



## Information on the revised recency of practice registration standard and policy - effective 1 December 2016

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### What is recency of practice?

Recency of practice (ROP) requirements are requirements in relation to the nature, extent, period and recency of any previous practice in the profession by applicants for general registration in the profession, including renewal of general registration.

When a practitioner meets ROP requirements it means that they have maintained an adequate connection with, and recent practice in, the profession since qualifying or obtaining general registration.

The psychology profession is broad and diverse; psychologists use their psychological skills and knowledge in a wide variety of professional settings and scopes of practice. Adequate connection and recent practice can be maintained in many different roles. Therefore for the purpose of meeting ROP requirements, 'practice' means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a registered psychologist in the profession. Practice in this context 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 the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

The recency of practice registration standard is developed by the National Board and approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. The standard sets out specifically what is considered 'recent' practice and an 'adequate' connection. It also sets out the remedial actions that applicants who do not meet the standard may be required to complete in order to become eligible to apply for general registration or to renew general registration.

Further detail about remedial requirements including supervised practice is included in the Policy for recency of practice requirements.

### Information on the revised registration standard and policy for recency of practice requirements

From 1 December 2016 - the first day of the next renewal cycle - the new *Recency of practice registration standard* (ROP standard) and *Policy for recency of practice requirements* (ROP policy) will come into effect.

Most psychologists will not be affected by the changes to the ROP standard. All psychologists who have practised for at least 250 hours (that's about 6 ½ weeks full-time) within the last five years will continue to meet the standard and will simply continue to declare at renewal every year that they have met the standard. Similarly, applicants for general registration who have completed an approved program of study or internship program within the last five years will still meet the standard on the basis of that study or training. As the policy deals with remedial options for psychologists and applicants for psychology registration who don't meet the ROP standard, these groups who do meet the standard will be unaffected by changes to the ROP policy.

Details of who could be affected by the new ROP standard and policy, and how they may be affected are set out in the table below.

The changes to the ROP standard primarily clarify the current requirements and improve the wording and structure of the documents to make them easier to understand. The revised standard also introduces a new minimum practice requirement in order to provide better guidance to psychologists and employers about the Board's expectations.

The Board's guiding principles for recency of practice are to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only psychologists who are able to practice competently and ethically are granted unconditional general registration; and to facilitate a flexible, responsive and sustainable psychology workforce by ensuring that restrictions are only placed on practice where necessary to ensure that psychology services are provided safely and are of an appropriate quality.

Additional information is provided on the [AHPRA website](#).

If this information does not provide you with what you are looking for, please refer to the PsyBA's [ROP FAQ](#), contact our Customer Service Team on 1300 419 495 or send us a [web enquiry](#).

### What will change under the new ROP registration standard and policy?

Current requirement (until 30 November 2016)	Revised requirement (from 1 December 2016)	Who does this affect?	Why is this changing?
To meet the requirement you must have practised as a registered psychologist in the past five years	To meet the requirement you must have practised for at least 250 hours as a registered psychologist in the past five years	Psychologists and applicants for psychology registration who will have completed between 1 and 249 hours of practice as a registered psychologist in the last five years at the time they apply for registration or renewal.	To have a minimum timeframe for practice without specifying a minimum amount of practice is not meaningful. Setting minimum practice hours will also provide guidance to psychologists and their employers on the Board's expectations.
The Board will not accept unregistered practice involving activities of a psychological nature.	The Board will not accept unregistered practice involving activities of a psychological nature as meeting the ROP standard. However the Board may take into account unregistered practice in countries where registration is not available when determining remedial requirements.	Psychologists and applicants for psychology registration who have practised psychology in a country that does not have registration or licensure for psychologists.	This will enable unregistered overseas practice to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine if a reduction in remedial requirements is appropriate. This will be fairer for psychologists who have been practising overseas.
An individual must, at the time the application made, be able to demonstrate that he or she has 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 restrictions on conditional practice will enable registrants to undertake supervised practice or other remedial action to meet ROP requirements while holding registration with conditions.

Current requirement (until 30 November 2016)	Revised requirement (from 1 December 2016)	Who does this affect?	Why is this changing?
No exemptions for applicants who have 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 a period of extended leave between completing a fourth or fifth year qualification and commencing a postgraduate degree or internship.	These applicants would only practise under supervision in their higher degree or internship, therefore skills and knowledge gaps can be addressed in that context while ensuring public safety.
When considering a reapplication for provisional registration after a period of absence the Board will 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 towards a new internship on a case-by-case basis. If the Board has granted an application for extension of an internship beyond five years due to exceptional circumstances, internship components from more than five years ago may be recognised.	Applicants for provisional registration who had previously been undertaking an internship program but did not complete the program, and who wish to recommence an internship after a period of extended leave.	This will allow more flexibility for special circumstances to be taken into account when appropriate.
In the event of inability to comply with the requirements the Board may require the applicant to undergo a performance assessment.	<p>The option for a separate performance assessment has been removed.</p> <p>The 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.</p>	Psychologists who are unable to meet the ROP requirement having practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years and will be required 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 may require the applicant to successfully complete further education	<p>The option for the Board to specifically require completion of further education has been removed.</p> <p>The 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.</p>	Psychologists who are unable to meet the ROP requirement having practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years and will be required to complete remedial action.	The onus will be on the practitioner to undertake self assessment (often in consultation with a supervisor/peer/employer) and determine whether to undertake further education and CPD. The Board requires the practitioner to demonstrate the requisite skills and knowledge to a supervisor and/or by passing the national psychology examination.

Current requirement (until 30 November 2016)	Revised requirement (from 1 December 2016)	Who does this affect?	Why is this changing?
<p>All applicants who are required to undertake supervised practice to meet ROP requirements must do so in accordance with the requirements of the 4+2 internship program while registered as a provisional psychologist.</p>	<p>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 by the Board.</p>	<p>Psychologists who are unable to meet the ROP requirement having practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years who are required to complete remedial action.</p> <p>From 1 December 2016 psychologists currently undertaking an internship program to meet ROP requirements will be permitted to apply to change or vary their program in accordance with the revised policy.</p>	<p>The revised policy will significantly increase flexibility allowing psychologists returning to practice to undertake re-entry training that is most suitable for their individual circumstances and scope of practice.</p>
<p>The number of hours of supervised practice required to be completed is determined based only on the length of absence from practice and on a minimum set by the Board.</p>	<p>The Board will consider a number of factors in addition to length of absence when determining the supervised practice hours required, as listed in the policy.</p> <p>The revised policy will also include a range of supervised practice hours rather than a minimum only.</p>	<p>Psychologists who are unable to meet the ROP requirement, having practised for less than 250 hours in the last five years, and will be required to complete remedial action.</p>	<p>Specifying a range of hours will give better guidance to practitioners intending to return to practice, and to their supervisors and employers. More flexibility to take a range of factors into account and vary the requirements accordingly will better support practitioners returning to practice after an extended period.</p>
<p>Not all National Law requirements or options are included in the standard or policy and clearly explained, therefore applicants and registrants may need to consult the National Law separately.</p>	<p>No changes to the National Law requirements, however they are more clearly and explicitly detailed in the registration standard and the policy.</p>	<p>Nobody is affected in terms of what is required as there have been no changes to the National Law. However, it is expected that most registrants, applicants and stakeholders will find that the revised standard is easier to read and more clearly explains what the requirements and options are.</p>	<p>The new format is more user-friendly and will better inform registrants and applicants of their options and obligations under the National Law.</p>