

## Guidelines for the national psychology exam

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Psychology Board of Australia  
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency  
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Ahpra and the National Boards regulate these registered health professions: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, dental, medical, medical radiation practice, midwifery, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, and psychology.

## 1. Overview of the exam

The national psychology exam (the exam) has been developed by the Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) in accordance with section 52 (1) (b) of the [Health practitioner Regulation National Law](#) (the National Law).

The exam supports the [General registration standard](#).<sup>1</sup> In order to be eligible to apply for general registration, applicants must complete a six-year sequence of education and training, and provide evidence of having passed the exam (unless exempt).<sup>2</sup>

These guidelines have been developed to provide an overview of the Board's policies and requirements to individuals sitting the exam (candidates) and their supervisors.<sup>3</sup> This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [National psychology exam candidate manual](#), which provides detailed practical information about the processes and procedures for sitting the exam.

## 2. Purpose of the exam

The exam helps protect the public by ensuring only those practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology in a competent and ethical manner are registered.<sup>4</sup>

The exam is one regulatory tool used to ensure that all applicants for general registration have obtained a minimum level of applied professional knowledge of psychology. The exam is not designed to be the sole test of a practitioner's competence to practise psychology. It is one of several methods that assess the various aspects of competence needed to practise safely and effectively.

Some other methods that are used to assess a practitioner's suitability for general registration include:

- completion of a period of supervised practice
- direct observation of practice
- completion of professional placements/internship
- assessment by a Board-approved supervisor while engaged in professional practice
- completion of a Board-approved qualification.

### For registration

The exam helps determine whether an individual should be granted general registration upon application. The exam ensures that practitioners with training in non-accredited pathways, international qualifications or people who are intending to return to practise as a psychologist can demonstrate the professional competencies required for general registration.

### For notifications

Notifications are concerns or complaints about registered health practitioners. Anyone can raise a concern about a registered health practitioner by contacting Ahpra. Complaints can be made about a practitioner's health, performance, or conduct.

The exam can be used to assist the Board, committee, panel, tribunal, or co-regulatory jurisdiction when making notification decisions. For example, the exam can assist to determine whether an individual is suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology when the competency of the practitioner is called into question by the notification.

Successful completion of the exam may be required for candidates to demonstrate they have the required knowledge and threshold professional competencies to practice psychology safely. Successful completion

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<sup>1</sup> The *General registration standard* is published on the Board's website at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au). Registration standards are approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council pursuant to the National Law.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants for general registration who are exempt from passing the exam are outlined in Section 4 entitled "exemptions" in this document.

<sup>3</sup> See section 39 of the National Law.

<sup>4</sup> See section 3(2) of the National Law.

of the exam can be required regardless of the training pathway undertaken by the practitioner. This means that practitioners who completed the higher degree pathway may be required to sit the exam as part of the notification process, and those who completed the internship pathway (who have previously passed the exam) may be required to pass the exam to demonstrate current competency.

Completion of the exam is one tool that can be used when a practitioner has a notification. Other assessment methods include:

- conducting a health assessment
- undertaking a criminal history check
- ensuring the candidate meets the registration standards (for example the *Recency of practice registration standard*, *Continuing professional development registration standard*)
- an assessment of behaviour against the *Code of conduct*.

### 3. Who is required to sit the exam?

The following groups must pass the exam before applying for general registration as a psychologist:

- Provisionally registered psychologists undertaking a 4+2 internship program<sup>5</sup>.
- Provisionally registered psychologists undertaking a 5+1 internship program.
- Internationally trained psychologists seeking general registration in Australia (unless exempt).<sup>6</sup>

The following groups *may* also be required to pass the exam:

- Individuals who do not meet the [Recency of practice registration standard](#).
- Individuals who are directed to sit the exam by the Board, committee, panel, tribunal, or co-regulatory jurisdiction, in relation to an application for registration, or a notification about their health, performance, or conduct<sup>7</sup>.

### Why is the exam required for these groups?

#### Non-accredited pathways

The 4+2 and 5+1 internship pathways are non-accredited pathways. They include one or two years of internship that are not regulated under the accreditation standards. Board-approved internship programs are conducted within the industry sector and not the education sector.

#### International qualifications

The exam is required for applicants for general registration with international qualifications (unless exempt) to ensure they have the requisite knowledge and skills to practise psychology competently and safely in the Australian context.

#### Return to practice

The exam may be required for applicants intending to return to psychology practice who do not meet the [Recency of practice registration standard](#). Passing the exam will demonstrate the appropriate level of applied professional knowledge and competence to ensure effective protection of the public.

When deciding if an applicant is required to sit the exam, several factors will be considered, including (but not limited to):

- the length of absence
- reason for absence

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<sup>5</sup> The 4+2 internship program was closed to new applications on 30 June 2022. For information on the retirement of the 4+2 internship pathway to general registration see: [www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Provisional/Retirement-of-4-2-internship](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Provisional/Retirement-of-4-2-internship).

<sup>6</sup> See section 4 of this document for more information on exemptions.

<sup>7</sup> This includes individuals directed to sit the exam by a Board, panel, tribunal, or co-regulatory jurisdiction under Part 7 of the [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law](#), as in force in each state and territory, or a notification about their health, performance, or conduct under Part 8 of the National Law.

- amount of practice experience undertaken before taking the break in practice
- any international practice during absence
- whether the applicant is returning to the same or a different area of practice
- whether any further relevant education has been undertaken during the absence.

#### 4. Exemptions

The following groups are exempt from having to sit the exam:

- a) New Zealand psychologists applying for general registration in Australia under the [Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition arrangements](#).
- b) Applicants for general registration who have completed the [higher degree pathway](#).

The exam is not required for this group as the higher degree pathway is sufficiently regulated through accreditation processes<sup>8</sup>. The higher degree pathway refers to a Board-approved postgraduate qualification accredited as a fifth and sixth year of study in psychology. This includes:

- an accredited six-year professional Masters qualification (fifth and sixth year), or
- an accredited doctorate, or
- a combined Masters/PhD qualification.

- c) Applicants for general registration with international qualifications whose qualifications have been assessed by the Board as substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies to a Board-approved qualification at the fifth and sixth year level of training (as per point b above).

This exemption provides applicants with international qualifications parity with the exemption noted above for applicants with Australian Board-approved post-graduate qualifications. All applicants holding international psychology qualifications, including applicants meeting this exemption are required to complete the [transitional program](#). Details about the overseas pathways, application process and exemptions for international applicants can be found on the [Board's website](#).

#### 5. Threshold professional competencies for psychologists

The Board has adopted a competency-based framework across its registration standards, codes, and guidelines. This is to protect the public and ensure that only those practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology in a competent and ethical manner are registered.

The exam is designed to test the threshold professional competencies required for initial and continuing general registration as a psychologist in Australia. The term 'threshold professional competency' is a benchmark that describes the minimum professional knowledge, skills, and other attributes necessary to practise as a registered psychologist in Australia. This is based on the premise that competency can be described on a continuum. The threshold represents the point on the continuum at which the minimum acceptable level of competence is reached to practise safely and effectively as a psychologist.

##### Threshold professional competencies assessed by the exam

The threshold professional competencies are outlined in the [Professional competencies for psychologists](#). All eight competencies are assessed by the exam.

##### Competencies not assessed by the exam

The exam is not designed to assess the competencies for [area of practice endorsement](#). The exam assesses the threshold professional competencies for general registration only, and not for any additional competencies that may be required by endorsement. The additional competencies for area of practice

<sup>8</sup> The [Australian Psychology Accreditation Council](#) (APAC) is the [accreditation authority](#) responsible for accrediting education providers and programs of study for the psychology profession.

endorsement are demonstrated by completion of an approved qualification<sup>9</sup>, and through successful completion of the registrar program.<sup>10</sup>

## Curriculum

The exam curriculum outlines the threshold professional competencies that are assessed by the exam and expected to be demonstrated by an applicant for general registration.

The eight competencies are assessed through four exam curriculum domains:

- Ethics
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Communication

The curriculum and other resources designed to assist candidates prepare to sit the exam are published on the [website](#).

## 6. Sitting the exam

### Eligibility

Table 1 outlines the groups required to pass the exam before applying for general registration, and when they are eligible to sit the exam.

Table 1: Who needs to sit the exam and when

Exam candidate	When you are eligible to sit exam
Provisional psychologist in 4+2 internship	During the sixth year (after 1,500 hours of supervised practice internship)
Provisional psychologist in 5+1 internship	During the sixth year
Person returning to psychology practice who does not meet the <a href="#">Recency of practice registration standard</a>	As directed by a Board, committee, panel, tribunal, or co-regulatory jurisdiction
Person with international qualifications in psychology who meet other requirements for general registration	During approved transitional program or other period of supervised practice
Person required to do so by a Board, committee, panel, tribunal, or co-regulatory jurisdiction	As directed by a Board, committee, panel, tribunal, or co-regulatory jurisdiction

### Eligibility for internationally trained practitioners

Internationally trained practitioners are required to be registered as a provisional psychologist and complete a period of supervised practice in Australia before applying for general registration. The period of practice includes completion of either a 4+2 or 5+1 internship program, or a three-month [transitional program](#)<sup>11</sup>. This allows an applicant to demonstrate the competencies for general registration including

<sup>9</sup> For more information see the [APAC accreditation standards for psychology programs](#) section on 'professional competencies for specialised area of practice'.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the Registrar program see: [www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Endorsement/Registrar-program.aspx](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Endorsement/Registrar-program.aspx).

<sup>11</sup> Information on the transitional program is at: [www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Overseas-Aplicants/Transitional-program.aspx](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Overseas-Aplicants/Transitional-program.aspx)

knowledge of Australian ethical and legal requirements, and to ground their skills in an Australian socio-cultural context.

### **Exam pass grade**

The Board has applied a scaled passing score for the exam of 70 per cent. The scaled passing score is the Board's view of the minimum level of applied knowledge required for independent and safe psychology practice.

### **Exam failure**

Candidates who fail the exam on their first or second attempt can re-sit the exam in the next exam period.

If a candidate fails three times, they will not be able to sit another exam until their registration renewal or a new application for registration is approved. See the *Policy and procedure for candidates who fail the exam three times* (Attachment A of this document) for further information.

Passing the exam is important and is one of the necessary components to gain general registration. If a candidate fails the exam six times, the Board may propose to refuse the candidate's application for renewal or registration.

### **Further information for candidates**

The Board has developed several resources to provide guidance to candidates preparing for the exam. Candidates are strongly recommended to review the following documents:

- National psychology exam candidate manual
- National psychology exam curriculum
- Exam reading list
- Sample exam questions

## **7. Review**

These guidelines will be reviewed as required, generally every five years.

## 8. Definitions

**Ahpra:** means the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency established under section 23 of the National Law.

**APAC:** the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council. APAC is the accreditation authority for the psychology profession.

**Approved program of study:** refers to a program of study accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council and then approved by the Board under section 49 (1) of the National Law as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration as a psychologist in Australia.

**Area of practice endorsement:** a mechanism under the [National Law](#) to identify practitioners who have undertaken additional qualifications. Endorsement in an area of practice allows for a notation to be included on a psychologist's record on the public [register of practitioners](#) to show the public, employers, and others that the psychologist has completed a Board-approved qualification and a period of supervised practice (registrant program) in an approved area of practice. This allows the psychologist to use the title associated with that area of practice.

**Board:** the Psychology Board of Australia established under section 31 of the National Law. The Board delegates some decision-making powers to committees, or Ahpra.

**Candidate:** any person approved by the Board as eligible to sit the exam.

**Competency/competencies:** clusters of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, values, and other attributes that enable a person to act effectively and to a defined standard in a professional practice situation associated with a professional role.

**Competencies for general registration:** core competencies that underpin the delivery of safe and effective psychological practice to client/s in Australia.

**Competencies for area of practice endorsement:** advanced competencies that underpin the safe and effective delivery of psychological practice to address client/s complexity and risk in specific areas of practice.

**Co-regulatory jurisdiction:** a jurisdiction which is not participating in the health, performance and conduct process provided by the National Law, but is involved in other parts of the National Scheme. New South Wales is a co-regulatory jurisdiction, so the health professionals' councils work with the Health Care Complaints Commission to assess and manage concerns about practitioners' conduct, health, and performance.

**Guidelines:** the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#) as published on the Board's website.

**National Law:** the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* as in force in each state and territory of Australia.

**National psychology exam (the exam):** the exam helps to protect the public by ensuring that only those practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology in a competent and ethical manner are registered. The exam also helps to ensure a consistent professional standard of psychologists nationally. The exam is one regulatory tool that the Board may use to ensure that all applicants for general registration have obtained a minimum level of applied professional knowledge of psychology.

**Notification:** a concern or complaint about the health, performance or conduct of a registered health practitioner or student and might include concerns that: a practitioner is practising unsafely (performance), is behaving in a way that might place the public at risk (conduct), and/or has a health impairment that might make them a risk to their clients or the public.

**Panel:** the Board may refer a registrant to a panel as part of managing a notification. There are two types of panels – health panels for health matters, and performance and professional standards panels for conduct and performance issues.

**Practice:** 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.

**Provisional psychologist:** a person registered as a provisional psychologist under section 62 of the National Law to enable that individual to complete a mandatory period of supervised practice to become eligible for general registration as a psychologist.

**Psychologist:** a person who holds general registration as a psychologist under section 52 of the National Law.

**Recency of practice:** means that a practitioner has maintained an adequate connection with, and recent practice in, the profession since qualifying or obtaining registration.

**Registered psychologist:** in this document includes a psychologist or a provisional psychologist.

**Supervisor or Board approved supervisor:** a person who holds general registration as a psychologist and who has been approved by the Board to supervise provisional psychologists or psychologists.

**Threshold professional competency:** a benchmark that describes the minimum professional knowledge, skills, and other attributes necessary to practise as a registered psychologist in Australia. This is based on the premise that competency can be described on a continuum. The threshold represents the point on the continuum at which the minimum acceptable level of competence is reached to practise safely and effectively as a psychologist.

**Tribunal:** the Board or a panel can refer a notification matter to a tribunal for hearing. This happens in the most serious allegations such as when a practitioner's behaviour constitutes professional misconduct, and when the Board believes suspension or cancellation of the practitioner's registration may be warranted. There are different tribunals operating in each state and territory. Tribunal decisions are independent and public.

## 9. Attachments

Attachment A: Policy and procedure for candidates who fail the exam three times



## Attachment A: Policy and procedure for candidates who fail the national psychology exam three times

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Date of effect: 1 December 2025

### Purpose

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) has developed the national psychology exam (the exam) to ensure a nationally consistent minimum professional standard for psychology. The exam supports the [General registration standard](#) and forms part of the assessment of eligibility for general registration as a psychologist.

This document sets out the policy and procedures to follow when a person sitting the exam (candidate) fails the exam three times.

### Definition of exam pass and failure

Candidates must achieve a scaled score of 70 per cent or higher to pass the exam.

The pass rate only applies to the total score. Candidates are not required to pass all four individual curriculum components (or domains) to pass the exam.<sup>12</sup>

Any candidate who sits the exam and gets a scaled score of 69 per cent or lower is considered to have failed the exam, regardless of whether the candidate:

- completed all the exam or only part of the exam, and/or
- had been granted special accommodation prior to the exam (providing the accommodations were sufficiently met).

Any candidate who does not attend an exam sitting that they have registered to sit, and are not granted special consideration for their non-attendance, is considered to have failed that sitting of the exam.

### Definition of three exam failures

Any candidate who sits the exam and gets a scaled score of 69 per cent or lower on three separate occasions is considered to have failed the exam three times.

If a candidate is granted special consideration due to adverse circumstances on the day of the exam that are outside of their control, then this sitting of the exam is considered null and void, and any failure of the exam on this day is not counted as an exam attempt.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The four curriculum components of the exam are outlined in the guidelines and include ethics, assessment, intervention, and communication.

<sup>13</sup> *The National Psychology Exam Candidate Manual* states that candidates who complete the exam are usually not eligible for special consideration unless there are adverse circumstances beyond their control, such as acute illness, hospitalisation, or loss of a family member. Special consideration is granted by the National Exam Coordinator.

## General principles for applying this policy

### Protection of the public

Protection of the public is paramount, and it is the role of the Board to ensure the safety and competence of practitioners to meet a minimum professional standard. The exam assesses applied psychological knowledge, which forms a significant basis of competence in the psychology profession. The exam helps demonstrate that training has produced a practitioner with an appropriate level of applied professional knowledge and competence, which will effectively protect the public.

### Timeliness in decision making

All decisions made after a candidate fails the exam for the third time will be made as soon as practicable following the third failure.

Renewing provisional registration has time limitations under section 64 of the National Law.<sup>14</sup> Provisional psychologists will need to get permission to continue their training if they go beyond these limits. This policy should be implemented within the context of these time limitations.

### Consistency in decision maker

The exam can be required in the context of both registration and notification decisions (see section 2 of these Guidelines). This means that the exam may be required by various decision-making bodies, including the Board, a committee, a panel, tribunal, or a co-regulatory jurisdiction.

To promote clarity and consistency in the decision-making process, the body that required the candidate to pass the exam is responsible for determining whether the candidate is eligible for further attempts of the exam.<sup>15</sup>

### Candidate responsibility

Candidates are responsible for practicing ethically and safely under supervision, organising appropriate supervision for their practice needs, and preparing for the exam, regardless of whether they are registered as a provisional psychologist or psychologist.

## Procedure for applying this policy

### Step one: Exam outcome

Ahpra will notify candidates who have failed the exam for the third time.

### Step two: Candidate decides preferred option

If a candidate fails the exam three times, they will not be able to sit another exam until their registration renewal or a new application for registration is approved.

For provisional psychologists, renewal of registration occurs once a year on the anniversary of the initial application for registration. For psychologists, renewal of registration occurs once a year on 30 November.

Options for candidates who fail the exam three times:

1. During the renewal/registration period – if the renewal/registration period is open, the candidate can choose to submit an application for renewal of registration or a new application (under section 62 or 64 if relevant).

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<sup>14</sup> Provisional registration may not be renewed more than twice. If a candidate is unable to complete the supervised practice during the initial period of registration and two renewals of that registration, the individual would need to make a new application for provisional registration.

<sup>15</sup> External bodies utilising this policy can seek advice from the Board regarding its consistent application.

2. Outside of the renewal/registration period – if the candidate fails the exam for the third time outside of the renewal/registration period, there are three options depending on the timing of the failure in relationship to the renewal period:
  - a. If the date for renewal/registration is within three months, the candidate can choose to wait until the renewal/registration period is open and apply. The Guidelines explain that a candidate must wait a minimum of three months before sitting the exam again.
  - b. If the renewal date is more than three months away, the candidate can choose to apply for early permission to sit an additional exam/s before the renewal date by submitting a statement and plan for professional development ([form SPPD-76](#)). If approved, the candidate may apply to re-sit the exam. The statement and plan will be re-confirmed when an application for renewal or registration (under section 62 or 64 if relevant) is submitted during the renewal/registration period.
  - c. If the renewal date is more than three months away, the candidate can choose to wait until the renewal/registration period is open. The candidate should continue supervised practice during this time. However, the candidate will be unable to take another exam until the statement and plan is approved.
3. Discontinue registration – candidates may choose not to submit another application for renewal or a new application for registration.

Candidates will need to inform Ahpra of which option they prefer.

### **Step three: Evidence required and registration status**

The following information must be submitted for each of the three options:

1. During the renewal/registration period

Evidence required: When a candidate has failed the exam three times, and submits an application for renewal of registration or a new application for registration (under section 64 if relevant), Ahpra will request a statement and plan ([form SPPD-76](#)) from the candidate and their supervisor under section 80 of the National Law.

This statement and plan must explain the reason/s for exam failure and outline the proposed steps to gain the knowledge and skills of professional practice expected to be demonstrated by a psychologist.

Registrant status: Candidates who choose this option can continue to work as a provisional psychologist or psychologist while remaining registered but will not be able to re-sit the exam until the application for renewal/re-registration has been approved.

2. Outside of the renewal/registration period

Evidence required: When a candidate has failed the exam three times and the renewal or re-registration period is several months away, early submission of the statement and plan (as per option one above) from the candidate and their supervisor is permitted.

This statement and plan ([form SPPD-76](#)) explains the reason/s for not yet passing the exam and outlines the proposed steps to gain the knowledge and skills of professional practice expected to be demonstrated by a psychologist.

When the candidate reaches the renewal or registration period, they will be required (under section 80) to submit a confirmation of the plan and an update on progress.

Registrant status: Candidates who choose this option will be able to continue to work as a provisional psychologist or psychologist while remaining registered and their statement is being reviewed. If the request to sit an additional exam or exams is approved, they will be able to register for an exam, even if it is scheduled before the annual renewal or registration deadline.

3. Discontinue registration

Evidence required: A candidate can choose to discontinue their registration at any time by writing to Ahpra or by indicating their intent to relinquish registration at renewal.

Registrant status: Candidates will be removed from the register when registration lapses (or if registration is surrendered, suspended, or cancelled). Candidates will no longer be able to use the title 'provisional psychologist' or 'psychologist'.

Candidates are required to consider their options and to submit the appropriate documentation to Ahpra.

#### **Step four: The outcome**

When a candidate has decided they would like to re-sit the exam and has submitted their statement and plan, it will be considered along with the candidate's exam results and their application for renewal/registration.

If the statement and plan is considered reasonable and is approved, this is what will happen:

- All candidates who fail the exam three times will have conditions placed on their registration at the time of their next renewal of registration. This condition will include adhering to the elements and timeframes outlined in the agreed plan.
- All candidates will be strongly encouraged to put into place effective supervision, study, continuing professional development (CPD) and other strategies that will assist them to pass the exam in the future.
- Candidates who fail the exam will be permitted to re-sit the exam in the next exam period. This is a minimum (not maximum) timeframe, and candidates are encouraged to be fully prepared before sitting the exam.

If the statement and plan is considered to not be reasonable, it will not be approved. In this case the candidate will be provided an opportunity to review and amend the statement and plan and resubmit for consideration.

#### **Continued failures**

When a candidate fails the exam three or more times, they are strongly encouraged to consider their personal circumstances and readiness for sitting the exam. It is the candidate's responsibility to engage in appropriate exam study and exam supervision to ensure readiness to sit the exam, and to ensure appropriate self-care strategies are in place to manage personal and professional circumstances. It is also the candidate's responsibility to inform us when there is documented evidence that meets our criteria for special accommodation and/or special consideration. The *National psychology exam candidate manual* provides information about eligibility and how to apply.

When a candidate has failed the exam six times, the Board may propose to refuse the candidate's application for renewal or registration.

The Board can propose to refuse a candidate's application for renewal of registration before the sixth exam sitting if there is reasonable evidence that the candidate is not adhering to their agreed plan, is not progressing in their performance on the exam, or there is evidence that the candidate's work does not meet the standard.

#### **Authorisation**

The Psychology Board of Australia is responsible for formulating and approving this policy.

#### **Review**

This policy takes effect from 1 December 2025. The Board will review this policy at least every five years.

This policy replaces the previously published policy from July 2019.

## Definitions

**Ahpra:** means the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency established under section 23 of the National Law.

**Board:** means the Psychology Board of Australia established under section 31 of the National Law. The Board delegates some decision-making powers to committees, or Ahpra.

**Candidate:** any person approved by the Board as eligible to sit the exam.

**Co-regulatory jurisdiction:** A jurisdiction which is not participating in the health, performance and conduct process provided by the National Law, but is involved in other parts of the National Scheme. New South Wales is a co-regulatory jurisdiction, so the health professionals' councils work with the Health Care Complaints Commission to assess and manage concerns about practitioners' conduct, health, and performance.

**Guidelines:** the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#) as published on the Board's website.

**National Law:** the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory of Australia.

**National psychology exam (the exam):** the exam helps to protect the public by ensuring that only those practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology in a competent and ethical manner are registered. The exam also helps to ensure a consistent professional standard of psychologists nationally. The exam is one regulatory tool that the Board may use to ensure that all applicants for general registration have obtained a minimum level of applied professional knowledge of psychology.

**Panel:** the Board may refer a registrant to a panel as part of managing a notification. There are two types of panels – health panels for health matters, and performance and professional standards panels for conduct and performance issues.

**Provisional psychologist:** a person registered as a provisional psychologist under section 62 of the National Law to enable that individual to complete a mandatory period of supervised practice to become eligible for general registration as a psychologist.

**Psychologist:** a person who holds general registration as a psychologist under section 52 of the National Law.

**Scaled passing score:** means passing the exam at a score of 70 per cent or higher. Raw scores (the total number of answers that were correct) are arithmetically converted to a scale that ranges from 0 to 100 and takes into consideration differences in difficulty among different versions of the exam. Adjusting scores will ensure that the passing score will remain the same, even if different versions of the test vary in difficulty. This ensures that candidates will not be penalised if a test is harder or given an unfair advantage if a test is easier.

**Supervisor or Board approved supervisor:** a person who holds general registration as a psychologist and who has been approved by the Board to supervise provisional psychologists or psychologists.

**Threshold professional competency:** the term 'threshold professional competency' is a benchmark that describes the minimum professional knowledge, skills, and other attributes necessary to practise as a registered psychologist in Australia. This is based on the premise that competency can be described on a continuum. The threshold represents the point on the continuum at which the minimum acceptable level of competence is reached to practise safely and effectively as a psychologist.

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