



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Occupational Therapy Licensing Board

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To: The Legislative Assembly

From: Nancy Schuberg, Executive Director  
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RE: Senate Bill 855 (2019)

Senate Bill 855, which became effective June 20, 2019, directs professional licensing boards to study the manner in which persons who are immigrants or refugees become authorized to practice regulated occupations or professions, and to develop and implement methods to reduce barriers to licensure for these persons. The purpose of this memo is to report on progress of the Occupational Therapy Licensing Board (OTLB) in meeting the requirements of the Bill.

### CURRENT REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGN APPLICANTS:

#### National requirements:

All OT's and OT Assistants must pass the national certification exam administrated by the National Board of Certification of Occupational Therapists (NBCOT). This is true for all 50 states and its territories.

National Certification Exam: The NBCOT recognizes that there are many different types of educational systems around the world. Although the foreign system may be different, occupational therapy schools are approved by the international organization that sets worldwide standards for occupational therapy educational programs. If the applicant in Oregon has met those standards, been approved to take the national certification examination, passed it and have met the requirements for licensure, they can be licensed in Oregon. The NBCOT does not require a SSN to sit for the exam or to be certified.

Education: If foreign applicants did not earn a masters/doctoral degree in OT from a US accredited college, they must apply for the NBCOT's OT Eligibility Determination (OTED) process. This will determine if the education, fieldwork meets the eligibility requirements to apply to sit for the OTR certification exam. If education and fieldwork are deemed comparable to current US entry-level standards, the applicant can sit for the exam.

Requirements for the OTED process are as follows:

- Official, final transcripts from the OT school.
- Verification of Academic Credential form (if applicable)
- National Government Recognition documentation
- Program Director Form
- Course syllabi





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### Oregon OTLB Requirements:

Passage of the NBCOT exam. They must have passed the national exam. (There is no state license examination).

Social Security Number: If the foreign-trained applicant does not yet have a Social Security number they are allowed to submit a notarized Affidavit to the Board.

Fingerprinting Background check: All applicants are required to pass a fingerprint background check through the state vendor, Fieldprint. Fieldprint has locations only within the US and its territories.

The Board will allow applicants who are out of the country to submit fingerprint cards by having it done at a consulate or police station in their home country.

English Language: The Oregon OTLB does not require passage of an English proficiency exam.

Jurisprudence exam: All applicants must pass the free online Law/Ethics exam pertaining to the Laws and rules in Oregon.

Transcripts: If an applicant has not yet worked as an OT, the applicant must submit final transcripts from the college confirming at least a Master's degree in occupational therapy.

Verification of licensure: If a foreigner has worked as an OT in another country – we require that they send us a verification from the licensing body in the country.

### AGENCY PROGRESS:

The Oregon OTLB issues licenses to foreign-trained therapists if they have met all the qualifications of the Oregon statutes, 675.210 to 675.340.

The Board has already taken steps to remove barriers for foreign applicants, by not requiring a Social Security number or requiring an English proficiency exam. If the applicant is getting their first license we require transcripts, and if they having practiced in another state we require a verification from the licensing body in the country to verify there has been no discipline. These are these the same requirement applicants in the US must follow.

The Oregon OTLB decided to reach out to licensees who indicated a foreign college on their application and who were initial licensed in Oregon within the last five years for input on their experience on getting licensed in Oregon. There were only six current licensees that fit this criteria, however none of the six chose to reply to the email. Board plans to broaden the criteria and send out another survey.

The NBCOT and the national OT association (AOTA) just announced that they would collaborate on the development of an Interstate compact. Once implemented and depending on how many states participate, it will enhance mobility and opportunities to practice across state lines of occupational therapy practitioners and their families.

The Oregon OTLB will continue to consult with foreign-trained applicants to understand what barriers they have encountered in getting licensed in Oregon.

