



## P028 - Overseas Trained Specialist Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy refers to the assessment of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) applying for Fellowship with the Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians (ACSEP), to determine their equivalence of specialisation and eligibility. The standards of practice of the ACSEP Training program have been accepted by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) and the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) as those required for registration to practice as a specialist. An IMG is a doctor who has undertaken a Sports Medicine Specialist Training program outside of Australia or New Zealand (NZ) and is seeking to be assessed for comparability to an Australian and New Zealand trained Sports and Exercise Physician. The term used for IMGs as specialists undergoing assessment by the ACSEP in Australia is Overseas Trained Specialist (OTS) applicant. In NZ the term used for IMGs as specialists undergoing assessment by the ACSEP is Specialist International Medical Graduate (SIMG).

When assessing an OTS applicant for comparability, the ACSEP will consider the training program completed, and subsequent to that, any further training, assessment, experience, recent practice, research, and continuing professional development (CPD) undertaken by the OTS applicant to determine whether all these components will enable the OTS applicant to practice at a level comparable to the standard expected of an Australian and New Zealand-trained Sports and Exercise Physician. In accordance with the requirements of the MBA, the OTS Sub-Committee will determine if an OTS applicant's training and experience, in comparison to an Australian and New Zealand trained Sport and Exercise Physician is:

- a. *Substantially Comparable*
- b. *Partially Comparable*
- c. *Not Comparable*

### 2. Background

The ACSEP is committed to providing a structured, fair and transparent process for IMGs applying for an equivalence and eligibility assessment. The ACSEP makes assessment decisions on the comparability and eligibility of OTS applicants for Fellowship using a dedicated OTS Sub-Committee, comprising a chairperson and 4 members, to the ACSEP. The ACSEP also recommends assessment



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decisions to the MCNZ on the eligibility of SIMG applicants for vocational registration in New Zealand. All decisions made by the OTS Sub-Committee have a 2-year expiry from the date of the initial assessment decision being communicated to the OTS applicant.

## 3. OTS Sub-Committee

Overseas Trained Specialist Committee Members shall be comprised of Fellows of the ACSEP. The Fellow members will be composed of a representative to the Examination Assessment Committee (Chair), a Fellow who has been through the OTS application process, a NZ Fellow, and a Fellow who has recent knowledge of the full ACSEP training program, such as a recently retired Chair of Training or Training Committee member. All members will need to declare any conflicts of interest prior to any discussion on applicants and withdraw from the process should there be any conflict of interest.

## 4. Scope

The policy applies to all IMGs applying to the ACSEP for recognition and Fellowship status.

## 5. Assessment of Eligibility to Practice

### 5.1 Assessment of Eligibility to Practice in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the ACSEP does not determine suitability for registration, and the College acts as a Vocational Education Advisory Body (VEAB) for the MCNZ. The College undertakes an assessment process of the applicant's academic and clinical credentials and provides recommendations to the MCNZ regarding the applicant's qualifications and experience. This advice assists the MCNZ to determine if the qualifications are as satisfactory as that of a NZ-trained specialist.

#### 5.1.2 Eligibility requirements

- a. For an SIMG applicant to be eligible to apply for the OTS training program in New Zealand, an applicant must satisfy the following requirements;
  - i. to hold a primary degree in medicine and surgery issued by a recognised international medical school and recognised by the MCNZ
  - ii. to have completed formal postgraduate training in Sport and Exercise Medicine (SEM)



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- iii. to have participated in a CPD program since obtaining the specialist qualification, and
- iv. to have met English language requirements of New Zealand (refer to information on the MCNZ website).

## 5.1.3 Program duration

- a. The training program is a structured postgraduate course of between 12-24 months duration, following MCNZ published standards.
- b. All application documents and information are on the MCNZ website, including links to all MCNZ forms.
- c. All SIMG applicants are required to complete the MCNZ VO3-B form which also outlines any additional documents required for submission, along with the application.

[MCNZ Policy on vocational practice assessments](#)

## 5.1.4 Fees

- a. Applicants pay an application fee to MCNZ to have their suitability assessed. Therefore, applicants are required to contact the MCNZ for all information regarding registration fees.
- b. If an SIMG application is successful they will be required to pay any fees related to ACSEP requirements, such as academic modules, courses, and the ACSEP conference fees during their supervised practice.

## 5.1.5 Applying for assessment

- a. A SIMG applicant must apply directly to the MCNZ with a completed application and relevant documents, which will be forwarded to the ACSEP for advice regarding the SIMG applicant's experience and qualifications.
- b. Following review of all documents, the ACSEP will provide preliminary advice to the MCNZ. The paper-based assessment is conducted by the ACSEP in its role as the VEAB.
- c. Apply to MCNZ for preliminary advice. The initial paper-based assessment of the SIMG application is conducted by the ACSEP OTS Sub-Committee. This assessment is based on the information provided in the application, which will determine if an applicant is eligible and required to attend an assessment interview conducted by the OTS Sub-Committee.



- d. Apply to MCNZ for interview advice. If an interview is required, the aim is to collect further information on the applicant's training and experience as well as to gain insight into the applicant's current SEM working situation. The interview involves a discussion about training, experience, and qualifications in SEM and is conducted by at least two members of the OTS Sub-Committee. The applicant may also be required to respond to clinical scenarios and past involvement in SEM, to assist the OTS Sub-Committee in assessing clinical skills and knowledge.
- e. The ACSEP will provide advice to the MCNZ regarding comparability for registration, and the SIMG applicant will be contacted about the pathway to be followed for the application to progress.

## 5.1.6 Outcome of the assessment process

- a. The ACSEP will communicate its advice on the SIMG applicant assessment and recommendations to the MCNZ. If the SIMG applicant is deemed eligible for registration in a provisional vocational capacity, then the SIMG applicant will be registered in one of the following pathways: supervision pathway or assessment pathway.
- b. Supervision pathway - when the SIMG applicant training, qualifications and experience are deemed "Equivalent" to a New Zealand trained specialist. Applicants who are assessed as *equivalent* will need to register within the provisional vocational scope of practice (supervision) and complete a period of supervision of up to 12 months to be eligible to apply for Fellowship of the ACSEP. The applicant may be required to sit written and/or clinical examinations and any other recommended requirements of the ACSEP.
- c. Assessment Pathway - when SIMG applicant training, qualifications and experience are deemed "as satisfactory as" a New Zealand-trained specialist. Applicants who are assessed *as satisfactory as* will need to register within the provisional vocational scope of practice (assessment) and will be required to complete a period of 12-24 months of supervised training and assessment, including the completion of outstanding academic modules and completion of the ACSEP written and/or clinical examinations, and any other recommended requirements of the ACSEP.
- d. Not Comparable to a New Zealand-trained specialist. Applicants who are deemed to be *not comparable* to a New Zealand-trained specialist will not be registered in a vocational scope of practice and provided with follow-up information.



#### 5.1.7 Apply for approval of supervision

- a. If the SIMG applicant is granted provisional vocational registration, the MCNZ will manage supervision and any assessment required. The MCNZ may ask the ACSEP for advice on the position and supervision arrangements of the SIMG applicant.

#### 5.1.8 Apply for full vocational registration

- a. Once the SIMG applicant has successfully completed all the supervision/assessment requirements set out by the MCNZ, they can apply for vocational registration.

### 5.2 Assessment of Eligibility to Practice in Australia

International medical graduates with formal postgraduate specialist qualifications in SEM may apply to the ACSEP for the assessment of their qualifications.

- a. Prior to applying to the ACSEP, an IMG must apply to the Australian Medical Council (AMC) for verification of their primary qualifications. Once verification of primary qualifications is determined, the IMG may apply directly to the ACSEP for recognition of prior qualifications and experience.
- b. To allow for full assessment of the applicant's qualifications, all documentation required to assess the applicant shall be published on the ACSEP website.
- c. To apply, the applicant must submit the Form on the ACSEP website.
- d. The OTS applicant is responsible for submitting all the appropriate and required documentation for assessment to demonstrate the comparability.
- e. Once an OTS applicant has applied, the ACSEP will determine if the applicant is assessed on a paper-based assessment alone, or by a paper-based assessment and assessment interview.

#### 5.2.1 Assessment standards

- a. The OTS Sub-Committee determines the OTS pathway to Fellowship based on a comparison to the training and education of Australian trained specialists, from documents submitted by the OTS applicant and interview performance. The factors considered are:
  - i. Education and training program completed
  - ii. Recency of practice
  - iii. Adequate Team and Events coverage



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- iv. Continued Professional Development: Proof of CPD will also be required. This will need to detail the nature and type of activity undertaken in detail (i.e. not just an attendance certificate)
- v. Academic modules studied
- vi. Clinical experience
- vii. Assessment strategies during training and written and oral examination performances. Specific details of the examination and type are required (i.e. timing of the examination e.g. end of training) type of examination, multichoice, short answer etc,
- viii. Details of any clinical examination: Objective structured clinical examination, long case, short cases. This should include the length of the examination (e.g. 3 hours)
- ix. Nature and type of practice, post-graduation from specialist training
- x. Comparable research experience.

## 5.2.2 Preliminary Assessment Outcomes

- a. Not Comparable; The applicant's training is *not comparable* to an ACSEP Fellow and they would be unlikely to fulfil requirements required in the MBA timeframes. An OTS applicant will be assessed *not comparable* if:
  - i. there is insufficient evidence of recent practice;
  - ii. there is insufficient evidence of completion of a specialist training program comparable to ACSEP programs.
- b. Partially Comparable; An OTS applicant will be assessed *partially comparable* if:
  - i. there is evidence of recency of practice in SEM;
  - ii. there is evidence of completion of an SEM training program comparable to the ACSEP training program, but lacks some ACSEP training program equivalencies;
  - iii. there is an insufficiency of CPD (including all topics covered and course content);
  - iv. there is an insufficiency of team and event coverage;
  - v. there is a lack of research skills.
- e. Substantially Comparable; an OTS applicant will be assessed *substantially comparable* if:



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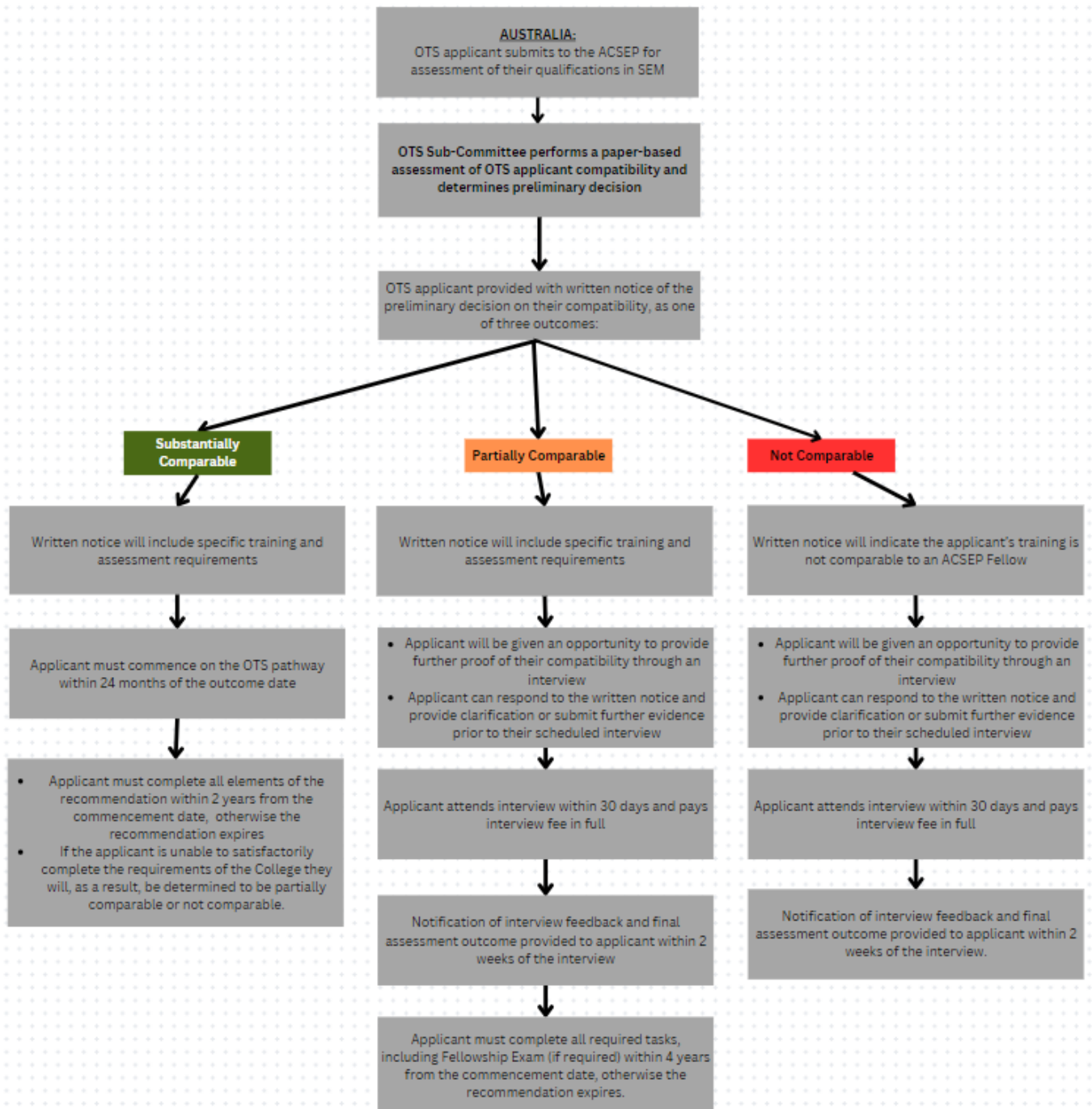
- i. there is sufficient evidence of practice;
- ii. there is sufficient evidence of completion of a SEM training program comparable to the ACSEP training program including skills, competencies and attributes;
- iii. there is appropriate and sufficient team and event coverage;
- iv. there is sufficient documentation of CPD including the nature of the CPD and topics covered, along with proof of attendance;
- v. an exit examination has been completed. This should consist of both written and clinical components.

## 5.2.3 Notification of Preliminary Assessment Outcome

- a. Applicants will be provided with written notice of the preliminary decision on their compatibility following a paper-based assessment, which will include the reasons for the assessment outcome.
- b. Where applicants have been preliminarily assessed as *partially comparable* or *substantially comparable* by the ACSEP, this written notice will include specific training and assessment requirements as per Section 5.2.5.
- c. Where applicants have been preliminarily assessed as *partially comparable* or *not comparable* by the ACSEP, they will be given an opportunity to provide further proof of their compatibility through an interview, as described in Section 5.2.4. These applicants can respond to the written notice and provide clarification or submit further evidence within 2 weeks of notification of preliminary assessment outcome. Notification of interview feedback and final assessment outcome will be provided to these applicants within 2 weeks of the interview.
- d. This process is summarised in Figure 1 below.



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**Figure 1.** Summary of assessment process for eligibility to practice in Australia.





#### 5.2.4 Interview

- a. An interview may be used to clarify aspects of the applicant's documentation, training program, currency of practice, and details of CPD.
- b. Interviews are obligatory for all OTS applicants who have been assessed as *partially comparable* and may be required for OTS applicants who have been assessed as *not comparable* on their paper-based assessment. The OTS Chair or a nominee shall forward to the interviewers any points requiring clarification to be addressed during the interview.
- c. The interview will also investigate the cultural competencies to practice in Australia. The interviews will be performed using a video platform and will:
  - i. take place within 30 days of the applicant being notified of their preliminary assessment outcome;
  - ii. be performed by 2 OTS Sub-Committee members and a community memberThe OTS applicant is assessed in accordance with the College's published assessment criteria: [Overseas Trained Specialist](#).
- d. The OTS applicant is given an opportunity to ask questions of the interviewers about the process, to ensure that the process is fully understood by the OTS applicant.
- e. Clinical testing is not undertaken during any interview.
- f. An interview fee is required to be paid in full. Applicants should refer to the current fee schedule as published on the ACSEP website.
- g. Interviewers should ensure they have good knowledge of the documentation provided by the applicant and have collaborated prior to the interview regarding where further clarification from the applicant is required.
- h. The interview panel shall confer after the interview and pass on their findings to the OTS Sub-Committee for final assessment.

#### 5.2.5 Training and Assessment Requirements for *Partially Comparable* and *Substantially Comparable* Applicants

- a. When deemed *partially comparable*, the OTS applicant may be required to:
  - i. undergo up to 24 months full time equivalent practice under supervision;
  - ii. undertake upskilling with associated assessments;
  - iii. complete some academic modules and/or research paper and/or workplace-based assessments (WBAs);



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- iv. complete formal examinations.
- b. When deemed *substantially comparable*, the OTS applicant may be required to:
  - i. undertake a period of up to 12 months FTE of practice under peer review by a reviewer approved by the ACSEP (this is to allow familiarisation with Australian Medical System);
  - ii. satisfactorily complete WBAs;
  - iii. be excused from completing formal examinations (as per MBA guidelines);
  - iv. be assessed as fully competent to perform the intended scope of practice and take full responsibility for individual patients.
- c. Process for applying for the OTS pathway: the OTS applicant should apply to the AMC for source verification when applying to the College for assessment. The outcome from the College is known as Report 1.
- d. Report 1 will be uploaded to the AMC/AHPRA portal by College staff and AHPRA will then determine where the applicants can apply to for registration.
- e. If the OTS applicant successfully completes all requirements, the College will send a final report (report 2) to AHPRA (see Section 5.2.6).

## 5.2.6 Maximum timeframe for completing College requirements

- a. An OTS applicant who receives an assessment outcome of *partially or substantially comparable* must commence on the OTS pathway within 24 months of the outcome date, otherwise the recommendation expires.
- b. Upon commencing on the OTS pathway, an OTS applicant assessed as *partially comparable* must complete all required tasks, including Fellowship Exam (if required) within 4 years from the commencement date, otherwise the recommendation expires.
- c. Upon commencing on the OTS pathway, an OTS applicant assessed as *substantially comparable* must complete all elements of the recommendation within 2 years from the commencement date.
- d. The maximum timeframes allow for part-time practice. Any examinations or assessments scheduled after the period of supervised practice/upskilling for *partially comparable* OTS applicants are to be completed within the maximum timeframes. Leave granted for 'exceptional circumstances' is not counted as part of the maximum timeframe.



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- e. The ACSEP will grant leave for interrupted time and exceptional circumstances to appropriate OTS applicants after written application to the OTS Sub-Committee. Each application will be considered, and the applicant notified of any extension to completing the requirements given, within 21 days of the application. The ACSEP policies that apply to College Registrars and Fellows will apply to OTS applicants.

## 5.2.7 Supervision/Peer review

- a. Supervision/peer review shall be provided by a current Fellow of the ACSEP in good standing. The Fellow must be current with CPD requirements and have undertaken the ACSEP Clinical Training Supervisor modules.
- b. Role of the supervisor: the supervisor will oversee all aspects of care provided by the OTS applicant. This may include direct supervision, discussion of all cases seen, and supervision of any procedures undertaken.
- c. Role of peer reviewers: Peer reviewers for WBAs will have no association with the practice where the OTS applicant is working. They will perform an assessment which may consist WBAs such as a mini clinical evaluation exercise or case-based discussion. Reviews of several cases seen by the OTS applicant may also be undertaken. If more than one peer review is to be undertaken, then this should be done by a different peer reviewer to avoid bias.
- d. Role of OTS applicant: the OTS applicant will comply with all supervision requirements and work towards any of the extra components required by the ACSEP. Completion of logbooks and any WBA forms should also be kept by the OTS applicant.
- e. Process for addressing issues identified during the supervisory period: the OTS applicant should initially approach their supervisor to resolve any supervision issues. If this does not resolve the issue, then the OTS applicant is encouraged to approach the ACSEP secretariat (OTS Sub-Committee) with a written submission regarding the issue.
- f. Supervision level: refer to AHPRA guidelines: [Supervised practice for international medical graduates guidelines.](#)

## 5.2.8 Decision regarding eligibility for specialist recognition

- a. After an OTS applicant has completed the additional requirements specified by the College in Report 1 or combined report (if applicable) the College will document its recommendation. The ACSEP will inform the OTS applicant of the outcome and will upload



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its decision using a reporting template of the MBA (Report 2) to the secure portal for use by AHPRA for the purposes of registration.

- b. Report 2 will confirm the ACSEP recommendation on whether the OTS applicant should be granted recognition as a specialist, or;
  - i. whether the OTS applicant should be granted recognition as a specialist in a limited scope of practice and any recommendations for conditions on registration, or
  - ii. whether the OTS applicant is considered *not comparable* and the reasons, or
  - iii. whether the OTS applicant has withdrawn from completing the additional requirements specified in Report 1 or the combined report.
- c. A OTS applicant who has been initially assessed as *substantially comparable* but who is unable to satisfactorily complete the requirements of the College will, as a result, be determined to be *partially comparable* or *not comparable*.

## 5.2.9 Fees

- a. Applicants should refer to the current fees as published on the ACSEP website.

## 5.2.10 Education support

- a. An OTS applicant who has undergone an assessment and found to be *partially comparable* will have equal access to all educational opportunities that are offered to Australian and NZ Registrars to prepare for the Fellowship Exam.

## 6. Area of Need

The ACSEP is a small college with training performed in private practice. Currently, there are few practitioners in regional Australia and 3-4 practitioners who provide a regular travelling service to a limited number of rural areas. Therefore, there is very little ability to provide supervision of training, or job capacity in areas of need as currently defined.

[Specialist Pathway - Area of Need](#)

## 7. Communication

The ACSEP will communicate the decisions with the MBA as per the appropriate forms, prior to any registration occurring.



## 8. Review, Reconsideration and Appeals

- a. Applicants may request a reconsideration, review or appeal the decision made on their comparability. Applicants wishing to do so will be directed to the [P019 – ACSEP Review, Reconsideration and Appeals Policy](#) available on the ACSEP website.
- b. Applicants may request a re-assessment of the application if they have undertaken further study or actions that may correct deficiencies identified in their initial application which may lead to a change in their application status. The ACSEP will provide supporting documentation for OTS applicants' re-assessment that outlines processes, timelines, requirements and fees.

## 9. Responsibilities of the Applicant

- a. All OTS applicants should familiarise themselves with the relevant Australian or New Zealand guidelines for assessment and registration, and the guidelines for assessment issued by the ACSEP.
- b. Applicants should follow the instructions and requirements received from the ACSEP on their specialist assessment. If supervision is required, the OTS applicant should find a suitable placement under an ACSEP Fellow.
- c. Applicants should ensure that all outstanding fees are paid in full.
- d. Applicants should ensure that they have registered and paid for any relevant examinations (Part Two - Written and Clinical).
- e. Applicants should notify the ACSEP once all requirements have been fulfilled.
- f. The ACSEP is not responsible for and cannot assist OTS applicants with;
  - i. finding employment or a training placement for the purposes of completing requirements
  - ii. sponsorship to work in Australia/New Zealand or visa requirements
  - iii. medical registration matters
  - iv. Medicare provider number issues (Australia)
  - v. primary source verification of overseas qualifications.

## 10. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. This policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Board of Directors as required.



## 11. Key Related Documents

- [AHPRA International Medical Graduates](#)
- [MCNZ policy on vocational practice assessments](#)

## 12. Feedback

ACSEP staff and membership may provide feedback about this document by emailing ACSEP Programs, Policies and Systems Administrator at [nationaloffice@acsep.org.au](mailto:nationaloffice@acsep.org.au)

### APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	ACSEP Board of Directors
Advisor or Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	OTS Sub-Committee, Education Committee, ACSEP CEO
Administrator	ACSEP Programs, Policies and Systems Administrator
Next Review Date	November, 2022

Approval and Amendment History	
Original Approval Authority	ACSEP CEO
Effective Date	
Amendment Authority and Date	N/A
Notes	V3 – 09/04/2024 Amended by Training and Pathways Coordinator, Training Program Manager & Policy Officer V2 - 03/09/2020 Developed by Program Manager Fellowship and Policy and Systems Administrator