practice of a profession in Australia requires evidence of an appropriate level of education and practical experience. Each Australian State and Territory government has separate legislation covering the recognition of podiatry qualifications. Registration with the appropriate State Podiatrists Registration Board is a mandatory requirement before a person can practise in the profession in Australia. The unregistered practice of podiatry is punishable by law. This booklet outlines the steps you will need to obtain registration as a podiatrist in either Australia.

Up until mid-1994, all overseas podiatrists who wished to work in Australia applied to the National Office for Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), a Commonwealth Government body, for registration purposes. Since 1 July 1994, the Australasian Podiatry Council (APodC) has been responsible for the assessment of qualifications of overseas podiatrists wishing to work in Australia.

Podiatry in Australia

Podiatry, also known as chiropody, is a well established profession in Australia. Podiatrists are primary health care professionals responsible for the care and treatment of the foot. They diagnose foot abnormalities and institute appropriate treatment, which may include the use of diagnostic radiography, podiatric instruments, clinical dressings, topical and oral drugs, local anaesthesia, minor surgical procedures, electrical treatment and the prescription of orthoses. Most podiatrists in Australia work in private practice. Others work in hospitals, local government clinics, community health centres and aged care facilities.

Australian institutions offering podiatry courses are the University of Western Sydney (NSW), La Trobe University (Victoria), University of South Australia, Queensland University of Technology and Charles Sturt University (NSW).

To become a podiatrist, a person must meet the entry requirements of one of these institutions offering podiatry courses and then complete a three or four year full-time course leading to an appropriate tertiary qualification in podiatry.

Knowledge and Competencies Needed by a Podiatrist

The knowledge and competencies expected of a podiatrist in Australia are listed below:-

Knowledge

- the scope, limitations and ideals of podiatry practice;
- the legal and ethical responsibilities of a podiatrist;
- the normal structure and function of the foot and leg;
- human posture and gait;
- the aetiology, pathology and clinical features of podiatric abnormalities; and
- diseases and abnormalities which may be of concern to a podiatrist.

Competencies

- recognise and understand the diseases and abnormalities which are of concern to a podiatrist;
- take a relevant case history, conduct a physical examination and accurately record information;
- critically analyse information to formulate a diagnosis;
- institute appropriate treatment. This may include the use of podiatric instruments, clinical dressings, topical and oral drugs, local anaesthetics, minor surgical procedures, electrical treatments and the prescription of orthoses;
- understand the role of other health professionals and recognise the value of referral to them in the interests of the patient; and
- be able to communicate with patients in a manner appropriate to their age and culture.

Professional Organisation

There is an **Australian Podiatry Association** in each state, to which most practising podiatrists belong. These organisations are affiliated with the Australasian Podiatry Council and, amongst other services:-

- conduct continuing education courses and seminars;
- provide advice on professional ethics and other aspects of podiatry practice;
- offer information concerning local workplace opportunities;
- offer access to a group malpractice insurance scheme.

Enquiries concerning the Australian organisations should be directed to the office of the Australasian Podiatry Council in the first instance.

Entry of overseas qualified podiatrists into the profession

In order for overseas-qualified podiatrists to be registered in Australia, they are required to undergo examination procedures established by the Australasian Podiatry Council.

These procedures have been designed specifically to assess the theoretical knowledge and practical competencies of candidates, as their qualifications do not immediately meet Australian registration requirements.

These procedures include:-

- ◆ a **written examination** in the multiple-choice-question format of about two hours duration in total (**Stage I**), and
- ◆ a **practical and oral examination (Stage II)** of a full day's duration.
- ◆ an **English test** is also required for applicants whose first language is not English.
- ◆ evidence of current **First-Aid/CPR certification**.

Applicants who have successfully completed a podiatry course at one of the Approved Overseas Podiatry Schools listed in the rear of this booklet may be exempt from the Stage I examination.

Applicants who are from the UK will be considered on an individual basis provided they have:

- Current registration and
- A three year tertiary degree qualification in podiatry from an approved school and
- All requested documentation received with initial application and approved

The Stage I examination can be attempted in most Australian capital cities and overseas wherever approved supervisory arrangements are in place; whereas the Stage II examination must be undertaken in one of the Schools of Podiatry in Australia.

Candidates passing these examinations and requirements will be issued with a certificate, which is recognised by all Registration Boards in Australia.

Eligibility

To be eligible to undertake the Australasian Podiatry Council assessment process, a candidate;-

- 1 Must have completed a three-year full-time tertiary degree course in podiatry or its part-time equivalent.
- 2 Must have current registration, or be eligible for registration, in the country where the qualification was granted.

For candidates to sit any exams they must have successfully completed a three year tertiary degree course (or equivalent) in podiatry. If less than 3 years (i.e. 18 months/2 years) candidates are not eligible and must complete a podiatry course from an Australian/New Zealand school listed in the rear of this booklet.

Exemption from the Stage II Examination

Candidates from the UK may be exempt from sitting the Stage II examination in the following circumstances:

- Current registration,
- A three year tertiary degree in podiatry from an approved school,
- All requested documentation received with initial application and approved

Applications

Prospective candidates must initially complete an application form supplied by the office of the Australasian Podiatry Council and return to the office at the address listed on the front of this booklet. The following documentation should accompany the application:-

- Certified copies of qualification papers,
- An official certified transcript of podiatry courses completed showing subjects and examination results,
- Evidence of professional work experience from graduation to present and two references from employers (or if self-employed, from professional colleagues), and
- Certified copy of current registration or licence to practice
- Certified translation in English of any documents originally issued in a language other than English
- Certified copy of current First Aid/CPR Certificate.

The initial application fee is \$650 for overseas residents.
If you are living in Australia please add 10% GST (\$650+\$65GST=\$715).
Payment must accompany the submitted documentation.
NB: All fees are in Australian Dollars.

Occupational English Test (OET)

If English is not the first language of the candidate, he/she must sit the Occupational English test, administered by the Centre for Adult Education (CAE). The OET assesses the English language proficiency of medical and health professionals wishing to study in, to migrate to and/or practice in Australia. It assesses reading, writing and speaking skills. A satisfactory level in all four sections of the test is required (a B pass or better in all four categories.)

The APodC will also accept a satisfactory result in the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) in place of the OET, provided the test is undertaken in the Academic Module and the test result is 7.5 or above in all four bands, with a 7.5 or greater overall band. The OET is the preferred test as it is designed to assess English language, taking into account the particular skills of the health professional.

At present, the OET is conducted each year during February and August and in all capital cities in Australia. Outside Australia it is conducted in March and September in another 50 international cities. Candidates liaise directly with the examination provider. Candidates must pass this test, if applicable, or gain an exemption, before proceeding to the Stage I examination.

The OET Centre
GPO Box 372
Melbourne VICTORIA 3001, Australia
Telephone + 61 3 9825 3800
Email: oet@oet.com.au
Website: www.occupationalenglishtest.org

Stage I Examination

The Stage I Examination is in a multiple choice format and is designed to test the candidate's knowledge of the podiatric sciences as used in Australian practice. The following topics are covered: anatomy, physiology, pathology, podology (including professional and legal responsibilities), biomechanics, anaesthesia and medical sciences. A pass in all subject areas is required for a successful overall pass.

Candidates may be eligible to sit the Stage I examination in the following circumstances:

- The candidate has completed a three year, tertiary degree course (or equivalent) in podiatry, at a school which is not listed as an Approved Overseas Podiatry School (see list of approved schools in this booklet),
- The candidate demonstrates documented evidence of registration to practise in the country in which he/she currently resides,
- All other required documentation has been provided

If this is the case, the candidate will be sent a letter advising this, along with an application form to sit this particular examination. The application fee for the Stage I exam is \$AUS800 if sat overseas. If your Stage I exam will take place in Australia, please add 10% GST (i.e. \$800 + \$80 = AUS\$880). A cheque or credit card authority must accompany the returned form.

The candidate may sit the exam either overseas or within Australia, provided it is conducted under supervision (i.e. at an Australian podiatry school or under supervisory arrangements approved by the APodC). The applicant is notified of the result in writing, within eight weeks of the examination.

Stage II Examination

The Stage II Examination is based upon entry level podiatry standards as defined by the Australasian Podiatry Council's *Competency Standards for the Australian Podiatry Profession (1994)* and is designed to provide an objective approach to assessment of the individual, utilising a variety of assessment tools.

The assessment is conducted in two stages over a full day. The first stage takes between three to four and a half hours to complete and consists of Clinical Observation, combined with a Clinical Record Audit of documentation completed by the candidate during the three hours of direct patient care. The second stage of the assessment is designed to assess competency of the candidate in areas of clinical practice, which may not have been assessed during the patient treatment session. An interview and four O.S.C.E's are conducted during the second half of the day.

A candidate may be eligible to sit the Stage II examination in the following circumstances:

- Successful completion of the Stage I examination and OET as applicable, OR
- The candidate has completed a three year, tertiary degree course (or equivalent) in podiatry, at a school which is listed as an Approved Overseas Podiatry School (see list at the rear of this booklet).

In addition, the candidate must provide all documentation required in the initial application. If eligible, the candidate will be sent an application form.

The application fee for the Stage II exam is \$AUS1300 plus 10% GST (i.e. \$1300 + \$130 = \$1430). NB: the GST is applicable to all examinations sat at **Australian** Schools of Podiatry. A cheque or credit card authority must accompany the returned form. (***NB: we do not accept American Express***)

The examination may be undertaken in either June/July or November /December and is conducted at one of the Australian schools of podiatry (where possible, corresponding with the location in which the candidate intends to seek registration.)

The candidate is responsible for any expenses incurred in attending the examination. Preparatory material accompanies the receipt of payment and confirmation of the Stage II examination.

A *current Australian CPR certificate* is also required prior to a candidate applying to the relevant Podiatrists Registration Board. A copy should be forwarded to the APoDC at the time of initial application. Alternatively, the candidate may undertake an Australian course, before or after the Stage II examination.

The applicant is notified of the result in writing, within eight weeks of the examination and an official certificate is provided which may then be presented to the relevant Registration Board. There is no time limit on the certificate, however some Registration Boards require the candidate to register within five years of completion of the examination.

Candidates from the UK may be exempt from sitting the Stage II examination in the following circumstances:

- Current registration,
- A three year tertiary degree in podiatry from an approved school
- All requested documentation received with initial application and approved

Failures and Appeals (Stage I & II)

If a candidate has been unsuccessful in either Stage I or Stage II, the candidate is advised in writing by the APodC. Either stage of the examination may be taken only twice, and the second attempt at either stage must be made at least 12 months following the previous sitting of the examination.

Candidates have the right to appeal the result of either the Stage I or Stage II examinations. Appeals must be submitted in writing, clearly stating the grounds for the appeal, within six weeks of the date on which the result was posted by the APodC.

The process of determining the result of an appeal should be completed within eight weeks of an appeal being lodged.

The decision of the APodC subcommittee will be final.

Approved Overseas Schools of Podiatry

South Africa

School of Health Technology
Technikon Witwatersrand
Doornfontein
JOHANNESBURG

United Kingdom

* Birmingham School of Podiatry
Matthew Boulton College
BIRMINGHAM

Huddersfield School of Podiatry
The University of Huddersfield
Queensgate
HUDDERSFIELD

Division of Podiatric Medicine
(University of Ulster at Jordanstown
NEWTOWN ABBEY

University of Salford
School of Podiatry
SALFORD

Department of Podiatry
University of Brighton
EASTBOURNE

School of Podiatry
Queen Margaret University College
EDINBURGH

Northern Ireland School of Podiatric
Medicine
The Queen's University of Belfast
BELFAST

- formerly University of Central England
Birmingham

London Foot Hospital & School of Podiatric **(Course now closed)**
Medicine
University College of London
LONDON

Canada

The Michenor Institute of Applied Health Sciences
Toronto
ONTARIO

University of East London
LONDON

Durham School of Podiatric Medicine
New College of Durham
DURHAM

Northampton School of Podiatry
University of Northampton
NORTHAMPTON

Plymouth School of Podiatry
University of Plymouth
PLYMOUTH

School of Health Professions &
Rehabilitation
University of Southampton
SOUTHAMPTON

Division of Podiatric Medicine
Glasgow Caledonian University
GLASGOW

The Centre for Podiatric Studies
University of Wales Institute
CARDIFF

Chelsea School of Chiropody
Paddington College
London **(Now closed)**

United States of America

Barry University School of Podiatric Medicine
FLORIDA

California College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery
CALIFORNIA

College of Podiatric Medicine & Surgery
University of Osteopathic Medicine
& Health Sciences
Des Moines
IOWA

Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine
Philadelphia
PENNSYLVANIA

Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine
Cleveland
OHIO

Dr William M Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine
Chicago
ILLINOIS

New York College of Podiatric Medicine
NEW YORK

Podiatry Registration Boards

Podiatrists Registration Board of NSW

PO Box K599
HAYMARKET NSW 1238
Phone: 02 9219 0277
Fax: 02 9281 2030

Podiatrist Board of Qld

GPO Box 2438
BRISBANE Qld 4001
Phone: 07 3234 1164
Fax: 07 3225 2527

Podiatry Board of S.A.

PO Box 229,
TORRENSVILLE PLAZA, SA 5031
Phone: 08 8443 9669
Fax: 08 8443 9550

Podiatrists Registration Board of Tasmania

PO Box 240
CLAREMONT Tas 7011
Phone: 03 6249 1377
Fax: 03 6249 4292

Podiatrists Registration Board

PO Box 70.
Collins Street West
MELBOURNE Vic 8007
Phone: 03 9286 1888
Fax: 03 9286 1880

Podiatrists Registration Board

PO Box 263
WEST PERTH WA 6872
Phone: 08 9481 0977
Fax: 08 9481 3686

Podiatrists Board of the A.C.T.

PO Box 976
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608
Phone: 02 6205 1634
Fax: 02 6205 1602

NZ Podiatrists Registration Board

PO Box 10-140
WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND
Phone: 64 4 499 7979
Fax: 64 4 472 2350

Podiatry Schools in Australia and New Zealand

Queensland

Queensland University of Technology
Kelvin Grove Campus
Redhill QLD, 4059
Bachelor of Applied Sciences (Podiatry)

New South Wales

University of Western Sydney
PO Box 555
Campbelltown NSW 2560
Bachelor of Health Sciences (Podiatry)

Victoria

La Trobe University,
BUNDOORA VIC 3083
Bachelor of Podiatry

South Australia

University of South Australia
North Terrace, ADELAIDE, SA, 5000
Bachelor of Applied Sciences (Podiatry)

New South Wales (Albury)

Charles Sturt University
PO Box 789
ALBURY NSW 2640
Bachelor of Health Science (Podiatry)

New Zealand

Auckland University of Technology
Private Bag 92006
Auckland 1020, NEW ZEALAND
Bachelor of Health Science (Podiatry)

Western Australia

University of Western Australia
35 Stirling Highway
Crawley, WA 6009
Location: QEII Medical Centre, N Block
Nedlands, WA 6009
Bachelor of Podiatric Medicine

Other useful contacts

Australia

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

GPO Box 1407
Canberra, ACT, 2601
<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/Default.htm>

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

PO Box 25
Belconnen, ACT, 2616
<http://www.dimia.gov.au>