

Te Poari o ngā Kaihaumanu  
Hinengaro o Aotearoa

The Psychotherapists Board  
of Aotearoa New Zealand

# Information for practitioners who hold an overseas psychotherapy qualification

## Background

Te Poari o ngā Kaihaumanu Hinengaro o Aotearoa (the Board) is a Responsible Authority set up under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act).

The principal purpose of the HPCA Act is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by providing for mechanisms to ensure that health practitioners are competent and fit to practise their profession.

This means to work and hold yourself out to be a psychotherapist in Aotearoa you must be registered with the Board and hold a current annual practising certificate (APC).

A psychotherapist with an overseas psychotherapy qualification<sup>1</sup> is assessed<sup>2</sup> by a committee of the Board against the Board's [Policy Criteria Expected of a Comparable Qualification](#) (Comparable Qualification).

## Timeframe

The assessment timeframe is usually a minimum of 6-8 weeks upon receipt of a correctly completed application. However, the timeframe will vary if the Committee needs to request further information/clarification.

## Assessment costs

The current fee for the assessment (\$3,300.00) is non-refundable. The fee for an annual practising certificate is additional.

## Assessment preparation

Prior to applying for registration under the comparable qualification policy, it is important to ensure you have provided the required documentation/evidence to support your application.

The Board's Qualifications Committee (Committee) is responsible for assessing, on a case-by-case basis, each overseas psychotherapy qualification submitted under the comparable qualification policy.

To assist the assessment, the Board has developed a structured [assessment form guide](#).

Please note the assessment is to assure the Board that your completed qualification is comparable to an Aotearoa Master's level qualification in psychotherapy. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the name of your qualification is specified on the comparable qualification assessment form, and that each criteria specified clearly demonstrates how it meets requirement.

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<sup>1</sup> a qualification not prescribed by the Board (Gazetted)

<sup>2</sup> under section 15(2) of the HPCAA

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### Assessment documentation/evidence

Further to completing the assessment form guide, applicants are required to provide clear documentation/evidence that they meet policy criteria.

Evidence may include<sup>3</sup>:

- Course curriculum/programme, content/course outline
- Paper descriptions
- Final assessment processes/descriptions
- Certified copy of academic transcripts
- Certified copy of qualification
- Additional documented information from the psychotherapy training provider

### Final Clinical Assessment

The final clinical assessment is a critical component of psychotherapy training in Aotearoa. Without documented evidence that your final clinical assessment meets requirement within the comparable qualification policy, it is possible your application will not be successful. Please note that the final clinical assessment is a clinical psychotherapy case study, not an academic thesis.

Please ensure any documentation/evidence submitted clearly outlines the final assessment process.

The criteria expected of a final clinical assessment includes:

- An in-depth psychotherapy case study of a client you have provided psychotherapy for during your training;
- Clinical supervisory reports of the case study;
- An assessed oral account of your psychotherapy practice.

Each of the above components help demonstrate in-depth psychotherapy knowledge and skills comparable to an Aotearoa psychotherapy qualification.

The case study component is expected to be a long-term psychotherapy, completed in the final year of your psychotherapy qualification. It would be expected to include a focus on the on-going therapeutic relationship, the modality used and the process of psychotherapy.

Clinical supervisory reports are expected to include assessment of the student's psychotherapy theoretic knowledge, clinical skills and understanding of the psychotherapy process.

The oral account of psychotherapy practice is typically conducted by a panel of psychotherapists, which may include a psychotherapist unfamiliar to the student. The focus is to discuss the student's understanding of the therapeutic process. This may include any areas of difficulty and how these were addressed and reflected on during the psychotherapeutic process.

### New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Applicants may be asked to have their qualification verified by New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) as being comparable to an Aotearoa New Zealand Masters level

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<sup>3</sup> The format of the documents may vary, but will need to include an overview of the course, its aims, objectives and assessment methods used etc.

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qualification. However, an NZQA assessment does not guarantee that the applicant will meet Board requirements for psychotherapist registration.

The Board notes that a NZQA assessment is limited as it is not profession specific; it does not consider clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical standards of conduct to be observed by psychotherapists. The Board's responsibilities in assessing a practitioner's qualification and competence are much wider than only considering the qualification. A NZQA assessment can complement an application but it does not guarantee eligibility for registration.

### **Professional Development Pathway**

Applicants that do not fully meet requirements for registration with the Board via the Tertiary Pathway may consider the Professional Development Pathway.

The Professional Development Pathway may be suitable for practitioners who have a mixture of psychotherapy skills, knowledge and professional development but whose psychotherapy qualification does not meet Board policy. To pursue this pathway you will need to be living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

There are three (3) organisations that are approved by the Board to carry out critical assessments:

[Australian and New Zealand Society of Jungian Analysts](#)  
[New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists](#)  
[New Zealand Association of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists.](#)

If you are interested in the Professional Development Pathway, please contact one of the above organisations directly.

### **Additional Information**

Alternatively, if you have not completed a qualification that meets the requirements outlined above, you may wish to look into registering with a more suitable regulatory authority see below:

- [The Psychologists Board of New Zealand \(PBNZ\)](#)
- [The New Zealand Association of Counsellors \(NZAC\)](#)
- [New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board \(SWRB\)](#)