

What has changed under the new ROP registration standard and policy?

This document explains the changes in the registration for recency of practice (ROP) that commenced on 1 December 2016, replacing the previous version that commenced on 1 July 2010; and the changes to the revised policy for recency of practice requirements that also commenced on 1 December 2016, replacing the version that commenced on 1 August 2011.

Previous requirement (until 30 November 2016)	Revised requirement (from 1 December 2016)	Who does this affect?	Why has this changed?
You had to have practised as a registered psychologist within past five years.	You must have practised for at least 250 hours as a registered psychologist in the past five years.	Psychologists who have completed between 1 and 249 hours of practice as a registered psychologist in the last five years when they apply for registration or renewal.	A minimum timeframe for practice without a minimum amount of practice is not meaningful. Setting minimum practice hours also provides guidance to psychologists and their employers on the Board's expectations.
The Board did not accept unregistered practice involving activities of a psychological nature.	Unregistered practice involving activities of a psychological nature will not meet the ROP standard. However unregistered practice in countries where registration is not available may be taken into account when determining remedial requirements.	Psychologists who have practised in a country that does not have registration or licensure for psychologists.	This enables unregistered overseas practice to be assessed case-by-case to determine if reduction in remedial requirements is appropriate. This is fairer for psychologists who have been practising overseas.
An individual, at the time the application made, had to be able to demonstrate that he or she had practised unconditionally as a registered psychologist within the previous five years.	Practice as a registered psychologist with conditions will generally be recognised for the recency of practice requirements.	Psychologists who have had any conditions on their registration in the last five years (whether in Australia or overseas).	Conditions can be applied to registrations, both in Australia and overseas, for a wide variety of reasons. Removing this restriction enables registrants to undertake supervised practice or other remedial action to meet ROP requirements while holding registration with conditions.
No exemptions for applicants who had not practised or completed an approved program of study in the last five years.	The Board may grant exemptions to applicants who completed an approved program of study between five and ten years ago and are applying for provisional registration to complete an accredited higher degree or internship program.	Applicants who have taken extended leave between completing a fourth or fifth year qualification and commencing a postgraduate degree or internship.	These applicants would only practise psychology under supervision in their higher degree or internship, therefore skills and knowledge gaps can be addressed in that context while ensuring public safety.

Previous requirement (until 30 November 2016)	Revised requirement (from 1 December 2016)	Who does this affect?	Why has this changed?
When considering reapplication for provisional registration the Board would not accept any components of an internship program completed more than five years ago.	The Board will consider all applications for full or partial recognition of a previous internship case-by-case. If the Board grants extension of an internship beyond five years, internship components from more than five years ago may be recognised.	Applicants for provisional registration who previously undertook an internship that they did not complete, and who wish to recommence an internship after extended leave.	This allows more flexibility for special circumstances to be taken into account when appropriate.
In the event of inability to comply with the requirements, the Board could require the applicant to undergo a performance assessment.	The option for a separate performance assessment has been removed. Options for further development of skills and knowledge and assessment of performance via a period of supervised practice and/or an exam have been retained.	Psychologists who have practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years and will need to complete remedial action.	A separate performance assessment is not necessary given that performance can be assessed by a Board-approved supervisor in the context of a supervised practice program and by the national psychology exam.
In the event of inability to comply with the requirements the Board could require the applicant to successfully complete further education.	The option to specifically require further education has been removed. Options for development of skills and knowledge, and assessment of performance via a period of supervised practice and/or an exam have been retained.	Psychologists who have practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years and need to complete remedial action.	This places the onus on the practitioner to undertake self assessment (often in consultation with a supervisor/peer/employer) and determine whether to undertake further education and CPD as part of their re-entry to practice.
All applicants who were required to undertake supervised practice to meet ROP requirements were required to do so in accordance with the requirements of the 4+2 internship program while registered as a provisional psychologist.	All applicants who are required to undertake supervised practice to meet ROP requirements must develop an individual return-to-practice plan, based on objective self-assessment of learning needs and other relevant factors, for approval.	Psychologists who have practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years and need to complete remedial action. Psychologists undertaking internships to meet ROP requirements before 1 December 2016 can apply to change or vary their program in accordance with the revised policy.	This significantly increases flexibility allowing psychologists returning to practice to undertake re-entry training that is most suitable for their individual circumstances and scope of practice.
The hours of supervised practice required to be completed was determined based only on the length of absence from practice and on a minimum set by the Board.	The Board will consider several factors when determining the supervised practice hours required, as listed in the policy. The revised policy also includes a range of supervised practice hours rather than a minimum only.	Psychologists who have practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years, and need to complete remedial action.	A range of hours gives better guidance to practitioners, supervisors and employers. Flexibility to take a range of factors into account and vary the requirements accordingly better supports practitioners returning to practice.
Not all National Law requirements or options were included in the standard or policy and clearly explained; some registrants needed to consult the National Law separately.	No changes to the National Law requirements, however they are more clearly and explicitly detailed in the registration standard and the policy.	Registrants, applicants and stakeholders should find the revised standard easier to read and understand.	The new format is more user-friendly and better informs registrants and applicants of their options and obligations under the National Law.