

Guidelines: Recency of practice

Effective from: 1 December 2016

1. Introduction

These guidelines have been developed by the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (the Board) under section 39 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). Under section 41 of the National Law, guidelines are admissible in proceedings under the National Law as evidence of what constitutes professional conduct or practice for physiotherapy.

These guidelines address the issue of recency of practice and provide a pathway for physiotherapists wishing to return to practice after a break.

2. Do these guidelines apply to me?

These guidelines apply to all registered physiotherapists except those with non-practising and student registration and recent graduates (as defined in the *Recency of practice registration standard*).

3. Summary of guidelines

These guidelines supplement the requirements set out in the Board's *Recency of practice registration standard*. They explain the importance of maintaining recency of practice and how you may return to practice after a break.

4. Background

Patients or clients have the right to expect that physiotherapists will provide services in a competent and contemporary manner that meets best practice standards. The National Law requires all physiotherapists to maintain competence. Recency of practice is considered to contribute to the competence of the physiotherapist to practise in his or her chosen field of work within their profession. It also means that a physiotherapist who engages in a particular type of practice would not be required to demonstrate recency of practice in areas outside his or her chosen scope of practice unless he or she intends practising in these areas.

5. What is recent practice?

You must have carried out:

- 450 hours of practice during the three-year period immediately prior to the start of the registration period, or
- 150 hours in the previous registration year.

6. Board monitoring of recency of practice

Your compliance with the *Recency of practice registration standard* may be audited from time to time. It may also be checked if the National Board receives a notification about you.

Every year when you renew your registration, you will be required to make a declaration about whether you meet the standard.

7. Declarations of not practising within the previous three years

If you have not practised within the three years prior to renewal, you will be required to demonstrate competence to practise and registration will be at the Board's discretion. If you do not intend to practise, you may apply for non-practising registration.

8. Practice

The practice of physiotherapy is not confined to clinical practice, and includes any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. For the purposes of these guidelines, practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes working 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 safe, effective delivery of services in the profession and/or use their professional skills.

The Board's ['Who needs to be registered,'](#) document provides further information for practitioners and is available on the Board's website.

9. Return to practice

If you intend to return to practice after a break, the Board will need to be assured of your competency to practise physiotherapy.

The Board may consider additional requirements and may place conditions on registration for a physiotherapist who does not meet the *Recency of practice registration standard*, including supervision. The onus is on you as the applicant to provide information to support your application.

When the Board considers an application for registration and where the applicant has not met the *Recency of practice registration standard*, the Board will consider each case on its merits and take into account a range of information including the following factors:

- your registration and practice history
- length of time away from practice and when you last practised
- nature and scope of practice prior to your break from practice
- any continuing professional development or education done, or professional contact maintained during your break from practice
- the intended field of practice, including the role and position proposed and any continuing professional development or education proposed in relation to it
- the level of risk associated with your proposed practise
- the type, duration of, and access to, the supervision required, if necessary, and/or
- the *Recency of practice registration standard*.

10. Plan for re-entry to practice

You are required to submit a plan for re-entry to practice for the Board's approval. This is regardless of whether you currently hold registration. If you are not registered, a re-entry to practice plan must accompany an application for registration.

Appendix A provides information on the requirements for a plan for re-entry to physiotherapy practice after a break of three years or more.

The purpose of the plan for re-entry to practice is to protect the public through ensuring that you have appropriate supports in place for safe practice.

The plan for re-entry to practice will be different for each applicant. It should be tailored to your particular circumstances and your individual learning needs. It is therefore not appropriate for the Board to issue a standard re-entry plan with set tasks or supervision levels.

11. Supervision

The majority of applicants seeking registration to return to practice after a break of three years or more, or who are applying for renewal but don't meet the recency of practice requirements, are required to be supervised for a period of time.

Should the Board consider that supervision is a necessary part of your return to practice, you will need to adhere to the *Supervision guidelines for physiotherapy*. This will require a **second submission** to the Board with information relevant to supervision as well as the documentation detailed in this guideline.

Alternatively, you could provide the completed supervision information with your initial application to return to practice after a break and if the Board decides that you do not need to be supervised, your supervisor would not need to adhere to the supervision requirements. The advantage of applying with a completed supervision plan and associated documents and agreements means that you are less likely to be required to reapply to the Board at a subsequent or future meeting with this information.

If you do not include complete information in accordance with the *Supervision guidelines for physiotherapy* and the Board determines that supervision is required, processing your application will be delayed.

12. Procedure for returning to practice

All applicants must submit:

1. an application for general registration, including a *curriculum vitae* in the **AHPRA format** which details any gaps in your practice history since you obtained your qualification
2. a completed **Appendix A** from this document: a re-entry to practice plan which details your previous field of practice, recent CPD you have done and propose to undertake and details of the proposed area of practice and a description of your past experience and its relevance to the proposed role; and
3. completed requirements contained in the ***Supervision guidelines for physiotherapy***, which include:
 - 3.1 a position description
 - 3.2 contact details and signed supervision agreements
 - 3.3 a supervised practice plan.

13. Review

Last reviewed: 1 December 2016.

Date of review: This guideline will be reviewed at least every five years.

Appendix A

Plan for re-entry to practice

Name of practitioner	
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Details of proposed employer (if applicable)	Name of employer:	
	Name of organisation:	
	Address:	
	Bus. Phone No:	

Proposed role	Previous field of practice	
	Details of proposed field of practice	
	Description of employment: Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of proposed field of practice• A description of your past experience and its relevance to the proposed role	
Please include with your application for registration:	A CV in the AHPRA standard format (The AHPRA standard CV format guideline may be found under <i>Registration</i> on the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au)	

Professional development activities

List any professional development activities you have done in the 12 months prior to the submission of your plan. (You may submit your CPD portfolio):

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Describe the professional development activities that you will undertake in the next 12 months:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Applicant name:	
Applicant signature:	
Date:	