



**Psychology Board of Australia**

# **GUIDELINES: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1 December 2015

# GUIDELINES: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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## 1. Introduction

These guidelines<sup>1</sup> have been developed by the Psychology Board of Australia (‘the Board’) under section 39 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. They supplement the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for registered health practitioners set out in section 128 of the National Law (refer to Appendix A).

They also supplement the specific CPD requirements for psychologists in the *Continuing professional development registration standard* (the CPD standard), that has been developed by the Board under section 38(1)(c) of the National Law and approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Ministerial Council) on 27 August 2015 with approval taking effect from 1 December 2015.

All registered general psychologists are required to be familiar with these guidelines, the CPD standard and the CPD requirements for health practitioners under the National Law.

These guidelines take effect from 1 December 2015.

## 2. Who needs to use these guidelines?

These guidelines apply to all psychologists with general registration, including those with an area of practice endorsement.

These guidelines do not apply to provisional psychologists or psychologists with non-practising registration.

## 3. Summary of requirements

A requirement for annual renewal of registration is participation in CPD in accordance with the Board’s CPD standard.

As a profession psychologists are heavily engaged in CPD and training. Prior to the introduction of mandatory CPD under the National Law in 2010, approximately 80 percent of psychologists were already attending seminars, conferences and workshops and undertaking private study and reading on a regular and voluntary basis<sup>2</sup>. Employers, professional groups and societies and government agencies (e.g. Medicare) have a long history of requiring annual CPD, therefore it was an accepted habit for most psychologists prior to 2010. Many psychologists will find they exceed the Board’s minimum standard in the course of meeting the skills and development requirements of employers, clients and their own professional standards. If audited you only need to demonstrate that you have met the minimum standard.

To meet the Board’s minimum standard you need to:

1. Have a written learning plan that includes identified CPD goals based on objective self assessment, and a plan for achieving your goals that includes proposed activities, timeframes and expected outcomes. You should review your CPD plan regularly – at least annually – and update and revise it as required.
2. Between 1 December and 30 November each year undertake 10 hours of peer consultation plus 20 hours of any other CPD activities in accordance with your CPD plan.
3. Keep a CPD portfolio including your CPD plan, CPD and peer consultation logs, evidence of attendance where applicable, and written reflection (journal or log of oral reflection with peers/mentor).

This document provides more detailed information and guidance for psychologists about the requirements of the CPD standard and information about the steps psychologists need to take when completing their CPD:

Step 1 – identify your CPD requirements

Step 2 – develop your learning plan

Step 3 – undertake CPD

<sup>1</sup> Based on the World Federation for Medical Education Global Standards for CPD (2003).

<sup>2</sup> Grenyer, B. F. S., Matthews, R., Stokes, D. & Crea, K. (2010). The Australian Psychology Workforce 2: A national profile of psychologists’ education, training, specialist qualifications and continuous professional development. *Australian Psychologist*, September 2010. 45(3). 168–177.

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Step 4 – maintain your CPD portfolio, and

Step 5 – renew your registration.

## 3.1 What is CPD?

CPD is the means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the qualities required in their professional lives. Professional development is an ongoing process which continues over the course of a career, adapting to changes in practice environments, professional domains, new information and consumer needs.

CPD designates the period of education and training of psychologists, starting after completion of basic education and postgraduate vocational training and extending throughout each psychologist's professional working life. CPD differs in principle from the preceding two formal phases, in that CPD implies self-directed and practice-based learning activities rather than supervised education and training.

CPD includes both structured and unstructured learning activities which directly contribute to the psychologist's competence to practise in their chosen field. Carefully tailored professional development can support competency and relevance in practice, which in turn assists members of the public who seek psychology services.

CPD does not always relate directly to current practice. It also promotes competence in new areas of practice; supports the professional need to explore, develop and consider new areas of competence; and extends the capacity of psychologists to make wiser judgements in complex and ambiguous situations they will certainly encounter in their professional lives.

## 3.2 Educational rationale

To deliver the highest quality professional service, the content of CPD must be directed towards enhancing professional competencies (both skills and knowledge). This includes keeping up to date with advances in research evidence and theoretical developments in various domains of psychology, organisation of work (team building and leadership), communication, ethics, teaching, research and administration.

There are three main sources of motivation for individual practitioners to undertake CPD:

- the professional drive to provide optimal evidence-based services to clients
- the obligation to honour the requirements of employers and a commitment to the profession, protection of the public and to practice in a competent and ethical manner, and
- the need to preserve job satisfaction and prevent "burn out".

The best available evidence suggests that effective CPD is characterised by the presence of three factors:

- **Effective planning identifies a need or reason for the particular CPD activity to be undertaken.**

Specifically identified needs should be the focus of CPD whenever possible. An identified need would usually relate to enhancing current practice. However, professional learning should also equip you to deal with unpredictable future demands, create a broad base of knowledge and experience on which to draw, and compensate for any deficiencies from past practice.

- **Learning is based on an identified need or reason.**

Whether the needs and goals identified are specific or general, the learning activities chosen must be appropriate and there should be a balance between general and specific CPD. The method of learning is less important than its relevance to the need and could vary in different circumstances from reading, attending a lecture or a course, a peer group meeting or visiting an institution for consultation and learning.

- **Follow up provision is made for reinforcing the learning accomplished.**

Following up on learning undertaken reinforces it and offers opportunities for disseminating and sharing learning with others. This more often leads to positive changes in methods of practice and the extent of effectiveness of the CPD undertaken can be evaluated in relation to the original need or reason for it.

### 3.3 CPD Model

The Board supports a CPD model which emphasises individual responsibility, offering practitioners flexibility and choice in the strategies used. A process of self-assessment forms the basis for determining the professional development plan.

A learning needs and opportunities assessment is, in most cases, an integral component of successful CPD. Methods for identifying learning needs range from formal assessments (using tests of knowledge, skills and attitudes, peer review, systematic review of practice such as audit or significant event analysis) to the more common ways that are part of everyday practice: thinking about mistakes, reflecting on practice, receiving complaints and feedback, interacting with the team. A learning needs assessment is important for all psychologists, and vital for those in isolated, independent or solo practice.

The Board recognises the many spheres of practice which draw on psychological knowledge and skills, and that psychologists work in a wide range of areas and roles. CPD should primarily be relevant to current practice; you should apply the CPD principles to fit your individual circumstances and the nature of your practice. Psychological practice should be based on the scientist-practitioner model which focuses on the use of research findings to inform professional practice and employs a problem-formulation and hypothesis-testing approach.

In addition to the formal and systematic element of CPD such as courses, conferences and formal supervision, professionals also engage in continuous learning and development that is informal and often subtle (such as professional dialogue with colleagues, case conferences, and peer review).

The Board's CPD model requires psychologists to:

1. identify their own professional development needs within their scope of practice
2. set professional development goals in relation to those identified needs and develop a plan to achieve these goals

3. select and undertake professional development activities to support the individual learning plan identified goals, and
4. evaluate and reflect on the extent to which those activities maintain or enhance practice.

The ultimate responsibility for maintaining and demonstrating professional competence to practise lies with the practitioner, guided by the Board's registration standards, code of ethics and guidelines. There is no best way to maintain, improve and broaden knowledge, expertise and competence. The range of professional development activities selected will vary according to individual career stage, area of practice, learning style, identified needs, and timing and availability.

#### Organisation and methods

A multifaceted CPD system is needed to take account of differences in professional roles, needs, learning priorities, and resource availability. While the profession bears a major responsibility for CPD, professional organisations function as major initiators, providers and promoters of CPD. There are also numerous providers of CPD not accountable directly to the profession, including universities, research societies, industry, and consumer organisations.

Opportunities to benefit from CPD on a day-to-day basis depend to a large extent on the working environment. There are wide variations. Work in large institutions can differ vastly, in the stimulus derived from collegiate interaction, compared to working in a rural area, or in solo or small private practice in the community. Information technology can help remedy some of the handicaps of isolation.

#### Evaluation and recognition

Use of personal portfolios and logbooks for recording activities with a CPD component provides a tool for planning and monitoring individual self-directed learning. The Board's CPD standard recognises the full range of activities, provided they are documented appropriately. In addition to logging the hours of CPD, a professional development journal should be kept to provide a written outline of the content and relevance of each activity and written reflection.

## 4. The CPD Cycle

### Step 1 – Registration status and CPD requirements

If you hold general registration for the full registration year (1 December to 30 November) you must complete 30 hours of CPD activities for the registration year. Of the 30 hours at least 10 hours must be peer consultation. These requirements apply regardless of whether you work full-time or part-time. Psychologists working part-time are expected to maintain the same high standards of practice as those working full-time.

If you hold general registration for part of the year, you only need to complete CPD for the part of the year that general registration was held. For every full month of general registration you must complete 2.5 hours (150 minutes) of CPD comprising 50 minutes of peer consultation plus 100 minutes of general CPD. You can only count CPD you completed during the portion of the year you held general registration, but you can choose to spread the hours across those months or complete it all at once.

If you take leave of absence from practice during the year but maintain general registration you must meet the full CPD requirements unless you apply for and are granted an exemption by the Board (see Appendix B). If you take leave of absence of 12 months or more the Board recommends that you change your registration type to non-practising and then change it back to general before you resume practice using the appropriate application forms.

The Board may consider a full or partial exemption or variation to the requirements of the CPD registration standard in special circumstances, such as ill health, parental leave or carer's leave. For more detail on exemptions refer to Appendix B.

Other factors that affect CPD requirements are:

- area of practice endorsements
- if you are undertaking a registrar program
- Board-approved supervisors

### CPD for area of practice endorsements

CPD activities should be relevant to the psychologist's area of professional practice therefore psychologists with area of practice endorsements are expected to obtain the majority of their CPD within their endorsed area(s) of practice. Depending on how many endorsements a psychologist has, the expectations are as follows:

- Psychologists with one endorsement complete 16 hours of CPD within that area of practice and the other 14 hours required may be in any area relevant to their practice.
- Psychologists with two endorsements complete 15 hours of CPD within each area of practice.
- Psychologists with three or more endorsements complete 30 hours of CPD that is split equally between the three or more areas of practice.

You do not necessarily have to complete the majority of the peer consultation component of CPD in your endorsed area of practice, or divide it equally across two or more endorsements. For example, if you have two endorsements, you could choose to do all 10 hours of peer consultation plus 5 hours of activities in one area and 15 hours of activities but no peer consultation in the other area.

Further information for psychologists with an area of practice endorsement is available in the Board's *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*.

### CPD in the registrar program

The Psychology Board of Australia registrar program (to become eligible to apply for an area of practice endorsement) is an intensive period of training in a specialised area of practice. Therefore if you are completing a registrar program you have additional supervision and professional development requirements.

A full-time registrar will exceed the minimum supervision/peer consultation and professional development requirements of general registration by meeting the requirements of the registrar program. However, registrars completing the program part-time or who take a leave of absence during the program while maintaining general registration, must ensure they

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still complete the minimum requirements of the CPD standard for the year; that is: 10 hours of supervision (peer consultation) and 20 hours of other CPD activities.

Further information for psychologists undertaking a registrar program is available in the Board's *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*.

## CPD for Board approved supervisors

If you are a Board-approved supervisor you have a continuing responsibility to maintain and develop your skills as a supervisor. CPD for Board-approved supervisors must include completion of a Board-approved supervisor training course or refresher course (e.g. master class) at least every five years. For further details refer to the Supervision section of the website – [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au) under *Registration > Supervision*.

It is also recommended that supervisors include some additional professional development activities relevant to supervision skills at least every two years, such as peer consultation on supervision, workshops on supervision, or other activities that improve knowledge and skills in relevant areas such as supervision, learning, teaching or mentoring.

## Step 2 – Develop your learning plan

Effective planning is important to maximise the benefits of learning, therefore psychologists need to have a written learning plan. The learning plan should be reviewed regularly and updated at least annually, or more regularly as required. It is common to review and update the plan for the next registration year around the same time as renewal of registration for the year. The learning plan can be amended during the year to respond to new opportunities or emerging learning needs.

The learning plan template provided in these guidelines is indicative, rather than prescriptive. The Board recommends that practitioners use the template (or one provided by their professional association or society) as they support an efficient auditing process. You can adapt the template to suit your own circumstances and learning need and goals.

## Identify your learning needs and goals

The most effective CPD is based on self assessment and identification of your own learning goals. In identifying your goals, a good starting point is to review your formal position description (if applicable) and think about whether there is scope to refresh, extend or improve your skills and knowledge in relation to the core requirements of your job.

Usually your learning plan would be predominantly relevant to your current practice, with scope to explore future relevant interests. However, if you plan to change your work role/area of practice in the near future then increasing your knowledge or skills in preparation for this transition can be the focus of the plan. Your plan can also include learning goals and activities that are not specifically relevant to your practice but will broaden your general knowledge of psychological practice.

In thinking about your goals you could review the core competencies of psychologists in conjunction with a review of your career stage. The core competencies are listed in both the *Guidelines for the 4+2 internship program*, and the *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements* which also sets out specific competencies for different areas of practice.

Another useful resource is the Board's national psychology examination curriculum which contains detailed information on the four domains of skill and knowledge required to pass the exam and be eligible for general registration. While the exam is aimed at testing entry-level knowledge it may still give you some ideas about aspects of your skills and knowledge that could be refreshed or further developed even if you have now progressed well past entry-level in your career. There is also a reading list for the examination that is updated often, allowing you to review new resources and references in the field.

## Things you could consider in setting your goals:

- What are the most important aspects of my current position/practice?
- What are the competencies required for these aspects?
- What do I need to develop or understand further?

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- How can I increase my knowledge, strengthen my skills or acquire new skills and knowledge to perform better in my current role?
- What are my career goals?
- What about developments and research in psychology?

Some of your goals may not be things you need to do, but activities in areas of interest that provide the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge in psychological practice.

## How many goals should I have?

You must identify at least one goal. The CPD learning plan template has space for three identified goals but this is just a guide and you may have more or less depending on your individual situation.

## Review and revise your learning plan

Professional development is a continuous improvement cycle and your learning plan can be fluid, with goals set and modified as necessary.

You may change your learning plan and goals over the year to accommodate a change in work role, career goals, or as new professional development opportunities arise. You may choose to review and update your plan mid-cycle to align with a performance review cycle in your workplace. Your learning plan may include long term goals that take several years to achieve, or you may achieve your goals set at the start of the year quickly and set new goals for yourself during the year.

You can still count CPD activities completed in relation to a learning need or goal that you later revised or abandoned when your professional development priorities changed, as long as the activities were relevant to your practice and/or goals at the time.

## Step 3 – Undertake CPD

### The CPD cycle

The CPD cycle for psychologists is the annual renewal cycle for general registration – 1 December to 30 November.

You cannot count CPD undertaken while you were not a registered general psychologist in Australia towards the Board's requirements. If you obtain general registration partway through a registration year you can only count CPD completed from the date you are granted general registration, but will apply pro rata for the part of the year you are generally registered. This also applies if you change from provisional to general registration during the year.

You cannot count CPD completed after 30 November towards the CPD requirements for the previous year, even if you are renewing your registration during the late period (1 December to 31 December). It will count towards the next year's requirements instead.

If you are following a different CPD cycle required by another registration board, professional association or linked to your employer's performance review cycle you still need to be able to show that you met the Board's requirements within the Board's CPD cycle. If your main CPD plan is one you keep for a separate purpose you may need to copy the information over to the Psychology Board template once a year, but you only need to provide enough detail to show you are meeting the minimum requirements.

If your separate plan is very detailed and you undertake a lot of CPD you don't have to copy it all into the Board's template – just enough to show you meet the standard. Alternatively, if your separate CPD plan includes the same information the Board requires and a similar amount of detail you can submit your separate plan to the Board if audited. However if your separate plan follows a different CPD cycle such as the calendar year or financial year you need to extend that plan cover the whole of the Board's CPD cycle of 1 December to 30 November or submit two plans that together cover the whole period.

Similarly, if you are keeping a CPD activity log or reflective journal for another purpose you can use the same log or journal for your Board CPD portfolio as long as dates are included and the format will allow auditors to clearly see that the Board's requirements were met during the period being audited.



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## Peer consultation

Peer consultation means supervision, mentoring and consultation in one-on-one or group format, for the purposes of professional development and support in the practice of psychology. It includes a critically reflective focus on the practitioner's own practice.

You should usually complete your peer supervision or consultation with someone who is more experienced or knowledgeable in the aspect of practice you are consulting them about.

Psychologists must complete a minimum of 10 hours of peer consultation each year.

Like other CPD, hours are logged and the activities are supported by entries into a journal. The peer consultation journal is a written outline of the content and relevance of peer consultation activities. The peer consultation journal is intended to increase the effectiveness of peer consultation by ensuring adequate review and reflection.

### *Why does the Board require peer consultation?*

The requirement for peer consultation is intended to enhance standards of practice, to improve quality of service. The primary function of the Board is to protect the public by ensuring that all psychologists continue to practise in a competent and ethical manner throughout their careers.

Evidence suggests that engagement in peer consultation is an important part of maintaining ongoing competence and professional development. A historical review of notifications received by psychology registration boards in Australia shows that psychologists who have notifications made about them that lead to serious misconduct findings, most often did not engage in any peer consultation about their practice. Significantly, timely peer consultation may have prevented malpractice.

Peer consultation and peer review are essential components characterising the development of the profession and practice of psychology. They are habits that should be fostered throughout a professional career.

### *What can be counted as peer consultation?*

Peer consultation is participation in discussion with peers about your psychological practice issues. Peer consultation should be relevant to the goals of the overall CPD plan and should follow an educational rationale. Peer consultation can be one-on-one or in a group, and can be undertaken face-to-face, via teleconference, videoconference or correspondence.

Peer consultation includes:

- individual supervision, mentoring or consultation with a peer, supervisor, manager, senior psychologist or other professional person
- small group case discussion with other psychologists
- small group peer support networks
- reviewing and discussing the outcomes of your annual learning plan, identifying new development objectives and updating your learning plan together with a senior colleague, manager, mentor or supervisor, and
- workplace discussion groups with psychologist peers where you spend time discussing and seeking advice on your own cases or other aspects of your psychology practice.

The time that you may count as peer consultation is the time focusing on your own practice. If you receive professional supervision or mentoring when each session is spent focusing entirely on your practice, then you can count the whole session as peer consultation. If you participate in consultation in which the group spends some time focusing on the practice of each participant you only count as peer consultation the estimated time spent discussing and reflecting on your specific practice.

The time you spend advising and focusing on others' practice can be counted towards your 20 hours of general CPD if it contributes to your learning goals, but not as peer consultation hours. Participants in peer support groups must determine the appropriate allocation of time based on the proportion of time focused on each person's practice. This is often done through the allocation of presenters; however group discussions can be fluid and will often be necessary for you to make a reasonable estimation of how much peer

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consultation you should claim. Peer consultation hours should not be 'double counted' by more than one person.

## *Who can you consult with?*

Peer consultation would usually be with a peer or senior psychologist. This could include individuals who have expertise in psychology but are not registered psychologists in Australia, such as overseas psychologists, retired psychologists and psychology academics.

Other professional persons may be acceptable if they advance the CPD goals. The roles of many psychologists have aspects in common with non-psychologist roles so consultation with non-psychologist peers can often be valuable for professional development. The Board recommends that the majority of your peer consultation is with other psychologists, but depending on your scope of practice you may benefit from consultation with others that have identified expertise relevant to your goals (e.g. academics and researchers, psychiatrists and other medical practitioners, or management consultants). You should ensure that you clearly indicate how consultation with non-psychologists links to the goals of your overall CPD plan.

You are not permitted to count consultation with provisional psychologists toward your 10 hours of peer consultation as a provisional psychologist has not yet demonstrated the minimum standard of competence required for general registration. You should aim to seek guidance and advice from someone who is your peer or senior.

You can count consultation with any other generally registered psychologist, including psychologists undertaking registrar programs leading to area of practice endorsement, towards your 10 hours of consultation. Note that the Board recommends you aim to complete your peer supervision or consultation with someone who is more experienced or knowledgeable in the aspect of practice.

Time spent in a formal role as a supervisor for a Board-approved internship program or registrar program cannot be counted towards the ten hours of peer consultation.

## *What should be discussed in peer consultation or supervision?*

You can consult your peers about any aspect of your psychological practice and the Board has adopted the following broad definition of 'psychological practice':

*'any role, whether remunerated or not in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a psychologist in their profession. Practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.'*

Therefore in addition to case consultation, peer consultation can include discussion of aspects of practice such as management, administration, teaching and research when you seek and obtain peer review of your practice. You may also discuss or seek advice from your peers about matters such as psychological ethics, laws and statutes, record keeping, material you plan to publish or present, systems and procedures for managing your practice, techniques for managing stress in your work role, preventing burnout and achieving a good work-life balance, implications of new research findings on your practice, and planning and reflecting on CPD activities.

## *I have an endorsement; does my peer consultation have to be in my specific area of practice?*

No, peer consultation can be general or related to your area of practice – whichever is most suitable for your current practice. Note that the majority of your CPD should be related to your area of practice endorsement. If you do want to count peer consultation towards the area of practice CPD required to maintain an area of practice endorsement, then it must be clearly relevant to that area of practice.

If you are a psychology registrar, all your supervision needs to be relevant to your area of practice and provided by your principal or secondary supervisor/s (refer to the *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*).

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## Recognised CPD activities

In accordance with an adult learning model, the Board will recognise any CPD activity you complete that directly contributes to the achievement of your CPD goals.

*Tips for psychologists who are remote, regional, low income or part-time*

- Some conferences and lectures are recorded and available to watch or purchase online
- Visit your local library for free access to peer reviewed journals and texts and free internet access
- Organise a journal club and share the costs of subscriptions
- Contact your professional association for information about CPD events in regional areas
- Search for online CPD activities, courses and forums
- Organise telephone, teleconference, or Skype consultations
- Refer to the Board's *Recommended reading list* for exam candidates for a list of reading resources that have been reviewed and endorsed by the Board and may be useful for self-directed CPD. The reading list and other exam resources are available at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/National-psychology-exam/Content-of-the-examination.aspx](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/National-psychology-exam/Content-of-the-examination.aspx).

## Active CPD

Active CPD refers to activities that engage the participant and reinforce learning through written or oral activities designed to enhance and test learning. Active CPD is recommended because knowledge that is reinforced and tested is more likely to be retained and is more likely to lead to positive changes to practice. However the individual practitioner needs to choose activities that best suit their own learning style therefore active CPD is optional.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Except for psychology registrars undertaking a Board registrar program leading to area of practice endorsement who must meet the active CPD requirements of their registrar program – refer to the *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements* for details.

## Step 4 – Maintain your CPD portfolio

Your CPD portfolio may be maintained in electronic or paper format and should include:

- learning plan
- CPD activity log
- peer consultation log
- professional development journal to record your reflections on all CPD (including peer consultation), and
- evidence of CPD.

It is recommended you include a resume/curriculum vitae or copy of the job and person specification for your current position as evidence of how your learning plan is relevant to your current practice.

Your evidence of CPD could also include things like:

- certificates of attendance/completion
- receipts
- reading list
- evidence of compliance with the CPD requirements of your professional association
- degree certificates or academic transcripts for postgraduate study
- university assignments/theses/research reports/published articles, and
- plans and progress reports for professional supervision and mentoring.

### *Retention of CPD records*

You must keep your CPD portfolio for five years in case you are audited.

### *Alternative CPD programs and portfolios*

Psychologists may participate in a professional development program through a professional society or association, employer, overseas registration authorities or other equivalent programs and maintain a CPD portfolio or online logging for that program. Provided the alternate program meets the Board's minimum

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requirements set out in the standard it will be accepted by the Board for meeting the CPD standard.

The Board will accept submission of portfolios maintained for alternate programs and print-outs of online records if you are selected for a CPD audit, provided they contain all the information required by the CPD standard and will enable the audit team to easily assess whether you are compliant with the standard.

## Professional development journal

### *Why do I have to keep a journal?*

Reinforcement is important in maximising the benefits of learning, hence the inclusion of a professional development journal for recording reflections on CPD activities including peer consultation. Written reflection in a journal demonstrates that you have actively engaged in the professional development activities (including peer consultation) you have undertaken and helps to reinforce learning through integrating theory and practice.

### *How much should I write?*

The Board's CPD model is based on adult learning principles. You are trusted to use the journal to engage meaningfully in your own reflection relevant to advancing your annual learning plan.

There is no set word count or length. You should use your judgement about the amount of detail that is appropriate for the different activities completed, however you must write some reflection on all your peer consultation sessions and other professional development activities.

During CPD audits the Board will be interested in the presence of written reflection, not the word count, length, or writing style. Generally an auditor will only be checking that content exists, and will not be reading your journal in any detail. However if there is a question as to whether aspects of the CPD you have claimed are justified, your reflections in your journal may be helpful in demonstrating how your CPD is relevant and has contributed to your learning goals.

### *Style and format*

You may use whichever reflection style suits you best such as a paragraph format or dot point format or a combination. Please ensure each entry includes the date.

As a general guide, for each CPD activity you claim your written reflection could include a description of the content of the activity, whether it was peer consultation or general CPD, a summary of what you have learned, and reflection on how this relates to your learning plan and practice. Action taken in response to the learning could also be documented here including further learning needs identified and any further professional development you plan to undertake.

If you take notes during CPD activities then they can be included in your CPD portfolio to meet the CPD reflection requirement if the notes include reflection.

You can keep your journal in whichever format you prefer – you can use the Board's template, create your own template, use a plain Word document or handwritten journal. You can keep all your reflections in one journal or keep separate professional development and peer consultation journals. If you use an online CPD logging system that allows you to record a reflection each time you log an activity this will also satisfy the CPD journal requirement.

## Certification of CPD

The Board does not certify CPD hours in advance. It therefore does not provide advice to CPD presenters about the CPD points that may be claimed from attending their activities. It is the responsibility of the psychologist to appraise the quality of CPD activities and justify the hours claimed, and be prepared to justify these at audit. CPD activities must comply with the Board's guidelines and standards.

## Tools for recording CPD

Portfolios maintained for alternate CPD programs may be used as long as the portfolio provides the information required by the Board's CPD standard.

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Alternatively, a psychologist may use the professional development templates attached to this guideline. All the CPD templates are also available in Word format on the *Forms* page of the website to allow you to type straight into the template.

## Step 5 – Renew your registration

When you renew your general registration you will be asked to declare whether you have met the Board's CPD requirements during the preceding period of registration. If you have met the requirements, you simply answer 'yes' to the question; you are not required to submit your CPD portfolio at renewal time as the portfolio only needs to be submitted if you are later selected for a CPD audit.

If you have not met the CPD requirements and have not been granted a formal exemption or variation of the requirements by the Board you will need to provide details of why you have not met the requirements. The Board will then consider your application for renewal and the options available under the CPD standard for renewal applications from practitioners who do not meet the standard.

The Board will first consider whether a failure to meet the requirements can be addressed through remedial action while allowing you to remain registered. The Board may agree to renew your registration but impose a condition or conditions that require you to undertake one or more of the following:

- additional CPD
- further education
- supervised practice, or
- the national psychology examination.

If conditions are placed on your registration they will appear on the public register in accordance with section 225(k) of the National Law.

In more serious cases where the Board reasonably believes that the failure of the individual to meet CPD requirements cannot be remedied through remedial action, the Board may refuse to renew registration or may take disciplinary action.

This could be necessary if you had previously failed to meet the requirements and remedial actions have not been effective, or where the failure raises serious concerns about your conduct, health or performance and that you may pose a risk to the health and safety of clients. For example if the reason for failing to undertake CPD was serious health impairment this could indicate that you are also not fit to practise. It could therefore be necessary to take immediate action or investigate under section 8 of the National Law; or to refer to the appropriate authority in a co-regulatory system.

### *CPD audit*

Audits are an important part of the way the Board and AHPRA protect the public. Audits help to ensure that practitioners are meeting the mandatory registration standards and provide important assurance to the community and the Board that a consistent minimum standard is being met by all psychologists.

AHPRA has a dedicated audit team which undertakes random audits of samples of practitioners periodically throughout the year. Audits are conducted after you have already renewed your registration for the next year, that is, you will not be asked to submit your CPD portfolio for the current year.

If you are selected for a CPD audit you will be notified via an audit notice in the mail and you will be required to submit your CPD portfolio within 28 days. You may be audited on more than one registration standard at once, for example you may also be required to submit evidence of compliance with the *Recency of practice registration standard* and the *Professional indemnity insurance registration standard*. You may also be audited for more than one year at a time and may be asked to submit your portfolio covering a period of two or more years. The audit notice will include details of what is being audited and a checklist of what you need to submit to meet the audit requirements.

For more information on audits please refer to the audit section of Board's website. In addition to auditing, the Board or a disciplinary panel may also request to see your CPD portfolio to assist with investigation of notifications.

## 5. Review

**Date of review:** 1 December 2015

This guideline will be reviewed at least every five years.

## Appendix A – Relevant provisions from the National Law

### General provisions

#### Part 5 National Boards, Division 3 Registration standards and codes and guidelines

##### 39 Codes and guidelines

A National Board may develop and approve codes and guidelines—

- (a) to provide guidance to the health practitioners it registers; and
- (b) about other matters relevant to the exercise of its functions.

Example. A National Board may develop guidelines about the advertising of regulated health services by health practitioners registered by the Board or other persons for the purposes of section 133.

##### 40 Consultation about registration standards, codes and guidelines

- (1) If a National Board develops a registration standard or a code or guideline, it must ensure there is wide-ranging consultation about its content.
- (2) A contravention of subsection (1) does not invalidate a registration standard, code or guideline.
- (3) The following must be published on a National Board's website—
  - (a) a registration standard developed by the Board and approved by the Ministerial Council;
  - (b) a code or guideline approved by the National Board.
- (4) An approved registration standard or a code or guideline takes effect—
  - (a) on the day it is published on the National Board's website; or
  - (b) if a later day is stated in the registration standard, code or guideline, on that day.

##### 41 Use of registration standards, codes or guidelines in disciplinary proceedings

An approved registration standard for a health profession, or a code or guideline approved by a National Board, is admissible in proceedings under this Law or a law of a co-regulatory jurisdiction against a health practitioner registered by the Board as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct or practice for the health profession.

### Specific provisions

#### Part 7 Registration of health practitioners

##### 128 Continuing professional development

- (1) A registered health practitioner must undertake the continuing professional development required by an approved registration standard for the health professional in which the practitioner is registered.
- (2) A contravention of subsection (1) by a registered health practitioner does not constitute an offence but may constitute behaviour for which health, conduct or performance action may be taken.
- (3) In this section –  
registered health practitioner does not include a registered health practitioner who holds non-practising registration in the profession.

##### 109 Annual Statement (part relating to CPD only)

- (1) An application for renewal of registration must include or be accompanied by a statement that includes the following –
  - (a) a declaration by the applicant that –
    - (iii) the applicant has completed the continuing professional development the applicant was required by an approved registration standard to undertake during the applicant's preceding period of registration

## Appendix B – Policy for exemption from continuing professional development (CPD) requirements

### Summary

The Psychology Board of Australia's (the Board) *Continuing professional development registration standard* (CPD standard) is approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

The CPD standard states:

*The Board may grant an exemption or variation from this standard to a psychologist with general registration in exceptional circumstances that result in substantial absence from practice. Exceptional circumstances may include serious illness, injury, bereavement, maternity/paternity/adoption leave, carer's leave, or other exceptional circumstances.*

*Applications for exemptions due to exceptional circumstances must be submitted in writing to the Board prior to the expiry of registration for the Board's consideration. The submission must include the nature of the special circumstance and the period of time during the period for which an exemption is being requested.*

The CPD standard allows for the Board to grant a full or partial exemption or variation to the requirements. The Board will usually prefer to grant a partial exemption given that CPD is a mandatory requirement for registered practitioners under the National Law. If you are able to practise at all during a year it is expected that you are also able to complete at least some CPD. Psychologists seeking to be exempt from CPD for an entire year or more are encouraged to change to non-practising registration which does not require any CPD to be completed.

The Psychology Board of Australia has delegated responsibility for matters about individual practitioners to regional boards, supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) offices in each state and territory. Individual applications for exemptions from CPD requirements will be assessed by the state

and territory offices of AHPRA and the relevant regional board within the policy framework determined by the National Board.

### Scope

This policy applies to psychologists who hold general registration. It does not apply to provisional psychologists or psychologists who hold non-practising registration.

Psychologists who held general registration for only part of the registration year and had provisional or non-practising registration or were not registered at all for the other part, are automatically exempt from CPD for the months (or part thereof) they did not hold general registration. This policy only applies if seeking a reduction or variation in the requirements for the period of general registration.

### Pro rata

For psychologists who hold general registration for part of the year the pro rata requirement is 2.5 hour per full month of general registration, one third of which much be peer consultation, unless the Board approves different arrangements under this policy. The Board will take these pro rata requirements into account when determining partial exemptions.

### General principles

The requirement to undertake CPD is one of the five key standards for registered health practitioners<sup>4</sup> provided for in the legislation. Therefore it is not intended that exemptions be routinely granted to individuals who hold registration to practise the profession and the types of special circumstances that may warrant an exemption to the CPD requirements are limited.

An exemption or reduction in the CPD requirements will only be granted when the psychologist's practice has

<sup>4</sup> Refer to section 38 of the National Law.



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been significantly disrupted due to special circumstances and there is compelling evidence that the circumstances have created a significant obstacle to the practitioner's ability to complete the Board's CPD requirements. Each application for exemption is considered on its individual merits.

The Board will not grant exemptions or reductions in CPD requirements due to reduced work hours, casual work or part-time work.

The Board does not consider a decision to pursue employment other than psychological practice (while still maintaining general registration) to constitute special circumstances. In this situation, the practitioner is encouraged to consider non-practising registration.

Psychologists should only request a CPD exemption when the duration of the special circumstances will impede significantly the practitioner's ability to meet CPD requirements for the registration period. Short periods of time when a practitioner is unable to undertake CPD can generally be 'caught up' across the remainder of the registration period. Financial hardship or remote location are not generally adequate grounds for an exemption as there are sufficient CPD opportunities available that are free of charge or low cost and/or available online or by correspondence.

## Examples of 'special circumstances'

Consideration of exemptions from the Board's CPD requirements may include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances where they have caused or will cause significant disruption to practice or absence from practice and ability to undertake CPD for an extended period:

- a. Significant ill health or injury of the practitioner
- b. Parental (maternity/paternity/partner/adoption) leave
- c. Providing care or support to a member of the immediate family or household, because of a significant personal illness or injury affecting the member of the immediate family or household
- d. Bereavement due to the death of a member of the immediate family or household

Other special circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Applying for CPD exemption

Psychologists seeking a CPD exemption due to special circumstances must submit a request, in writing, to the AHPRA office in their capital city. The written request must explain the nature of the special circumstances and how the circumstances prevent the psychologist from undertaking CPD; and the dates for the period which the CPD exemption is being sought. Supporting evidence should be included where applicable.

Requests are to be made as soon as possible but not more than 12 months before the start date for which the CPD exemption is being sought.

Requests for CPD exemption are assessed on an individual basis. Where necessary, the psychologist may be requested to provide additional information to support his or her request.

If a CPD exemption is approved, the psychologist will usually be required to complete pro rata CPD for each month in the registration cycle that the psychologist is not exempt. Pro rata will generally also be applied to the requirement for one third of CPD to be peer consultation. Regional boards reserve the right to vary this requirement if deemed appropriate.

## Contact details

Send your written request for a CPD exemption to the AHPRA office in your capital city:

### AHPRA GPO Box 9958

Canberra ACT 2601  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Darwin NT 0801  
Brisbane QLD 4001

Adelaide SA 5001  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Melbourne VIC 3001  
Perth WA 6001

## Appendix C – CPD cycle



## Appendix D – Frequently asked questions

### **Can I count activities that are part of my regular work role as CPD?**

In general, no, you should only count activities that extend your learning. You can count conferences, workshops etc. that you attend or present at that are not part of your everyday work role even if they are organised or paid for by your employer. However repeat lectures or workshops that you run on an on-going basis should not be counted unless you can justify how they extend your professional development.

Team meetings or meetings with your manager would not usually count unless there is a specific focus on professional development and learning. However case discussion and group learning activities with your work team may count as CPD or peer consultation, and annual/semi-annual performance review and professional development planning with your manager may in some circumstances be relevant as peer consultation.

### **I have been undertaking a re-entry program to meet recency of practice requirements while holding general registration with conditions, can I count the program towards CPD requirements?**

Yes, you can count CPD you undertake as part of the program towards your regular CPD requirements for general registration and professional supervision you receive in the re-entry program can count for the peer consultation requirement of the CPD standard.

### **Can I count a Board-approved supervisor training program as CPD?**

Yes. Approved providers of supervisor training programs are required to provide participants with a certificate of completion which details how much CPD can be claimed for the program including whether there was any peer consultation.

For a list of Board-approved supervisor training providers please refer to the Supervision section of the Board's website.

### **Does researching or preparing information for presentation or publication count as CPD?**

If you are researching or preparing new information you can count it as CPD. If you present the same material at several different forums you should not count it each time. You should only count your own original work, not editing or proof reading of others' material.

If you are a Board-approved supervisor you can count time you spend researching new information in preparation for supervision.

### **I am a generally registered psychologist completing further accredited postgraduate study – can I count it as CPD?**

Yes, and depending on the nature of the study you may also be able to count peer consultation obtained in that context.

### **I am already doing CPD to meet the registration requirements of an overseas psychology board or for membership of my professional association – can I count that same CPD towards the Board's requirements?**

Yes, provided you complete it within the Board's registration cycle and it meets the Board's requirements, it is fine to 'double up' and count the same CPD for different purposes.

Psychologists who are also registered in another health profession in Australia may find that some of their CPD activities are relevant to the practice of both professions. In this case they could count the same activity towards the hours required for both professions provided the CPD meets the requirements for both Boards.

### **I attended a workshop however they did not provide a certificate of attendance. Can I still claim this workshop towards my CPD hours?**

Yes, recording the details of the workshop in your CPD log and written reflection in your professional development journal will be adequate proof of attendance. If you paid to attend the workshop and have a receipt, include that in your portfolio as well.

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## **I attended a forum or information session presented by the National or Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia – can I count this as CPD?**

Yes, as long as it contributes to achievement of a goal in your learning plan. The Board does not provide certificates of attendance at forums, so if you are claiming it as CPD just record your attendance in your activity log and write some reflection in your CPD journal. If you are audited and the audit team wants further verification of your attendance they will contact the Board secretariat directly for a copy of the forum registration list.

## **I am approved to provide psychological services through the Medicare Better Access Scheme, what are my CPD requirements to maintain that approval?**

Since 1 November 2014 there are no longer separate CPD requirements for psychologists who provide services under Medicare's Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners Scheme. This applies to both psychological therapy services provided by clinical psychologists, and focussed psychological strategies (FSP) services provided by psychologists. Instead you are required to meet the Board's CPD requirements to maintain general registration, and if you provide psychological therapy services you also need to maintain a clinical psychology area of practice endorsement.

Medicare may audit to ensure that you maintain general registration, and where applicable a clinical psychology endorsement but they will not directly audit your CPD. However under sections 219–220 of the National Law AHPRA or the National Board may disclose information about you to Medicare. Therefore if you are audited by the Board and you have not met the CPD requirements to maintain general registration or clinical psychology endorsement, Medicare will be notified.

## **How are the hours for peer consultation calculated, i.e. if the peer consultation between two psychologists goes for one hour, with half an hour focusing on each psychologist's practice, does this count as one hour or 30 minutes?**

The time that you may count as peer consultation is the time focusing on your own practice or matters directly

relevant to your own professional development. In this example, each psychologist could count 30 minutes towards peer consultation. Time spent listening and providing advice to another psychologist may count as general CPD if it contributes to achievement of a goal in your learning plan.

## **Is a journal club peer consultation?**

No, but it could be counted towards general CPD.

## **I have general registration and only work part-time. Do I still need to do 30 hours of CPD?**

Yes, all generally registered psychologists must complete a minimum of 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) activities annually. There is no provision in the National Law for a 'part-time' or 'occasional practice' registration category that would enable different CPD requirements to be set because it is expected that part-time practitioners maintain the same level of knowledge, skill and competence as full-time practitioners.

Part-time practitioners may structure their CPD to suit their work context, for example if you have a low caseload, in peer consultation you may spend less time on case discussion and more time on other aspects of your practice and professional development.

## **Can records be kept in electronic format or do they need to be hard copies?**

Yes, it is acceptable to keep your CPD portfolio in electronic format. If you are selected for audit you will either need to provide the portfolio in an accessible electronic format or provide a printed version.

## **When I notified of an intention to audit my CPD records how long will I have to prepare and submit my portfolio?**

You will be required to submit your CPD portfolio to AHPRA within 28 days of the date of the notice.

## **Once audited can CPD records be destroyed?**

No, you must still retain your CPD portfolio for the time frame specified in the CPD standard – from 1 December 2015 this is five years.

# GUIDELINES: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Appendix E – CPD forms

### Continuing professional development learning plan

Plan to commence on	Month		Year	
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Each year a psychologist should review their practice, identifying areas of need and goals for the following year. These goals should form part of a continuous improvement cycle to consolidate and add to knowledge, skills and competency in the practice of psychology. This review may be undertaken in the context of peer consultation.

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
<b>Learning needs identified and goals set</b>			
<b>Type of activities proposed to meet this need</b> (peer consultation, seminar etc.)			
<b>Dates proposed activities planned</b> (weekly/monthly/specified dates if known) Note: these dates can be adjusted			
<b>Outcomes anticipated</b>			

<b>Review date</b>	
<b>Outcomes achieved</b> Towards the end of the year, review the progress and success or failure to meet these needs. In addition, evaluate all the completed CPD undertaken (even if it was not related to these needs) and reflect upon future needs and goals.	

Name of psychologist		Page	of
Signed		Date	

# GUIDELINES: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Continuing professional development activity log

Continuing professional development is the means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives.

Date of activity	Type of activity (Workshop, reading, seminar, conference)	Activity details (e.g. name of course, presenter, institution etc.)	Specify area of practice (if applicable) (e.g. clinical)	Duration (hours being claimed)
			<b>Total hours</b>	

**Note:** Verification of CPD (e.g. receipts, flyers, citations, certificates of attendance) should be attached. Additional information in the form of a professional development journal should be attached to provide a written outline of the content and relevance of each activity

Name of psychologist		Page	of
Signed		Date	

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## Peer consultation log

Peer consultation means supervision and consultation in individual or group format, for the purposes of professional development and support in the practice of psychology and includes a critically reflective focus on the practitioner's own practice. Time spent focusing on another's practice within group or individual consultations can be counted as general CPD if it contributes to a goal of your current learning plan.

Date	Focus of peer consultation (topic, issue, problem)	Colleagues involved (who you consulted)	Total duration	Duration of focus on your own practice	Signature(s) of colleagues
			<b>Total minutes</b>	<b>Peer consultation minutes</b>	

You must also maintain a peer consultation journal that provides a written outline of the content and relevance of peer consultation and reflecting on the experience. When submitting this peer consultation log for audit please also attach your peer consultation journal.

Name of psychologist		Page	of
Signed		Date	

# GUIDELINES: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Professional Development Journal

A professional development journal is a written outline of the content and relevance of each CPD activity. Please note there is no set word count or length, however you must write some reflection on your CPD. Your reflection could include a description of each CPD activity that you claim, a summary of what you have learned and how it relates to your learning plan, and action taken in response to this learning.

Date	Professional Development Journal



# GUIDELINES: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Peer Consultation Journal

A peer consultation journal is a written outline of the content and relevance of each peer consultation. Please note there is no set word count or length, however you must write some reflection on your peer consultation sessions. Your reflection could include a description of each session, a summary of what you have learned and how it relates to your learning plan, and action taken in response to this learning

Date	Peer Consultation Journal