

Fact sheet: Changes to the area of practice endorsement registration standard and guidelines

November 2019

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) has updated the *Registration standard for area of practice endorsements* and *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*. The revised registration standard and guidelines come into effect on 1 December 2019. These updates bring the Board's area of practice endorsement qualification requirements in line with the new [accreditation standards](#) for the psychology profession that took effect from 1 January 2019.

Advance copies of the registration standard and guidelines for area of practice endorsement (AoPE) [have been published](#) early to allow registrars and supervisors time to become familiar with the changes in AoPE requirements.

Changes to the AoPE registration standard

The content and structure of the registration standard has been streamlined and updated. The types of qualifications that lead to AoPE, and the duration of the registrar program that follows each qualification type, are detailed in the new AoPE guidelines instead of the registration standard.

The qualification requirement for AoPE remains an accredited postgraduate qualification in one of the nine approved areas of practice. This qualification requirement has not changed, and is consistent with the endorsement requirements set out in the [National Law](#). The nine approved areas of practice also have not changed.

The new AoPE standard provides clarity that individuals who previously held endorsement before taking a break from practice are eligible to reinstate that endorsement when returning to practice, provided they meet all the requirements for general registration.

The new [accreditation standards](#) for psychology allow higher education providers to offer one-year bridging qualifications or 'stand-alone' programs for endorsement (see Figure 1). Bridging programs have historically only been available to psychologists who already hold a postgraduate qualification in another area of practice. The new one-year stand-alone qualifications may be offered to all psychologists, including those who obtained general registration through an internship pathway. As with all qualifications approved for endorsement, psychologists must also complete the registrar program to be eligible for AoPE. We have updated the revised AoPE registration standard and guidelines to recognise these new one-year stand-alone programs for AoPE.

Higher education providers will set their own entry requirements for these stand-alone programs, in accordance with the accreditation standards and other higher education sector regulations. At the time of writing, stand-alone programs were not yet offered by higher education providers. Given the new accreditation standards came into effect in early 2019, the Board expects higher education providers are still developing stand-alone programs according to the new standards. Once developed, these programs need to be [accredited](#) by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council and then approved by the Board in order to be considered eligible qualifications for completing the registrar program and obtaining AoPE.

Changes to the AoPE guidelines

Reduced registrar program hours

The practice requirements of the registrar program are now specified in hours and weeks, rather than years, providing small reduction in total hours of psychological practice for all pathways (see Figure 1).

Qualification	New requirement for registrar program total hours	Minimum duration of psychological practice (no change)	Old supervised practice requirement
Masters Degree	3000 hours	88 weeks	2 years (3080 hours)
Bridging program (1 st AoPE)	3000 hours	88 weeks	N/A
Bridging program (2 nd or dual AoPE)	2250 hours	66 weeks	1.5 years (2310 hours)
Combined Masters/PhD	2250 hours	66 weeks	1.5 years (2310 hours)
Doctoral Degree	1500 hours	44 weeks	1 year (1540 hours)

Fewer progress reports

Progress reports are no longer due every six months during the registrar program. Registrars now only need to provide two progress reports: one after they have completed half of their supervised practice hours and one at the end of the program, alongside their application for endorsement. Registrars need to determine when they have reached their half-way point.

Flexible supervision requirements

Supervision requirements in the registrar program are now more flexible. The requirement for supervision to be provided at least fortnightly is now a recommendation. This change allows for the frequency of supervision sessions to be varied over the course of the program as appropriate. For example, a registrar and their supervisor may wish to have more frequent supervision in the first half of the program and less in the second half; or increase the frequency of supervision during a period when the registrar is undertaking different or more challenging work.

We have relaxed the requirement for supervision sessions to be at least one hour long. The new guidelines allow up to 25% of total supervision to be delivered in sessions shorter than one hour.

We have clarified the definition of 'direct supervision' to emphasise that registrar supervision does not need to be completed face-to-face. All registrar program supervision can be provided by video or web conference (e.g. Skype) or by phone. The principal or secondary supervisor is not required to be located at the same site as the registrar. While this has always been permitted under the AoPE guidelines, we have clarified the language in the new guidelines to encourage registrars and supervisors to take advantage of this flexibility, particularly those located in rural and remote areas of Australia.

Other changes to the guidelines

We have improved the explanation of AoPE to better communicate the requirements set out in the National Law, and to clarify that work experience, supervision, professional development courses and non-accredited degrees cannot contribute towards meeting the qualification requirement for AoPE.

The registrar program is no longer required to be completed within five years. The Board no longer specifies a timeframe.

Information about continuing professional development requirements for psychologists holding an AoPE has been removed from the guidelines because this is already detailed in the [Guidelines for continuing professional development](#). Information about requirements for Board-approved supervisors has also been removed because this is covered in the Board's [Guidelines for supervisors](#).

The 'Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition' section has been updated to include 'neuropsychologist', a new scope of practice in New Zealand. We now recognise this scope of practice as equivalent to an AoPE in clinical neuropsychology.

Competency 7 for all areas of practice has been updated to align with the core competencies for general registration.

Transitional provisions for people enrolled in a Doctoral degree in 2010 have been moved from the AoPE guidelines to the [Board website](#). This information will remain a Board policy and will be detailed on the website, allowing those individuals who have not yet completed their Doctoral degree to apply for endorsement under these provisions.

Current registrars and supervisors

These updates to the AoPE registration standard and guidelines have been made with the aim of improving the training experience for registrars and supervisors. Registrars should ensure they are familiar with the changes to the AoPE registration standard and guidelines and discuss them with their supervisor.

The new requirements will apply from 1 December 2019. Until then, progress reports and applications for endorsement will continue to be assessed under the current guidelines.

Figure 1: Pathways to area of practice endorsement

