

Who is in charge of registration?

The Psychology Board of Australia (PBA) registers students and psychologists. They are supported by a new national body, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). A national registration and accreditation scheme came into effect in Australia on 1 July 1, 2010, replacing the former Psychology Registration Board of Victoria (PRBV). Information is published on the Board's website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

What types of registration are there?

There are three types of registration:

- 1. Provisional Registration** Postgraduate students must be registered provisionally from the commencement of enrolment in their higher degree and for the duration of enrolment. The "provisional" title reflects that students are trainees. Students in a postgraduate Masters course undergo a substantial period of training, and although they practise autonomously (usually in one-on-one consultations) this occurs under close supervision in workplace placements.
- 2. General Registration** A person can legally practice and identify themselves as a psychologist.
- 3. Non-practising Registration** Non-practising registration pertains to retirees, people taking time out of the workforce (e.g. to raise children, travel), or psychologists who work but not in the capacity or direct application of psychology.

When must I provisionally register?

All students enrolled in a postgraduate psychology degree program (i.e. enrolled in subjects) must immediately register with the Psychology Board of Australia (PBA) for provisional registration. If a student is not provisionally registered, then they cannot undertake placements and any course work undertaken will not count towards eventual general registration.

Do I need to stay provisionally registered while completing only research-based components of the course?

Yes. Post-graduate psychology students must be registered from the commencement of enrolment and for the duration of enrolment, including enrolment while completing a research thesis.

This is a change from the pre-APHRA situation in Victoria. Before 1 July 2010, provisional psychologists completing higher degrees in Victoria were not required to be provisionally registered for the duration of their enrolment, only while they completed the practical components of their qualification.

When can I call myself a Provisional Psychologist?

Provisional Psychologists undertaking an accredited higher degree or a Board approved 4+2 internship are entitled to use the title “Provisional Psychologist” while engaged in approved supervised practice.

Can a Provisional Psychologist do paid/volunteer work outside the university course program?

Yes. From April 6, 2011, provisional psychologists undertaking a higher degree can seek approval from the PBA to work in psychology roles that do not contribute to the requirements of their higher degree. The PBA will generally not approve solo work in private practice, as they consider that this setting does not offer sufficient support for the provisional psychologist or sufficient protection for the public. Depending on the circumstances and the provisional psychologist’s duties, working with other psychologists in a group private practice might be approved.

A separate application form needs to be submitted for each proposed work role. Follow the links to *Forms* at www.psychologyboard.gov.au, and download *Application for working in addition to approved placement for higher degree pathway provisional Psychologists (AWOP-76)*.

While practicing outside a higher degree program, a provisional psychologist must arrange professional indemnity insurance. Supervision must be provided, according to the guidelines outlined in the application form.

When can I apply for General registration?

Masters students must complete all components of their degree (coursework, placements and thesis) and be on the graduation list before being eligible for General registration. You do not have to formally graduate (i.e., have attended the graduation ceremony), merely be eligible to graduate. If your thesis has been submitted but not yet accepted, then you cannot yet apply for General registration.

Until 30 June 2013, Masters/PhD students may apply for General registration after a minimum of two years full-time enrolment in postgraduate study, upon completing all Masters coursework and placements, and after making sufficient progress on their thesis (i.e., the thesis has progressed sufficiently as to be equivalent to a Masters thesis and would be eligible for submission as a Masters thesis).

Where do I find the registration forms to fill out?

www.psychologyboard.gov.au. Follow the links to *Forms*.

For provisional registration: *Application for provisional registration - APRO-76*

For general registration: *Application for general registration - AGEN-10*

What do I do before I can apply for General registration?

Masters

1. Complete all components of the course.
2. Once your thesis has been accepted, printed, and bound, submit a copy of your thesis to the Psychology Department. The department can then confirm that you have completed the course. Contact Level 12 admin staff for more information.
3. The Head of School will send you a letter to confirm that you are eligible to graduate. You need a certified copy of this letter for the PBA application.
4. Arrange for the university (Student Centre) to send PBA your official academic transcript, as evidence that you have completed the qualification.

Combined Masters/PhD

1. Complete all coursework and placements, and have made sufficient progress with your thesis (i.e., the thesis has progressed sufficiently as to be equivalent to a Masters thesis and would be eligible for submission as a Masters thesis).
2. Obtain the Head of School's signature, along with your own, on PBA form *PDEC-76*, to declare that you have completed all coursework and practicum placements at the Masters level, and that your thesis has progressed sufficiently.
3. Arrange for the university (Student Centre) to send the PBA your official academic transcript, as evidence that you have completed the coursework and practicum placements.

What is the cost?

Follow the links to *Fees* at <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Fees.aspx>.

As a guide only (accurate at May 3, 2011) provisional registration costs \$390 (this equals the annual fee, with exemption from the application fee, which has been waived until 30 June 2011).

The initial cost for General registration is \$800. On the initial registration, both an application fee (\$410) and a fee for annual renewal of registration (\$390) apply. Thereafter, the annual renewal fee is \$390.

How long will it take to process my application for provisional or general registration?

The PBA state that most applications for initial registration (either provisional or general) are processed within 4-6 weeks. Part of the application process for general registration involves a criminal history check, which AHPRA organises but which another organisation conducts.

The general registration form (AGEN-10) asks me to attach a Curriculum Vitae (CV) with my "practice" work history, which my current/recent employer has signed. But I don't work in a psychology-related field. Is this relevant?

All applicants must attach a CV. However, the PBA is really only interested in past work, paid or unpaid, which is related to psychology (e.g., work in aged care or as a telephone counsellor). While it is recommended that you document all past employment in your CV, you only need to have an employer sign and date your CV if they are a current or recent employer, and if the work is in a field that is related to psychology.

There are guidelines on the PBA website, <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/>, for how your CV should look. Follow the links to *Forms*, and then *Supplementary Information*, for *Standard Format for Curriculum Vitae*.

What is the difference between registration and endorsement?

In addition to general registration, some psychologists will also be eligible to use a title that indicates to the public and employers they are a specialist practitioner with additional qualification or advanced practice recognised by the PBA (e.g., clinical endorsement or forensic endorsement). *Practice endorsement* of a psychologist's registration is a legal mechanism that supplements the process of General registration. An endorsement on registration indicates that a psychologist has expertise in an advanced area of practice in addition to the minimum level of psychological training required for general registration.

For example, a psychologist who undertakes a Master of Psychology degree (Clinical Neuropsychology) is eligible to apply for clinical neuropsychology endorsement. Applying for endorsement is a separate process to registration.

What qualifications will I require for endorsement?

Unless you qualify for one of the transitional arrangements (see PBA website Guidelines and FAQs for more information), to be eligible for endorsement in one of the approved areas of practice a registered General psychologist must have:

- a) an accredited doctorate in one of the approved areas of practice, and a minimum one year of approved supervised full-time equivalent practice with a Board approved supervisor in a Board approved registrar program or
- b) an accredited Masters or Masters/PhD in one of the approved areas of practice, and a minimum of two years of approved supervised full-time equivalent practice with a Board approved supervisor in a Board approved registrar program.

How can I apply for an endorsement?

The application form for an area of practice endorsement is available at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au. Follow the links to *Forms*.

What is a registrar program?

In order to gain practice endorsement, a psychologist with General Registration must complete a registrar program.

The registrar program consists of three components:

1. Psychological practice (in a job that is least 0.5 equivalent full time = 17.5 hours per week). The PBA defines full time psychological practice as 35 hours per week over a 44 week year (allowing eight weeks of annual and personal leave).
2. Supervision, with a Board-approved supervisor, at least one hour per fortnight.
3. Active continuing professional development (CPD).

Before beginning a registrar program, the psychologist must submit a supervised practice plan (Form A) to the PBA for approval, setting out in detail the practice, supervision, and professional development arrangements. The PBA's approval must be granted before the registrar commences the registrar program.

Six-monthly progress reports should be submitted (Form B). Approval must be sought from the PBA before any substantial change is made to the registrar program including changes to the work role or the supervisor (Form C). The psychologist is required to submit a final completion of the registrar program form to the PBA (Form D). The registrar may then apply for endorsement.

Throughout a registrar program, a psychologist may refer to themselves as 'Registrar Clinical Psychologist' or 'Clinical Psychologist Registrar' or 'Clinical Psychologist (Registrar)'.

Please refer to the PBA website for more details: <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/>. Follow the links to *Policies*, *Codes and Guidelines*, and then *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*.

What is continuing professional development (CPD)?

The PBA defines CPD as activities undertaken by a psychologist to “maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives.”

All psychologists must satisfy three components annually. These include (1) submit an individual learning plan; (2) undertake 30 hours of acceptable CPD activities per annual

cycle; and (3) write a journal entry for each hour of CPD to demonstrate how CPD activity has contributed to the initial learning goals. More information is provided at <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/FAQ-and-Fact-Sheets.aspx>. Follow the link to *Fact Sheet - Continuing Professional Development*.

Psychologists with General Registration must complete a minimum of 30 hours of CPD activities annually. Of these 30 hours, at least 10 hours must be “peer consultation” and 10 hours are recommended to be “active” CPD activities. Psychologists who obtain General registration part way through the year are exempt from the CPD standard for the period they were not registered and complete pro-rata CPD for the period of registration.

Registrars must receive 40 hours of supervision and complete 40 hours of *active* CPD activities for every full time equivalent year of the registrar program. This exceeds the minimum requirements of the CPD standard and so registrars do not have to complete any additional peer consultation/supervision or CPD on top of that required for the registrar program.

A psychologist with one area of practice endorsement (e.g., clinical) must complete a minimum of 16 hours of CPD within that area of practice and the other 14 hours required may be in any area relevant to their practice (i.e. 30 hours total). For psychologists with multiple endorsements, guidelines can be found at www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

What is peer consultation?

Peer consultation refers to supervision and/or consultation in individual or group format that involves a psychologist critically reflecting on their 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. Peer consultation can occur face to face, via teleconference, Skype, email, or in an online forum. You cannot count consultation with provisional psychologists toward your 10 hours of peer consultation.

You can consult your peers about any aspect of your psychological practice. The PBA broadly defines “psychological practice” as: *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 aspects of practice such as management, administration, teaching and research.

Time that is spent advising and focusing on others’ practice can be counted towards general CPD, but not as peer consultation hours. For example, 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.

What is active CPD?

Active CPD refers to activities that engage the participant and reinforce learning through written or oral activities. For more information and examples of active CPD, refer to <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Codes-and-Guidelines.aspx> (follow the link to *Psychology guidelines continuing professional development*).

At least 10 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.

What are acceptable CPD activities?

The PBA leaves it up to psychologist to self-assess whether an activity is suitable for CPD. Guiding principles are that the activity is directly related to psychological practice; is within the scope of an accepted scientist-practitioner, peer-reviewed evidence base; and is related to your learning plan.

Annually, the PBA will randomly choose psychologists for an audit of their CPD portfolio. If chosen, psychologists must justify hours claimed and prove that their CPD activities comply with PBA standards.

Examples of CPD are provided at <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Codes-and-Guidelines.aspx>. Follow the link to *Psychology guidelines continuing professional development*.

CPD activities might include:

- conducting or attending psychology workshops, seminars, or lectures.
- writing, assessing, or reading and analysing peer review psychology journal articles or scholarly professional books.
- writing, assessing, or reading and analysing research proposals and grants.
- producing, reviewing, or viewing and analysing such items as professional videos, audio, internet resources, and scientific posters.
- attending a journal club, where peers discuss and analyse peer review psychology journal articles.

Active CPD activities might include:

- Attending seminars where there is a written test.
- Reading a structured series of professional psychology articles followed by completing an online assessment.
- Providing an oral presentation or tutorial to a group of peers on a new topic in psychology.
- Providing peer consultation to other psychologists.
- Attending a workshop with a required role play of skills.
- Studying a new technique, trialling this in the workplace, then reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the technique.

What is the difference between the PBA and the Australian Psychological Society (APS)?

Registration as a psychologist via the PBA is a legal requirement to work as a psychologist. The PBA is legally responsible for regulating psychology to protect the public. This involves registering psychologists and students; developing standards, codes and guidelines for the psychology profession; and handling complaints, investigations and disciplinary hearings. Membership of the APS is not mandatory to work as a psychologist. The APS is a professional association for psychologists, to represent and promote psychology to the public. Information about the APS is available at www.psychology.org.au/.

What is the difference between PBA endorsement and the Australian Psychological Society (APS) requirements for College membership?

Just as being a member of the APS is not the same as being registered by the PBA, being a member of an APS College is not the same as being endorsed by the PBA. APS Colleges represent specialist areas in psychology (e.g., clinical, counselling, organisational, and health). Each College promotes its area and encourages and supports the education and professional development of specialist practitioners.

The requirements to join an APS College are similar to that of PBA endorsement and there is much overlap. For instance, to become a full member of the APS College of Clinical Psychologists, the College requires a minimum of six years university training, (including approved postgraduate clinical studies and placements in mental health settings), plus a year of further approved supervision in the clinical field. Members are also required to maintain a program of on-going professional development. Information about the APS requirements for College membership is available from the APS at www.psychology.org.au/.