



## Fact Sheet

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### Continuing professional development (CPD)

#### Background

The National Board released its draft continuing professional development standard (CPD standard) for public consultation in October 2009 and was pleased to receive a large number of submissions from stakeholder groups and individuals. The consultation paper and submissions are published on the Psychology Board of Australia's website at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au) under 'Past consultations'.

Following the consultation process the revised CPD standard was submitted to the Ministerial Council for their consideration, in accordance with section 38(1)(c) of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. Approval was granted by Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 with the standard taking effect from 1 July 2010.

The CPD standard is available from the Board's website 'Standards and Guidelines' tab. The Board also publishes the *Guidelines on continuing professional development* (CPD guidelines) which contain additional information for psychologists.

The CPD standard and guidelines were reviewed in 2014 with public consultation undertaken from April-June 2014. The Board is currently seeking Ministerial approval of proposed changes to the CPD standard.

This document outlines key information about continuing professional development and the steps practitioners need to take when completing their CPD:

- Step 1 – identify your registration status and CPD requirements
- Step 2 – develop your learning plan
- Step 3 – undertake CPD
- Step 4 – maintain your CPD portfolio, and
- Step 5 – renew your registration.

#### What is continuing professional development?

Continuing professional development 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. Carefully tailored professional development can assist competency and relevance in practice, which in turn assists members of the public who seek psychology services.

#### CPD Model

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. Psychologists should apply the principles of continuing professional development to fit their individual circumstances.

For the individual to demonstrate evidence of professional development, in an effort to maintain their ongoing competency to practice as a registered psychologist, the Board supports a model which emphasises individual responsibility, offering registrants flexibility and choice of the strategies used. A process of self-assessment forms the basis for determining the professional development for a practitioner.

The CPD model supports practitioners identifying their professional development needs within their scope of practice. Practitioners then set professional development goals in relation to those identified needs, develop a plan to achieve these goals, select and provide evidence of undertaking CPD activities, and 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 as an accountable health professional, guided by the Board's registration standards, codes 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.

## Step 1 - Identify your registration status and CPD requirements

### Registration status

Psychologists who hold general registration for the full registration year must complete 30 hours of CPD activities for the registration year and of the 30 hours at least 10 hours must be peer consultation. These minimum requirements apply regardless of whether you work full-time or part-time, as part-time psychologists need to maintain the same high standard of practice as those working full time.

### Other factors to consider in identifying your CPD requirements

#### *Did you change your registration status during the year?*

If you held provisional or non-practising registration, or were unregistered for part of the year and also held general for part of the year you only need to complete CPD for the part of the year you were generally registered. For every month of general registration psychologists 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 were generally registered but you can choose to spread the hours evenly across those months or complete it all at once according to what suits you best.

If you take a leave of absence from practice during the year but maintain your general registration you still have to meet the full CPD requirements unless you apply for and are granted an exemption by the Board (see section on exemptions in this fact sheet).

If you take a 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.

#### *Are you undertaking a registrar program?*

Psychologists undertaking a Psychology Board of Australia registrar program to become eligible to apply for an area of practice endorsement are completing an intensive period of training in a specialised area of practice and therefore have additional supervision and professional development requirements.

Registrars receive 40 hours of supervision and complete 40 hours of active professional development activities for every full time equivalent year of the registrar program. This more than covers the minimum requirements of the CPD standard, so registrars do not have to complete extra peer consultation/ supervision or CPD on top of that required for the registrar program. However registrars who complete the registrar program part-time or take a leave of absence during the program must still complete the minimum requirements set out in the CPD standard – that is 30 hours of CPD per annum including receiving at least 10 hours of supervision (peer consultation). More information about supervision and CPD requirements for registrars is set out in the *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*.

#### *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 area of practice endorsement complete a minimum of 16 hours of CPD within that area of practice and the other 14 hours in any area relevant to their practice (30 hours total)
- psychologists with two area of practice endorsements complete a minimum of 15 hours of CPD within each area of practice (30 hours total)
- psychologists with three area of practice endorsements complete a minimum of 10 hours of CPD within each area of practice (30 hours total).

This recommendation applies even if a psychologist was generally registered for the full year but only had the endorsement/s for part of the registration year. Psychologists work in a specific approved area of practice while undertaking a registrar program (or other approved supervision or bridging program) that leads to endorsement. Therefore prior to achieving an endorsement a psychologist will usually already have been working in that area of practice and therefore have been undertaking their CPD in that area.

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. So 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 consultation in the other area.

Psychologists with an area of practice endorsement can also refer to the information available in the *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*.

### *Board approved supervisors*

If you are a Board-approved supervisor you have a responsibility to maintain and develop your skills as a supervisor on an ongoing basis. Therefore to maintain your approval, your CPD must include completion of a Board-approved supervisor training program, refresher course or master class at least every five years. For further details visit the Supervision section of the Board's website under the Registration tab.

It is also recommended that you include some additional professional development activities relevant to your supervision skills at least every 2 years, such as peer consultation on supervision, workshops on supervision, or other activities that improve your knowledge and skills in relevant areas such as supervision, learning, teaching or mentoring.

### *Exemptions*

Psychologists who have provisional or non-practising registration are automatically exempt from the CPD standard.

Psychologists who change registration types during the year or who obtain general registration for the first time partway through the year are automatically exempt from the CPD standard for the period they were not generally registered and complete pro rata CPD for the period general registration is held.

The Board may consider a partial exemption for special circumstances such as ill health, parental leave or carers leave on receipt of a written request for an exemption prior to the expiry of registration.

For more information on CPD exemptions please refer to the Board's *Policy for exemption from continuing professional development (CPD) requirements* which is published in the policy section of the Board's website.

## **Step 2 – Develop your learning plan**

### **Why is a learning plan required?**

The best available evidence suggests that effective CPD is characterised by an identified need or reason for the particular CPD activity to be undertaken and follow-up provision for reinforcing the learning accomplished. Effective planning is important to maximise the benefits of learning, hence the written learning plan. The Board does not wish to impose unnecessary burdens; but believes it is important to recognise and formalise this important aspect of ongoing professional development to give structure to CPD. For more detail on the educational rationale please refer to the CPD guidelines.

Ideally your learning plan should 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. You can also include in your plan learning goals and activities that are not specifically relevant to your practice but that will broaden your general knowledge of psychological practice.

The Board recommends that psychologists use its template for their learning plans (or one provided by their professional association or society) as they assist the efficient auditing process, but you can adapt it to suit your own learning plan and number of learning needs/goals.

### **Identify your learning needs and goals**

If you need some help identifying your goals a good starting point could be to review the eight core competencies (capabilities and attributes) of psychologists in conjunction with a review of your career stage. The core capabilities can be found below and more detail can be found in the *Guidelines for 4+2 internship programs*. You could also review the competencies for your specific area of practice which are included in the *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*. Both these guidelines are published online at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au).

The eight core competencies are:

1. knowledge of the discipline
2. ethical, legal and professional matters
3. psychological assessment and measurement
4. intervention strategies
5. research and evaluation
6. communication and interpersonal relationships
7. working within a cross-cultural context, and
8. practice across the lifespan.

#### *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?
- 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?*

This is entirely up to you. The CPD learning plan template has space for three identified learning needs but you may have more or less depending on your individual situation. You must identify at least one learning need or goal.

### **Review and revise your learning plan**

Professional development is a continuous improvement cycle and your learning plan can be fluid whereby goals are 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 according to new professional development opportunities that arise. 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

### CPD cycle

The CPD cycle for psychologists aligns with the annual renewal cycle for general registration – 1 December to 30 November every year.

You cannot count CPD you have undertaken while you were not a registered general psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia. If you obtain general registration partway through a registration year you can only count CPD completed from the date you are generally registered, this also applies if you change from provisional to general registration partway through 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); count it towards next year's requirements instead.

### Peer consultation

Peer consultation means supervision and/or consultation in a one-on-one 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. It is a good idea where possible to complete your peer supervision or consultation with someone who is more experienced or knowledgeable in the aspect of practice you are consulting them about.

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

The requirement for peer consultation is intended to enhance standards of practice and improve quality of service. The primary function of the Board is to protect the public by maintaining high professional standards. Evidence suggests that engagement in peer consultation is an important part of ongoing competence and continued professional development. A review of notifications received by psychology registration boards in Australia prior to implementation of mandatory peer consultation under the National Scheme, shows that psychologists who have notifications lodged against them that lead to serious misconduct findings often did not engage in any peer consultation about their practice. Significantly, timely peer consultation may have acted to prevent malpractice. In addition, peer consultation and peer review are essential components characterising the development of the profession and practice of psychology, and as such are habits that should be fostered throughout a professional career. The peer consultation journal is intended to increase the effectiveness of peer consultation by ensuring adequate review and reflection.

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

The time that you may count as peer consultation is the time focusing on your own practice. If you receive professional supervision or mentoring where each session is spent focusing entirely on your practice then you can count the whole session as peer consultation. However if you participate in consultation where the group spends some time focusing on the practice of each participant you only count as peer consultation the estimated time spent discussing your specific practice. The time you spend advising and focusing on others' practice can be counted towards your 20 hours of general CPD, but not as peer consultation hours.

Peer consultation includes:

- participation in group or one on one discussion about practice issues – this can occur, for example, by face to face, via teleconference, or video conferencing,
- professional supervision and mentoring received (whether mandatory or voluntary), and
- contacting a professional advisory service or other ways of getting advice and review of aspects of your practice, e.g. in writing.

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 nonclinical 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 peer consultation can include discussion on aspects of practice such as management, administration, teaching and research where you seek and obtain peer review of your practice. You may also discuss or seek advice from 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, and planning and reflecting on CPD activities.

You may count consultation with non-psychologists peers if the consultation will be valuable for your professional development. It is recommended the majority of your peer consultation is with other psychologists but depending on your scope of practice you may benefit from consultation with some of the following, by way of example:

- psychiatrists and other medical practitioners
- mental health nurses
- occupational therapists
- legal practitioners
- teachers and other education professionals
- social workers
- counsellors
- allied health managers
- academics in psychology or related disciplines
- overseas psychologists
- human resources managers.

You should ensure that you clearly indicate how your consultations with non-psychologists link to the goals of your overall CPD plan.

#### *Peer consultation with trainees*

You cannot count consultation with provisional psychologists toward your 10 hours of peer consultation.

You can count consultation with any generally registered psychologist, including psychologists undertaking registrar programs, towards your 10 hours of consultation. Keep in mind though that if you are the supervisor of a registrar it is expected the majority of your time with the registrar would be spent focusing on their practice, not yours. Additionally it is recommended you aim to complete peer supervision or consultation with someone who is more experienced or knowledgeable in the aspect of practice you are consulting them about.

#### *Does my peer consultation have to be in my endorsed area of practice?*

No, peer consultation can be general or related to your area of practice – whichever is most suitable for your practice. If you do want to count peer consultation towards the area of practice CPD required to maintain an endorsement then it must be clearly relevant to that area of practice. If you are a registrar however, all your supervision needs to be relevant to your area of practice and provided by your principal or secondary supervisor/s.

#### **Recognised professional development activities**

Examples of types of CPD activities are included in the CPD guidelines. The Board does not accredit CPD activities or providers, therefore psychologists are not limited to CPD offered by specific providers and have the flexibility to choose the CPD options that best suit their own needs, including activities offered by overseas CPD providers.

To determine if a CPD activity is suitable, use your professional judgement to assess whether the activity is directly related to psychological practice and will contribute to achievement of the goals you set for yourself in your learning plan. Psychologists may be asked to justify CPD hours on this basis.

CPD outside the scope of accepted scientist-practitioner professional psychology practices, as judged by senior peer review, may not meet the Board's CPD standard. Psychologists should be cautious in counting CPD that might not fall within a standard view of what constitutes psychology (e.g. psychology as outlined in a first year university psychology textbook provides a good guide as to what is standard psychology) or that has a questionable evidence basis (see for example, Devilly, G. J. (2005). Power therapies and possible threats to the science of psychology and psychiatry. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 39, 437-445).

## Active CPD

Active CPD refers to activities that engage the participant and reinforce learning through written or oral activities – refer to the CPD guidelines for more information and examples of active CPD. Ten hours per annum of active CPD is recommended for psychologists.

If you are a psychology registrar working towards an area of practice endorsement 40 hours of active CPD per annum is required for your registrar program.

## Step 4 – Maintain your CPD portfolio

Your CPD portfolio should include:

- Learning plan
- CPD activity log
- Peer consultation log
- Peer consultation journal
- Professional development journal
- Evidence of CPD

## Peer consultation journal and professional development journal

### Why do I have to keep journals?

Reinforcement is important in maximising the benefits of learning, hence the inclusion of a peer consultation journal and professional development journal. Written reflection in the journals demonstrates that you have actively engaged in the professional development activities 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; therefore it trusts that the individual practitioner will use the journal to engage meaningfully in their own reflection relevant to advancing their annual learning plan. Practitioners are reminded that during CPD audits the Board will be interested in the presence of written reflection, and not the word count or length. You must write some reflection. Psychologists should use their judgement about the amount of detail needed as appropriate for the different types of activities attended (e.g. a one-hour workshop versus a full conference day) and the appropriateness and quantity of reflection to meet this requirement. As a general guide for each CPD activity you claim, your written reflection could include a description of the content, a summary of what you 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 you may have identified and any further professional development you plan to undertake as a result.

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. If you are already a copious note taker you should find it very easy to meet the written reflection requirements.

Professional development journal templates are included in the CPD guideline and are also available in Word format on the Forms page. You may use whichever reflection style suits you best i.e. a paragraph format or dot point format or a combination.

## Evidence of CPD

### What evidence should I include?

You must include:

- CPD activity log
- Peer consultation log
- Peer consultation journal Professional development journal.

It is recommended that 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.

You 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
- plans and progress reports for professional supervision and mentoring

If you maintain a CPD portfolio or online CPD logging for a professional association or overseas registration authority that meets the Board's standards you can use the same portfolio or print outs of online records to meet the Board's requirements.

## **Step 5 – Renew your registration**

### **Renewal**

You do not need to submit your CPD portfolio with your renewal – you only need to declare on your renewal that you understand that you are required to meet the requirements of the CPD standard and affirm that you have completed this requirement. You only need to submit your CPD portfolio if you are selected for a CPD audit.

[Further information on CPD is available on our website.](#)



# Psychology Board of Australia CPD Cycle

