



**General
Osteopathic
Council**



**OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL
NEW ZEALAND**
KAUNIHERA HAUMANU
TUAHIWI O AOTEAROA

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: Mutual Recognition of Registration

To establish a framework for a mutual system of registration between the General Osteopathic Council and the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand.

BETWEEN
General Osteopathic Council (UK)
Osteopathic Council of New Zealand

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between the General Osteopathic Council and the Osteopathic Council of
New Zealand

Effective Date: 01 January 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish a framework for a mutual system of registration between the General Osteopathic Council and the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand.

This MOU will streamline international registration processes between the UK and New Zealand, removing barriers that either prevent or unnecessarily delay workforce mobility, and improving public access to safe and competent healthcare professionals in both jurisdictions.

2. Background

Both the General Osteopathic Council and the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand are responsible for the regulation and registration of osteopaths within their respective jurisdictions.

In recognition of our shared goals of patient protection and that we have similar regulatory standards, the parties seek to collaborate on a system of mutual recognition of registration to allow individuals to move freely and easily between jurisdictions.

3. Parties to the Agreement

This MOU is entered into by and between:

- **General Osteopathic Council**, the healthcare regulatory body for the osteopathic profession in the UK.
- **Osteopathic Council for New Zealand**, the healthcare regulatory body for the osteopathic profession in New Zealand.

4. Mutual Recognition of Registration framework

The scope of this MOU covers the following areas and establishes, at the time the MOU is signed, the positions of the General Osteopathic Council and Osteopathic Council of New Zealand:

4(a) - Regulatory Bodies, including right to practice

UK

Osteopaths in the UK are regulated by the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC). The GOsC oversees the registration of osteopaths, for setting and maintaining standards for osteopathic education and training, ensuring that they meet professional standards, and managing complaints and disciplinary procedures.

Osteopaths must be registered with the GOsC in order to practice legally. The GOsC maintains a public Register, and individuals are only allowed to use the title 'osteopath' once they are registered.

New Zealand

Osteopaths in New Zealand are regulated by the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand (OCNZ). The OCNZ oversees the registration of osteopaths, for setting standards for, and accredits, educational programmes that provide prescribed qualifications, ensures that they meet professional standards and manages complaints and disciplinary procedures - <https://www.health.govt.nz/regulation-legislation/health-practitioners/responsible-authorities>

Osteopaths must be registered with the OCNZ and hold a current Annual Practising Certificate (APC) in order to practice legally. The OCNZ maintains a public Register, and individuals are only allowed to use the title 'osteopath' once they are registered.

What may trigger a review of the MOU?

A substantive change in the regulatory roles of either of the two bodies would constitute this MOU being reviewed.

An example may be the removal of setting and maintaining standards for osteopathic education and training from the regulator and given to a different organisation.

4(b) - Qualification Requirements

UK

Osteopaths must complete an accredited education program, which is typically a 4-5 year Bachelor of Osteopathy (BOst) or Master of Osteopathy (MOst) with a focus on meeting graduate outcomes rather than course lengths. Without a recognised qualification, an applicant would be unable to apply for registration with the GOsC. Overseas-qualified osteopaths are assessed against a three-stage registration process.

New Zealand

Osteopaths must complete an accredited education program, which is typically a 4-year Bachelor of Musculoskeletal Health and Post-graduate Diploma in Osteopathy (BMSkH and PGDip Osteopathy) or 5-year Master of Osteopathy (MOst) with a focus on meeting accreditation standards and graduate outcomes rather than programme lengths. Overseas applicants may apply through one of three registration pathways: Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act Pathway (for those registered in Australia), an accelerated Competent Authority Pathway, or a Non-Recognised Qualification Pathway (which incorporates a clinical experience and qualification assessment process) -

<https://www.osteopathiccouncil.org.nz/Public/Public/How-To-Register/OverseasApplicants.aspx>

What may trigger a review of the MOU?

A substantive change in the qualification requirements of either of the two bodies would constitute this MOU being reviewed.

An example may be the introduction of an apprenticeship standard in osteopathy.

4(c) - Scope of Practice

UK

There is no scope of practice set by the GOsC. UK osteopaths are primary healthcare practitioners who provide holistic, person-centred care across the lifespan, utilising evidence-based approaches for both the management of specific conditions and for promoting overall wellbeing, working within the limits of their training and competence and meet any legal requirements. Osteopaths must adhere to the Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS) that require osteopath have the knowledge and skills to support their practice. Many osteopaths incorporate adjunctive approaches within their practice such as acupuncture/needling, shockwave therapy, though GOsC does not regulate postgraduate training courses.

New Zealand

The OCNZ has set a primary 'Osteopath' Scope of Practice that includes manual therapy informed by osteopathic principles and incorporating broad diagnostic competencies. The scope recognises osteopaths as primary healthcare practitioners who provide holistic, person-centred care across the lifespan, utilising evidence-based approaches for both the management of specific conditions and for promoting overall wellbeing. The OCNZ has also set an Extended Scope of Practice in Western Medical Acupuncture, to allow appropriately trained osteopaths to add these techniques to their scope, and has set a number of Vocational scopes which acknowledge advanced training in areas of practice covered by the primary Scope of Practice (for example, Pain Management or Gerontology) -

<https://www.osteopathiccouncil.org.nz/Public/Public/Registered-Osteopaths/Scope-Of-Practice.aspx>

What may trigger a review of the MOU?

A substantive change in the scope of practice or practice standards within either jurisdiction would constitute this MOU being reviewed.

An example may be UK introducing a scope of practice or significantly revising practice standards including graduate outcomes.

4(d) - Regulation of International Qualifications

UK

Osteopaths who qualify outside the UK have to go through a three-stage assessment process before they become eligible to apply for registration with the GOsC. The three-stage process is:

- Assessment of overseas qualification
- Completion of a further evidence of practice form
- Assessment of clinical performance

On successful completion of the three-stage process an applicant may apply for registration with the GOsC.

New Zealand

Under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act (1997), osteopaths registered in Australia may apply for a direct registration process for practice in New Zealand. Overseas-qualified osteopaths (excluding Australia) may be considered under two pathways. The Competent Authority Pathway provides accelerated entry for practitioners who are registered with, and hold a qualification recognised by, a recognised Competent Authority (currently limited to GOsC). This pathway does not typically require any further pre-registration assessment of qualification or competence. Overseas applicants not eligible for this pathway would undergo a qualification assessment process by the OCNZ, for comparability to New Zealand qualifications, and a review of clinical experience and further education. This review may include a clinical assessment.

Registrants under both pathways are required to complete the Competent Authority Pathway Programme within one year of registration, requiring the development of a practice portfolio under the guidance of an assigned preceptor - <https://www.osteopathiccouncil.org.nz/Public/Public/How-To-Register/Overseas-Applicants/Competent-Authority-Pathway-Programme.aspx>

What may trigger a review of the MOU?

Changes to the international registration pathway in either jurisdiction.

4(e) - Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

UK

The GOsC requires osteopaths to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) to maintain their registration. This is a three year CPD cycle with a requirement that osteopaths demonstrate how activities meet the breadth of their practice and relate to the four themes of the Osteopathic Practice Standards. They must undertake an objective activity and activities in relation to communication and consent. The scheme culminates in a Peer Discussion Review.

New Zealand

The OCNZ requires osteopaths to undertake CPD (under the Continuing Competence Programme (CCP)), consisting of a two-year cycle. The CCP requires osteopaths to assess their learning needs, with reference to the Osteopathic Practice Competencies and Code of Conduct, plan and carry out relevant learning activities, and reflect on what they have learned and how this has been implemented in practice. Peer review and collaborative learning is encouraged but not required - <https://www.osteopathiccouncil.org.nz/Public/Public/Registered-Osteopaths/Professional-Development.aspx>

What may trigger a review of the MOU?

A substantive change in the CPD schemes of either of the two bodies would constitute this MOU being reviewed.

An example may a CPD scheme in either jurisdiction increasing/decreasing the number of hours osteopaths must complete in order to comply with the scheme.

4(f) - Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

UK

The GOsC has a formal complaints procedure that allows patients, colleagues, or employers to make complaints against osteopaths. The GOsC investigates complaints with the Investigating Committee referring the most serious complaints to either the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) or Health Committee. The PCC may issue sanctions including admonishments, conditions of practice, suspensions and removal from the Register.

New Zealand

Similar to the UK, the OCNZ handles complaints about osteopaths. The OCNZ has a structured process for investigating complaints, and cases may be considered under competence, conduct or health pathways. Conduct matters may be referred to a PCC, who may lay a charge with the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (HPDT). Disciplinary action by the HPDT can include cautions, supervision, suspension, or removal from the register. The OCNZ aims to maintain public safety and uphold high professional standards -

<https://www.osteopathiccouncil.org.nz/Public/Public/Patients/Making-a-complaint-how.aspx>

What may trigger a review of the MOU?

A substantive change in the complaints and disciplinary procedures of either of the two bodies would constitute this MOU being reviewed.

An example may be a change in legislation which allows for complaints to be closed by a regulator case manager rather than an independent fitness to practise panel.

5. Who would be eligible to apply for registration under the Mutual Recognition of Registration MOU?

A table outlining how someone qualified in New Zealand would be eligible to apply for registration in the UK, is annexed to this MOU.

This MOU formalises the information used by the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand to classify the General Osteopathic Council as a Competent Authority.

6. Requirement to inform of changes

If either authority makes changes to their regulatory system, or plans to make changes to their regulatory system, that impact any terms under *Section 4, Mutual Recognition of Registration Framework* they have a responsibility to inform the other authority, who may then initiate a review of the MOU.

7. Implementation and review

This MOU will come into effect from **01/01/2026** and shall be subject to review at least once every two years.

8. Resources and Funding

Each party will bear its own costs in relation to the implementation and operation of the mutual registration system unless otherwise agreed in writing.

9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The parties agree to treat all shared information in accordance with applicable privacy and data protection laws in their respective jurisdictions.

10. Dispute Resolution

Any disagreements arising from this MOU will be resolved through good faith discussions between designated representatives. If unresolved, the matter may be escalated to the Chair of the Council within each authority.

11. Amendments and Termination

This MOU may be amended at any time by mutual written agreement. Either party may terminate the MOU by providing 60 days' written notice to the other party.

12. Legal Status

This MOU is not intended to create legally binding obligations. It reflects the mutual intent of the parties to cooperate in good faith. It does not create any legal, financial, or contractual liabilities or rights enforceable in law.

For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this MOU creates an obligation on either party to approve any individual application for registration. Each party retains the discretion to approve or decline an application for any reason, in accordance with its own regulatory framework

13. Signatures

Signed on behalf of:

General Osteopathic Council

Name: Matthew Redford
Position: Chief Executive and Registrar
Date: 03 December 2025

Signature: 

Osteopathic Council of New Zealand

Name: Tim Friedlander
Position: Registrar
Date: 03 December 2025

Signature: 

Annex A to the Memorandum of Understanding

New Zealand qualified osteopath – routes to registration in the UK

Individual is qualified and has met New Zealand regulatory standards			
Currently registered with OCNZ and holds an APC *	Currently registered with OCNZ and does not hold an APC *	Previously held registration but no current registration with OCNZ	Never registered with OCNZ
Apply directly for registration with the GOsC	Complete x3 stage GOsC international registration pathway	Complete x3 stage GOsC international registration pathway	Complete x3 stage GOsC international registration pathway
-	<i>If successful</i>	<i>If successful</i>	<i>If successful</i>
-	Apply for registration with the GOsC	Apply for registration with the GOsC	Apply for registration with the GOsC

* APC - Annual Practising Certificate

United Kingdom qualified osteopath – route to registration in New Zealand

Individual has met GOsC regulatory standards			
Currently registered with GOsC and holds a qualification recognised by GOsC	Currently registered with GOsC but does not hold a qualification recognised by GOsC	Previously held registration but no current registration with GOsC	Never registered with GOsC
Apply directly for registration with OCNZ	Completes OCNZ non-recognised international qualification registration pathway	Completes OCNZ non-recognised international qualification registration pathway	Completes OCNZ non-recognised international qualification registration pathway
<i>If successful</i>	<i>If successful</i>	<i>If successful</i>	<i>If successful</i>
Completes post-registration <i>Competent Authority Pathway Programme*</i>	May have post-registration requirements and/or conditions based on individual assessment. May include completion of <i>Competent Authority Pathway Programme*</i>	May have post-registration requirements and/or conditions based on individual assessment. May include completion of <i>Competent Authority Pathway Programme*</i>	May have post-registration requirements and/or conditions based on individual assessment. May include completion of <i>Competent Authority Pathway Programme*</i>

*The *Competent Authority Pathway Program* (CAP Programme) is a portfolio-based competence programme completed in the workplace with oversight and support provided by a Council-appointed preceptor.