

Fact sheet

Registration as a provisional psychologist for higher degree students

What is the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme?

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) came into effect in Australia on 1 July 2010.

The National Scheme is the regulation of 14 health professions in Australia under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). It establishes 14 National Boards, including the Psychology Board of Australia (the Board), that regulate the professions and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) which provides administrative support to the National Boards, including receiving and processing applications for registration.

Information about the National Scheme and the implications for practitioners is published on the Board's website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au and on AHPRA's website at www.ahpra.gov.au. The information below aims to provide useful information for higher degree students seeking provisional registration under the National Scheme.

What types of registration apply to psychology?

For the psychology profession, there are three registration types:

- general registration
- provisional registration
- non-practising registration

What is provisional registration?

Provisional registration is the registration type that enables the individual to complete a period of supervised practice that is required to be eligible for general registration. You must be registered as a provisional psychologist if undertaking one of the following programs to general registration:

- a) an accredited higher degree program
- b) a 5+1 internship program
- c) a 4+2 internship program
- d) a transitional program (for overseas-qualified psychologists)

Postgraduate students must be registered as a provisional psychologist from the start of enrolment in their higher degree and for the duration of enrolment in any component of an accredited qualification including coursework, practicum and research thesis. This applies to both fifth year students in the 5+1 pathway, and masters, doctorate and combined degree students in the higher degree pathway.

How do I apply for provisional registration?

Online application for provisional registration is available if you:

- have completed an accredited fourth year psychology degree in the last 10 years (or will be finishing soon), and

- have never previously been registered as a health practitioner or student with one of the [14 health professions boards](#) in Australia, and
- have been offered a place in an accredited fifth year psychology program.

For full details visit [Online Graduate Applications](#).

Alternatively, you can apply for provisional registration using the paper application form - [Application for provisional registration - APRO-76](#) and lodge it with your [local office of AHPRA](#). All applicants for provisional registration are required to meet the requirements of the National Board's registration standards, guidelines and policies, the code of ethics and the National Law, which are all available on the Board's website.

When do postgraduate psychology students have to apply for registration?

You need to apply for provisional registration after you have enrolled in your degree (i.e. enrolled in subjects), and before you start your degree (i.e. attending classes and undertaking placements).

When you apply for provisional registration you need to provide evidence of current enrolment in an accredited higher degree. AHPRA will accept a print-out of your online record of enrolment and will cross reference your enrolment record with a list of currently enrolled students that is provided directly to AHPRA by the head of psychology at your university or college. AHPRA will not accept a letter of offer to enrol in a course instead of evidence of current enrolment.

When you begin your studies your tutors and placement supervisors can use the online [Register of Practitioners](#) to confirm your registration as a provisional psychologist.

What does it cost to apply for provisional registration?

Applicants for provisional registration are not required to pay an application fee.

A registration fee is payable on initial application for registration and then annually on renewal of registration. The registration and renewal fees applicable to provisional psychologists are set out in the [schedule of fees](#).

The Board reviews its fees annually in consultation with its Finance and Management Committee and AHPRA.

Renewal

The annual registration renewal date for provisional psychologists generally the anniversary of the date you were first granted provisional registration. The annual fee you pay on initial application and then each time you renew your registration is always for a full 12 months of provisional registration.

New applications from current provisional psychologists

Under section 64(3) of the National Law it is not possible to renew provisional registration more than twice. Therefore, if you require provisional registration for more than three years you will need to re-apply for registration before the expiry of two renewal periods (i.e. at the end of your third year of registration). It is recommended that you re-apply for provisional registration at least two months before your registration expiry date so that your new registration is in place before your previous registration expires and there is no interruption to your studies. It is your responsibility to ensure you remain registered. If you do not renew and your registration lapses you will not be able to continue as a provisional psychologist until a new application for registration is approved. As with initial registration, there is no application fee for re-registration as a provisional psychologists; only the registration fee.

Changing to general registration

When you complete your training and apply for general registration, any 'unused' portion of your provisional registration fee will be considered in determining general registration fee payable.

What is my fee used for?

Charging registration fees allows the Board to carry out its functions in accordance with the National Law. In Australia, fees from registrants fully fund the regulation of the profession. The purpose of regulation is to provide for the protection of the Australian public by ensuring that health services are provided safely and are of an appropriate quality. The core regulatory functions are:

- **Professional standards** – development of policies guidelines, codes, and registration standards for approval by Ministers
- **Registration** of psychologists and provisional psychologists
- **Notifications** – managing complaints and concerns about the health, conduct or performance of psychologists and provisional psychologists
- **Compliance** – monitoring and auditing to ensure compliance with Board requirements
- **Accreditation** and approval of programs of study in partnership with the accreditation authority.

What happens if a postgraduate psychology student does not apply for provisional registration?

All postgraduate psychology students must apply for provisional registration at the time of beginning their degree. If you are not granted provisional registration you will not be able to use this degree for the purposes of registration as a psychologist.

Additionally, under the National Law there are strict title protections. This means that if you are not a registered provisional psychologist, you cannot use the title 'Provisional Psychologist' or any other title, name, initial, symbol, word or description that could be reasonably understood to indicate that you are registered or otherwise authorised or qualified to practice in the This means that if you undertake a degree which requires provisional registration without being registered you may be committing a 'holding out' offence profession (maximum penalty for an individual - \$30,000).

When you complete your training and apply for general registration the registration officer will cross reference your academic transcript with your registration history to ensure that you were registered for the duration of enrolment. If the provisional registration requirements have not been met, an application for general registration may not be approved.