

# **New Zealand Speech-Language Therapists' Association**



## **EVIDENCE OF DYSPHAGIA COMPETENCY**

## **Background**

During the 2007 Annual General Meeting of the NZSTA, a constitutional change was enacted that required all applicants for Full membership to demonstrate competency in dysphagia. The specific wording in the constitution is as follows:

### **Section 1 (g) PROVISIONAL MEMBERS**

(ii) Individuals applying for membership in NZSTA who have not received education in dysphagia will only be eligible for Provisional Membership status.

## **Rationale for requiring Dysphagia competency**

As per NZSTA programme accreditation guidelines, all graduates of NZSTA accredited programmes are required to demonstrate competency in dysphagia. Therefore, the same standard should apply for overseas therapists wishing to join the NZSTA. Individuals who are unable to demonstrate Dysphagia competency will not be precluded from obtaining Provisional membership status in the Association. There is an expectation that up-skilling in the area of dysphagia will occur during the Provisional membership period. If Dysphagia competency is not obtained during the Provisional membership period, the applicant will not be eligible for Full membership status. The applicant would be required to reapply for membership in the Association and undergo another Provisional membership period.

## **What is documented evidence of Dysphagia competency?**

Evidence of Dysphagia competency can be provided in a number of ways. Three preferred forms of evidence are provided below; however these should not be viewed as the only forms of evidence that will be considered.

1. *Academic coursework.* Evidence of a one-semester course (or a minimum of 15 instructional hours) dedicated to the topic of dysphagia assessment and management.
2. *Clinical coursework.* Evidence of supervised clinical practica in the area of dysphagia. Confirmation by a supervisor that competency in assessment and management of dysphagia would be required.
3. *Workshop/Short Course.* Evidence of completion of a dedicated short course on the topic of dysphagia assessment and management.

Alternatively, if the applicant is unable to provide sufficient evidence of Dysphagia competency, they may wish to obtain competency upon arrival in New Zealand. The first point of contact for obtaining the necessary competency would be the three NZSTA accredited educational programs.

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