

Guidelines on continuing professional development

Introduction

These guidelines¹ have been developed by the Psychology Board of Australia under s. 39 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. The guidelines:

- supplement the requirements set out in the Board's registration standard for continuing professional development
- supplement the requirements set out in the National Law pursuant to s. 128 in relation to continuing professional development.

The relevant sections of the National Law are set out in Attachment A: Extract of relevant provisions from the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act*. The Psychology Board of Australia Continuing professional development registration standard is at Attachment B.

Who needs to use these guidelines?

These guidelines apply to all general psychologists but do not apply to provisional psychologists or psychologists with non-practising registration. They also apply to psychologists with an area of practice endorsement.

Summary

A requirement for annual renewal of registration is participation in continuing professional development (CPD) in accordance with the Board's CPD standard.

CPD designates the period of education and training of psychologists commencing 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 aims to maintain, improve and broaden psychologists' knowledge, expertise and competence and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives. CPD assists psychologists to meet the changing needs of clients (including the industries in which psychologists are employed), to respond to scientific developments and to fulfill the evolving requirements of registration and other professional bodies and of society.

¹ Based on the World Federation for Medical Education Global Standards for CPD (2003)

Continuing professional development

Educational rationale

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

Motivation for CPD, from the perspective of the individual practitioner, derives from three main sources:

- the professional drive to provide optimal evidence-based services to clients
- the obligation to honour the requirements of employers and society
- 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:

- An identified need or reason for the particular CPD activity to be undertaken - Specifically identified needs should be the focus of CPD whenever possible; however, professional learning should also equip psychologists to deal with unpredictable future demands and relate to a broad base of knowledge and experience on which to draw, besides making up for deficiencies from past practice.
- Learning is based on such an identified need or reason - some CPD should be based on the general professional need to explore, to develop and consider new areas of competence. Whether the need identified is specific or general, the learning activities must be appropriate and there must 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 that learning and offers opportunities for disseminating and sharing learning with others. Beneficial alterations in methods of practice follow and the extent of effectiveness of the CPD undertaken can be evaluated in relation to the original need or reason for it.

A learning needs assessment is therefore, 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. While a learning needs assessment is important for most psychologists, it is vital for those in isolated, independent or solo practice.

These guidelines focus on the formal and systematic element of CPD such as courses, conferences and formal supervision. It is understood that 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).

Learning plan

A psychologist must develop a learning plan each year, as set out in the Board's CPD registration standard. The learning plan can be amended during the year to respond to new opportunities or emerging learning needs. The learning plan template in these guidelines is indicative, rather than prescriptive, and can be adapted to suit the individual psychologist's circumstances and learning needs.

Organisation and methods

A multifaceted CPD system is needed to take account of differences in professional roles, needs, learning priorities, and resource availability. A basic assumption is that the profession itself bears a major responsibility for CPD, with professional organisations functioning as major initiators, providers and promoters of CPD. However, there are numerous providers of CPD not accountable directly to the profession, including universities, research societies, and industry and consumer organisations.

Opportunities to benefit from CPD on a day-to-day basis depend to a large extent on the working environment. Extreme contrasts are present. Work in large institutions differs vastly from working in a rural area, in solo or in a small practice in the community, in the stimulus derived from collegiate interaction. Information technology can help remedy some of the handicap of isolation.

Evaluation and recognition

CPD does not always relate directly to current practice, but promotes competence in new areas of practice and extends the capacity of psychologists to make wiser judgments in complex and ambiguous situations they will certainly encounter in their professional future.

Differentiated systems have been developed which specify the level of acceptable CPD engagement. For example, professional organisations have developed mechanisms for specifying numbers and duration of accredited CPD courses or activities for which the individual psychologist obtains CPD points. Another development focuses on monitoring individual daily learning activities.

Use of personal portfolios or 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 attached to provide a written outline of the content and relevance of each activity.

Peer consultation

A psychologist must complete a minimum of 10 hours of peer consultation a year within the 30 hours CPD required each year. 'Peer consultation' is defined as 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 psychologist's own practice. To be approved by the Board for the purpose of CPD, the peer consultation must be:

- in either a group or individual format
- a minimum of 10 hours each year focused on the psychologist's own practice
- within the goals of the overall CPD plan; that is, it should follow an educational rationale

- with a fellow peer or senior psychologist; however, other professional persons may be acceptable if they advance the CPD goals
- face to face or by alternative means such as by telephone
- documented in a log book with an attached peer consultation journal to provide a written outline of the content and relevance of the consultation.

When negotiating a peer consultation agreement, the following must be taken into account:

- Providing peer consultation to others either individually or in a group counts as active CPD hours.
- Providing peer consultation to others must not be counted in the 10 hours required to meet this standard, although it can be counted towards general CPD hours.
- Providing supervision or consultation to others outside this specific peer consultation purpose cannot be counted as CPD.
- 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 generally done through the allocation of presenters.
- Time spent in a formal role as a supervisor for (a) a 4+2 internship program or (b) a candidate for an area of practice endorsement, cannot be counted towards peer consultation or other CPD.

Types of CPD

Examples of types of CPD usually recognised by the Board include:

- conducting or attending psychology workshops, seminars, lectures or courses of study;
- writing, assessing or reading and analysing: peer review psychology journal articles, scholarly professional books and monographs, or research proposals and grants;
- producing, reviewing or viewing and analysing: professional videos, audios, internet resources or scientific posters;
- providing peer consultation to other psychologists.

Active CPD

Ten (10) hours each year are recommended to be 'active CPD' which refers to continuous professional development activities that engage the participant in active training through written or oral activities designed to enhance and test learning. This is a recommendation of the Board, not a requirement. Examples of 'active' CPD include the following:

- attending seminars where there is a written test
- reading a structured series of professional psychology articles followed by completing an online assessment
- giving an oral presentation or tutorial to a group of peers on a new topic in psychology
- providing peer consultation to others
- attending a workshop which requires in vivo role play of skills;
- studying a new technique, followed by trialling this technique in the workplace, and a review and evaluation of the effectiveness and implementation of that technique

CPD to maintain an endorsement

To maintain endorsement in an approved area of practice, the psychologist must meet the requirements of the Board's continuing professional development registration standard (see Attachment B). Requirement 3 of the standard is:

'As a general guide, CPD activities should be relevant to the psychologist's area of professional practice and have clear learning aims and objectives that meet the individual's requirements'.

This means that psychologists are expected to obtain the majority of their CPD (i.e. greater than 15 hours) within their endorsed area(s) of practice. For a psychologist with more than one area of endorsement, all 30 CPD hours must be spread equally between the endorsed areas. Psychologists are not required by the Board to obtain additional CPD hours over and above the Board's general CPD standard of 30 hours/year.

Certification of CPD

The Board does not certify CPD hours in advance. It therefore does not provide advice to CPD presenters about the CPD 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 to that of the Board program may be used as long as the portfolio provides the information required by the standard. Alternatively, a psychologist may use the templates attached to this guideline. The templates are also available in Word format in the document [Continuing Professional Development Forms](#) on the Board's website at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Forms.aspx.

References

Psychology Board of Australia Continuing professional development registration standard

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|---|
| Date of issue: 1 July 2010 |
| Date of review: This guideline will be reviewed at least every three years |
| Last reviewed: May 2011 |

Extract of relevant provisions from the *Health Practitioners Regulation National Law Act*

General provisions

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

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

Psychology Board of Australia

Continuing professional development registration standard



Authority

This standard has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 pursuant to the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (2009)* (the National Law) with approval taking effect from 1 July 2010.

Summary

A requirement of annual renewal of registration is participation in a Board-approved program of continuing professional development (CPD).

Registered psychologists have a responsibility to ensure that they continue to maintain, enhance and extend their knowledge and skills throughout their working lives. Consumers also have an expectation that registered psychologists providing professional services do so in a competent and contemporary manner.

Scope of application

This standard applies to all registered psychologists. It does not apply to practitioners who have student registration, provisional registration and non-practising registration.

A registered psychologist who has been registered for less than 12 months at the time of application for renewal of registration or endorsement must have accumulated the minimum number of CPD hours for every month of registration. For example, 30 hours per year equates to 2.5 hours per month.

Requirements

1. An applicant for renewal of registration or endorsement must declare that he or she has completed the minimum requirements of the CPD standard, in the previous 12-month registration period, that applies to his or her registration category.
2. A registered psychologist must complete a minimum of 30 hours of CPD activities annually. Of these 30, a minimum of 10 hours must be peer consultation and 10 hours are recommended to be 'active' CPD activities.
3. As a general guide, CPD activities should be relevant to the psychologist's area of professional practice and have clear learning aims and objectives that meet the individual's requirements.
4. A registered psychologist is required to develop a learning plan based on a self-assessment of skills and knowledge, which ascertains areas for development or improvement and enhances life-long learning.

Professional development activities selected should:

- a) be outcome focused
 - b) seek to ensure continued competence in the psychologist's area of practice
 - c) seek to ensure activities have contributed to the quality of a psychologist's practice, which results in the maintenance of high-quality client services.
5. A registered psychologist must maintain an up-to-date CPD portfolio that includes:
 - a) a learning plan, as previously described, which also includes desired outcomes
 - b) how the CPD relates to the psychologist's professional development; and
 - c) all CPD activities undertaken.
 6. In addition to the CPD portfolio, where applicable, registered psychologists are required to retain any receipts, tax invoices or certificates of attendance to verify participation in CPD activities.
 7. Registered psychologists may participate in a professional development program through their professional society or an equivalent program; however, participation in these programs must meet the minimum requirements of this standard.
 8. Portfolios that are maintained for alternate programs, and contain the information required in this standard, will be accepted by the Board.
 9. Random audits of registered psychologists will be undertaken annually. A registered psychologist will be notified in writing that he or she has been selected for audit and will be required to submit their CPD portfolio and evidence of participation in CPD activities.

Requirements during the first year of national registration

The Board recognises that not all registered psychologists transitioning to the national register have been subject to CPD requirements. Accordingly, the initial period for complying with the requirements of this standard will be from 1 July 2010 until 30 November 2011 (i.e. the Board will apply the standard to applications for renewal from November 2011).

Exemptions

1. Special circumstances:
 - a) An applicant for renewal of registration who wishes the Board to consider an application for



partial exemption from this standard, due to ill health, maternity/paternity leave or other special circumstances, must submit a request 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 previous registration period for which an exemption is being requested.

Failure to comply with this standard

1. In the event that a registered psychologist has failed to meet the requirements of this standard the Board may:
 - a) refuse to renew registration or endorsement; and/or
 - b) impose a condition on registration requiring the registered psychologist to successfully complete:
 - additional CPD activities within a specified period; and/or
 - further education; and/or
 - a period of supervised practice with a Board approved supervisor; and/or
 - c) require the registered psychologist to undergo a performance assessment; and/or
 - d) require the registered psychologist to undergo an examination; and/or
 - e) instigate disciplinary proceedings pursuant to Part 8 of the National Law or the relevant legislation applying to that jurisdiction.

Definitions

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.

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.

Active CPD refers to continuous professional development activities that engage the participant in active training through written or oral activities designed to enhance and test learning.

References

Psychology Board of Australia Guidelines on CPD will be available on the Board's website.

Review

This standard will commence on 1 July 2010. The Board will review this standard at least every three years.



**Psychology Board of Australia
Continuing professional development learning plan**

Plan to commence on : Month _____ Year _____

Each year a psychologist should review their practice, identifying areas of need 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.

| | Area of need 1 | Area of need 2 | Area of need 3 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Learning needs identified | | | |
| Type of activities proposed to meet this need (peer consultation, seminar etc.) | | | |
| Dates proposed activities planned (weekly/monthly/specified dates if known) Note: these dates can be adjusted | | | |
| Outcomes anticipated | | | |

Review Date:

Outcomes achieved

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: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Page: _____ of _____

**Psychology Board of Australia
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. Active CPD: Refers to continuous professional development activities that engage the participant in active training through written or oral activities designed to enhance and test learning.

| Date of activity | Type of activity (Workshop, reading, seminar, conference) | Active CPD (Y/N) | Activity details (e.g. name of course, presenter, institution etc.) | Specify endorsed area of practice (e.g. clinical) | Duration |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|---|-----------------|
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| Total Hours | | | | | |
| Hours Active CPD | | | | | |
| Hours Endorsed Area of Practice CPD | | | | | |

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: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Page: ____ of ____

**Psychology Board of Australia
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 active CPD.

| | Focus of Peer Consultation (topic, issue, problem) | Colleagues involved (who you consulted) | Total Duration | Duration focused on own practice | Signature(s) of colleagues |
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| | | | Total Minutes | Peer Consult Minutes | Active CPD Minutes (Total minus Peer) |

Note: Additional information in the form of a peer consultation journal should be attached to provide a written outline of the content and relevance of the consultation.

Name of psychologist: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Page: _____ of _____

**Psychology Board of Australia
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 |
|------|----------------------------------|
| | |



Psychology Board of Australia Peer Consultation Journal

A peer consultation journal is a written outline of the content and relevance of peer consultation activities. 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 |
|------|---------------------------|
| | |