



# Policy on working in addition to placements

## For psychology higher degree candidates

### Summary

This policy sets out the requirements for psychology higher degree candidates who wish to use the protected title 'provisional psychologist' to practise psychology in positions that are in addition to university placements, and which do not contribute to the requirements of their accredited professional degree.

### Background

Provisional registration is granted under section 62 of National Law<sup>1</sup> to individuals to enable them to complete an approved period of supervised practice in order to be eligible to apply for general registration as a psychologist.

Provisional registration allows the individual to use the title 'provisional psychologist' in relation to the supervised practice pathway for which provisional registration was approved. For students in the higher degree pathway, use of the title is not permitted for work outside the approved program of study, except in work roles where additional approval has been granted by the Board.

The Board permits higher degree students to apply for approval to work in addition to placements:

- both concurrently with their university coursework and placements under supervision, and
- at the completion of all coursework and placements while they are being supervised for the thesis component of the degree.

This allows students undertaking university coursework and placements to extend and consolidate their psychological skills under supervision while studying, and encourages continuity in student skill development during completion of the thesis.

### Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to registered provisional psychologists enrolled in approved higher degree programs accredited at fifth year or above who wish to practise as a provisional psychologist in addition to the requirements of their accredited degree.

Psychology higher degree candidates must seek Board approval to work in any position external to their university placements where:

- the title 'provisional psychologist' or any other title that could reasonably be taken to mean the person is a provisional psychologist will be used, and
- the individual engages in psychological practice as defined in this policy in any role that involves direct client contact, whether voluntary or paid.

This policy does not apply to provisional psychologists in administrative, research, teaching or tutoring roles where there is no direct client contact; or to provisional psychologists completing a Board-approved internship program, transitional program or re-entry program.

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<sup>1</sup> The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory  
**Psychology Board of Australia**

## Definition of psychological practice for provisional psychologists

*Psychological practice by provisional psychologists involves the application to individual clients, groups, or organisations, of psychological knowledge, methodology, principles, techniques, and ethical standards. It takes place in a wide range of professional practice settings and workplaces. It involves direct client contact and client-related activities of a psychological nature, including:*

- *individual client interventions - psychological practice activities such as assessment, counselling, diagnosis, intervention, case consultation, case conferences, report writing and case notes, evaluation, and modification of interventions*
- *group interventions - psychological practice activities, such as training and development, group counselling, organisational development and change, consultancy, resource development, and program evaluation, and*
- *individual or group interventions, rehabilitation, career development, outplacement counselling, employee assistance programs, report writing, consultation, and liaison.*

*Psychological practice involves the application of specific skills, such as establishing professional relationships and maintaining professional behaviour, applying evidence-based theory, evaluating the efficacy of psychological treatments or programs and referring the client to another health practitioner if required, communicating with the client about treatment or other interventions, making referrals, and self-reflective practice and understanding personal and professional limitations.*

## Requirements for working in addition to placements

Provisional psychologists must apply for approval to work in addition to placements using the *Application for working in addition to university placements for provisional psychologists - AWOP-76*, which is published on the Board's website at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au).

If practising in more than one additional work role, a separate application must be made for each one.

There is no application fee to apply for approval to work in addition to placements.

The Board has a responsibility to provide for the protection of the public, and therefore when assessing an application must be satisfied that the proposed supervised practice is suitable and the provisional psychologist will be adequately supervised. Therefore an application for approval to work in addition to placements must meet the following criteria:

### 1. Provisional registration

- a. Approval to work in addition to placements is only available to currently registered provisional psychologists who are actively enrolled in an accredited psychology higher degree.
- b. If provisional registration lapses or is suspended or cancelled for any reason, approval to work in addition to higher degree placements is also lapsed, suspended or cancelled at the same time.
- c. If an individual continues to work as a provisional psychologist when they no longer hold registration with the Board they will be in breach of title protections of the National Law and the matter will be referred for investigation.

### 2. Approval of the work role

- a. The provisional psychologist is required to submit with their application for approval to work in addition to placements, a formal position description that has been signed and verified by the supervisor, manager or employer.
- b. Provisional psychologists are not permitted to establish an independent private practice as a provisional psychologist or work in any role where there is no supervision. The provisional psychologist must have access to someone who can provide regular support and guidance and is available outside formal scheduled supervision sessions. If the Board-approved supervisor/s is not onsite they should be available to be contacted by phone or email if required, and/or there should be someone else onsite such as another psychologist, manager or other health practitioner who can provide day-to-day support and guidance.

- c. The Board will not approve a work role if the Board considers that:
  - the applicant would be practising outside their scope of competence, or
  - there will be insufficient supervision and support for the provisional psychologist in the role, or
  - the public will be placed at risk, or there is insufficient information provided to enable the Board to determine the level of risk.
- d. If the provisional psychologist changes work roles or supervisors, or if there are significant changes to the approved work role or supervisory arrangements, they must seek prior approval from the Board.

### 3. Psychological supervision

- a. Provisional psychologists working in addition to placements must receive regular psychological supervision by a registered general psychologist who is currently approved by the Board to supervise provisional psychologists.
- b. The supervisor/s must directly observe (in person, via videoconference, or by video recording) at least two client sessions where psychological services are provided in every six-month timeframe.
- c. Supervision must be provided:
  - at a minimum rate of one hour of supervision per 17.5 hours of psychological practice, and
  - regularly: usually at least one hour per week of either individual or small group supervision and at least 66% of supervision should be individual (one-on-one)
- d. A record of supervision must be kept by the provisional psychologist and reviewed and signed regularly (e.g. weekly or fortnightly) by the supervisor and must be made available to the Board if requested.
- e. Supervision reports must be provided by the supervisor every six months and submitted to the Board by the provisional psychologist. These reports must be provided using the progress report form PPSR-76 approved by the Board for this purpose and include all the following:
  - confirmation that the provisional psychologist's work has been directly observed
  - a statement about whether the supervisor is satisfied that the provisional psychologist's practice is safe and ethical and services they provide are of an appropriate quality.
- f. an unsatisfactory supervision report will be referred to the relevant state or territory board for review with possible outcomes as follows:
  - an explanation from the supervisor and/or the provisional psychologist may be required, and/or
  - additional supervision may be required, and/or
  - approval to work in addition to placements may be revoked, and/or
  - disciplinary action may be taken if there is evidence that the public has been placed at risk by a significant failure by the supervisor to adhere to their responsibilities as a supervisor, or a significant departure from professional standards and/or failure to meet their obligations as a registered practitioner by either the supervisor or the provisional psychologist.

### 4. Professional indemnity insurance

Provisional psychologists must be covered by professional indemnity insurance that meets the requirements of the Board's *Professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard* for all psychological practice that they undertake. It is the responsibility of the individual provisional psychologist to ensure that appropriate professional indemnity insurance is in place before starting practice.

## When can I start working in addition to university placements?

- a. Approval to work in addition to placements may be sought at any time from the beginning of enrolment in the accredited degree.
- b. Working in addition to placements can only begin after Board approval is granted.
- c. Provisional psychologists completing the higher degree pathway may continue to work in addition to placements while the thesis is being marked. Once the thesis is accepted and the final academic transcript is available, the provisional psychologist may continue to work in addition to placements for up to 28 days, by which time an application for general registration must be made. Provisional psychologists may then continue to work in addition to placements until the application for general registration is decided.
- d. Provisional psychologists completing the 5+1 internship program pathway may continue to work in addition to placements while finalising their sixth internship program plan for up to 28 days after completion of the fifth year degree. However, they cannot begin accrue hours for the sixth year internship until the completed plan has been submitted and approved by the Board.

## Definitions

In this policy:

An **accredited higher degree** or **accredited professional degree** is a postgraduate psychology program at fifth year or above that has been accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council and approved by the Board as providing a qualification for registration.

**AHPRA** means the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency established under Part 4 of the National Law.

**Board** or **National Board** means the Psychology Board of Australia established under part 5 of the National Law.

**Client** means a party or parties to a psychological service provided by the provisional psychologist. Clients may be individuals, couples, dyads, families, groups, organisations, communities, facilitators, sponsors or those commissioning or paying for the professional activity.

**Direct client contact** means the performance by the provisional psychologist of specific tasks of psychological assessment, diagnosis, intervention, prevention, treatment, consultation, and provision of advice and strategies directly with clients, either face-to-face (including videoconference etc) or via telephone, under the guidance of a supervisor. In this policy direct client contact does not include research, teaching or tutoring.

**Group supervision** means small group supervision sessions comprising a maximum of five provisional psychologists and led by one or more Board-approved supervisors. Group supervision may occur face-to-face in the same location, or via videoconference or via teleconference.

**Individual supervision** means one-on-one real time verbal supervision between the provisional psychologist and a Board-approved supervisor. It may occur face-to-face in the same location, or via videoconference or via telephone.

**National Law** means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory of Australia.

**Provisional psychologist** means a person registered as a provisional psychologist under part 7 of the National Law.

**Psychologist** means a person who holds general registration as a psychologist under Part 7 of the National Law.

**Supervisor** or **Board-approved supervisor** means a person who holds general registration as a psychologist and who has been approved by the Board to supervise provisional psychologists.

## **Responsibilities**

The National Board is responsible for formulating and approving this policy. AHPRA is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and effectively managed.

## **Authorisation**

Psychology Board of Australia  
Date of issue: 6 April 2011

## **Review**

The Board will review this policy every five years or as required.

**Last reviewed:** 31 July 2015. This version is effective from 1 September 2015.