

**Policy for 4+2 internship program:
limited work role**



Psychology
Board of
Australia

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Summary

The Provisional Registration Standard was approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory with approval taking effect from 1 July 2010. The Psychology Board of Australia's *Guidelines for 4+2 Internship Program* (the Guidelines) were developed in accordance with s.35(1)(c)(iii) of the National Law. The Provisional Registration Standard indicates the requirements of the 4+2 internship program that must be successfully completed and the Guidelines outline the details of these requirements. Section 3.2 and section 6 of the Guidelines specify that eight core capabilities common to all areas of psychological practice must be achieved by provisional psychologists in the two-year internship. The term *capability* refers to the range of knowledge, skills and expertise expected of and demonstrated by a six-year trained psychologist.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for limiting any work role that the Board considers will not enable a provisional psychologist to achieve all of the training objectives of the capabilities of the 4+2 internship program.

Definitions

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

AHPRA means the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Board means the Psychology Board of Australia established under part 5 of the Act

4+2 internship program or **internship program** refers to the supervised practice program as outlined in the Guidelines.

4+2 pathway refers to the pathway to general registration undertaken by provisional psychologists that is based on Board approval of the plan; supervisors; and work role(s) for the internship program

Guidelines refers to the *Guidelines for the 4+2 internship program: provisional psychologists and supervisors*

Practice refers to the practice of psychology as defined under the Guidelines

Provisional Psychologist means a person registered as a provisional psychologist under part 7 of the Act

Psychologist means a person who holds general registration as a psychologist under Part 7 of the Act

Supervisor, or Board Approved Supervisor or Principal Supervisor means a person who holds general registration as a psychologist and who has been approved by the Board, pursuant to section 9 of the Guidelines, to supervise provisional psychologists

Responsibilities

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

Scope

This policy applies to the Board, supervisors and provisional psychologists undertaking the 4+2 pathway to general registration.

Legislation

Under s.35 (1) (c) of the National Law, the Psychology Board of Australia had developed and approved the *Guidelines for 4+2 Internship Program: Provisional Psychologists and Supervisors* (the Guidelines). The Psychology Board of Australia has delegated the implementation of the 4+2 internship program to AHPRA. The Psychology Professional Officers at AHPRA may recommend a course of action or refer a specific case to the relevant Regional Board for a decision.

Background

The Guidelines state that: 'Work roles for the internship program must be psychological in nature: based on direct client contact and involving the psychology-specific tasks of psychological assessment, problem formulation, diagnosis, intervention and prevention' (section 3.5). Time spent on tasks that a provisional psychologist is required to undertake as part of his/her work role that do not fit within this definition of psychological practice (for example, clerical tasks, driving to and from appointments) cannot be accrued as hours of professional practice. Further, work roles or responsibilities such as teaching or tutoring in psychology, supervising other professionals or working in research positions do not constitute psychological practice for the purpose of the Guidelines and will not be approved.

Work roles that are predominately concerned with the provision of services unrelated to psychology in another professional field (for example, social worker, occupational therapist, psychiatric nurse, teacher, special educator, speech pathologist), will not be approved (refer to section 3.5 of the Guidelines).

The Guidelines recognise that, to achieve the broad generalist training of the 4+2 internship program and the training objectives of the eight capabilities of that program,

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including the 'practice across the lifespan' capability, it may be necessary for the provisional psychologist to undertake more than one work role.

Policy

Time accrued by a provisional psychologist towards the 4+2 internship program will be restricted to a maximum of 1540 hours for any work role that AHPRA considers will not provide sufficient opportunities for a provisional psychologist to achieve the training objectives of all of the capabilities of that program.

Work roles which might warrant implementation of this policy

1. Any work role in which it will not be possible for a provisional psychologist to meet the training objectives of all eight capabilities (for example, roles that enable training towards the 'psychological assessment and measurement' capability but not the 'intervention strategies' capability)
2. Any work role that provides training opportunities that will only partially meet the training objectives of any of the capabilities (for example, work roles in which psychological interventions offered to clients are restricted to a few sessions)
3. Any work role that has a restricted or limited client group (for example, people with intellectual disabilities); type of presenting issue (for example, prevention of recidivism); and/or type of intervention (for example, behaviour management)
4. Any generic work role that is also open to allied health professionals other than provisional psychologists and which involves generic assessments (for example, barriers to workplace employment) and/or generic or prescriptive interventions (for example, cognitive skills training)
5. Any work role where the primary focus is on group programs and/or
6. Any work role that offers training restricted to any specialist area of psychology that does not include sufficient opportunity for assessment, diagnosis and treatment of a range of general mental health impairments, disabilities, conditions or disorders.

Where more than one of the above limitations apply to a work role, the work role may not be approved.

Variation to this policy

For applicants required to undertake two years (3080 hours) of supervised practice:

- A work role that enables the provisional psychologist to achieve all of the training objectives of the capabilities except the 'across the lifespan' capability and the 'research and evaluation' capability will be subject to a variation to this limited work role policy.

Research and evaluation capability

Work roles such as teaching or tutoring in psychology, supervising other professionals or working in research positions do not constitute psychological work for the purpose of the Guidelines and will not be approved. However, supervised applied psychological research as part of a psychological practice role may be accepted, provided it contributes to the achievement of the core capabilities for the internship and constitutes not more than 388 hours of psychological practice.

Across the lifespan capability

This variation to the limited work role policy applies to work roles in which the client lifespan stage is defined by virtue of the nature of the service (for example, childhood/adolescence services such as child, adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) or primary schools and adult/late lifespan services such as adult mental health or geriatric services).

For applicants required to undertake two years (3080 hours) of supervised practice:

- Supervised practice requirements in work roles that will not enable the provisional psychologist to achieve the training objectives of the 'across the lifespan' capability (because the client group is restricted to the lifespan stages of childhood/adolescence or adulthood/late adulthood) can be accrued to a maximum of 2310 hours of the required 3080 hours.
- The provisional psychologist must complete at least 770 hours of the supervised practice requirements in a Board-approved work role that enables him or her to meet the 'across the lifespan' capability with clients in the other lifespan stages. For example, if the lifespan stages of the client group of the proposed work role are childhood/adolescence only, the provisional psychologist must obtain approval for and work in a work role for at least 770 hours with clients in the adult/late adult lifespan stages.

For applicants required to undertake one year (1540 hours) of supervised practice:

- If a work role will not enable the applicant to meet the 'across the lifespan' capability (because the client group is restricted to the lifespan stages of childhood/adolescence or adulthood/late adulthood), then accrued hours of supervised practice in that work role

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will be limited to 1020 hours. The applicant will be required to complete at least 520 hours in a Board-approved work role with clients in the other lifespan stages.

Provisional psychologists working in a childhood/adolescence service may apply to accrue hours spent in interventions with parents, teachers, guardians and so on towards the 'across the lifespan' capability requirements. Similarly, provisional psychologists working in a psycho-geriatric service may apply to accrue hours spent providing interventions with the client's family, including children and adolescent relatives, towards the 'across the lifespan' capability requirements.

Exemptions may be allowed where the client group in a work role is restricted to one of the two broad lifespan stages (childhood/adulthood) but where the Supervised Practice Plan and progress or transitional reports related to this Plan demonstrate how consultation and provision of advice and strategies to teachers, relatives and so on contributes to achievement of the objectives of the 'across the lifespan' capability and that the role incorporates opportunity for assessment, diagnosis and treatment (for example, family therapy) of mental health issues in both children/adolescents and adults/older adults. The Supervised Practice Plan and supervision report will be considered on an individual basis by Professional Officers in conjunction with the case studies demonstrating 'across the lifespan' capabilities.

Authorisation:

Psychology Board of Australia
Date of issue: 6 April 2011

Review

This policy will be in effect from 6 April 2011. The Board will review this policy at least every three years.

Last reviewed: 1 August 2011