

Employing O&M Specialists



Some tips for recruitment teams

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) employers in Australia and New Zealand recruit both locally and internationally. The O&M workforce is enriched by the diverse career pathways, qualifications, languages, cultural and practical experiences of its members. But how does a recruitment team know if an applicant's O&M qualifications are adequate?

The Orientation and Mobility Association of Australasia (OMAA) is the peak professional body and sets the industry standards for professional registration of O&M specialists in Australia and New Zealand. The OMAA also reviews O&M training programs against international standards for O&M qualifications.

ROMSA – a Registered O&M Specialist in Australasia

Recruitment teams can search the [O&M Directory](#) on the OMAA website to check an O&M specialist's credentials. An applicant for OMAA Registration must:

- develop independent community travel skills and competent daily living skills with simulated blindness/low vision, to embody O&M knowledge (minimum 80 hours) ●
- become a Certified O&M Specialist (COMS) which requires:
 - completing a comprehensive, COMS-compliant O&M qualification
 - completing a 350 hour COMS-supervised internship, or equivalent
 - passing the international COMS exam
- maintain ordinary OMAA membership, with annual fees and mandatory declarations about ethical standards, insurance, and fitness to practise.

Why COMS?

There are many pathways to becoming an O&M specialist. The COMS program provides an international benchmark for the academic standards, body of knowledge, and workplace experience required for entry level O&M specialists, as well as professional development requirements to recertify every five years. The COMS Handbook is available at <https://www.acvrep.org/certifications/coms>. See also two OMAA Factsheets on applying for COMS and ROMSA.

Not yet COMS/ROMSA?

A job applicant might be a new graduate, returning to work after extended leave, or applying from overseas, and not yet have COMS or OMAA Registration. An OMAA standards advisor can assist a recruitment team to evaluate an O&M applicant's credentials, and then support an OMAA member to apply for COMS and ROMSA within the first year of employment. Contact standards@omaaustralasia.com for more information.

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