

Frequently Asked Questions

30 June 2025

Recency of practice FAQ: common questions

I am taking a break from practice, should I let my registration lapse or change to non-practising registration?

It is up to you to decide which option will best suit your circumstances.

If you wish to remain registered during a break from practice, you must continue to meet all of the registration standards and that includes doing the required amount of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), you must continue to meet the Recency of Practice (RoP) requirements and you must maintain your Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII). You must also continue to update AHPRA with any changes to your criminal history.

If you apply for non-practising registration, your name will remain on the public, online register of practitioners and you can continue to use the protected title for your profession. There is an annual non-practising registration fee which is significantly less than the full registration fee.

If you let your registration lapse, or you surrender your registration, your name will be removed from the register and you will no longer have to pay registration fees. You cannot use the protected title 'physiotherapist'.

It is important to note that it doesn't mean that you can't re-register after a break from practice.

I'm still working but I don't see patients anymore – will I meet the standard

The definition of practice is broad and includes both clinical practice and non-clinical roles in physiotherapy. You may not have any direct contact with patients, but if your work relates to physiotherapy you can meet the recency of practice standard if you have practised at least the minimum number of hours in your chosen scope of practice.

For example, you can meet the recency of practice standard working solely in physiotherapy administration, teaching, or a physiotherapy policy or research role, if you have worked at least the minimum number of hours in this scope of practice.

I work part time as a physiotherapist – will I meet the standard?

To meet the recency of practice standard you must have practised in your chosen scope of practice for a minimum of 450 hours in the previous three years, or 150 hours in the previous 12 months.

For example:

- working one day a week (i.e. 7.6 hours per day) will be sufficient to meet the standard as long as the total hours worked meets the minimum number of hours required in the standard.
- working one day a month (i.e. 7.6 hours per day) will not be sufficient to meet the standard.

What does scope of practice mean?

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
National Boards
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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.

Scope of practice is the professional role and services that an individual health practitioner is trained, qualified and competent to perform. A physiotherapist's scope of practice may include clinical and non-clinical practice. If your scope of practice is in a non-clinical role, you do not need to practise in a clinical role to meet the recency of practice standard.

The Board's code of conduct requires physiotherapists to recognise and work within the limits of their competence and scope of practice.

I do a mix of clinical practice and some administration work – will I meet the standard?

It depends on the number of hours you have practised, and the mix of work undertaken. It's your responsibility to make sure you're safe and competent to practise in your intended scope of practice.

The definition of practice is broad and includes both clinical practice and non-clinical roles in physiotherapy. If you satisfy the requirements for recency of clinical practice you will satisfy the requirements for recency in non-clinical practice.

If your scope of practice is a mix of clinical and non-clinical, in assessing whether you meet the recency of practice standard you need to consider the balance of clinical and non-clinical work, and whether you have practised the required number of hours to remain safe and competent in the clinical aspect of your scope of practice. If you have not practised the required number of hours to remain safe and competent in the clinical aspect of your scope of practice, you may be required to undertake some supervised practice or have a professional development plan or a return to practice plan. Refer to the registration standard for more information.

I'm changing jobs, moving from a non-clinical role back to clinical practice – what do I need to do?

If you are significantly changing your scope of practice (for example, moving from a non-clinical role such as an administrative role back to clinical practice) you may be required to undertake some supervised practice, have a professional development plan and a return to practice plan. Refer to the registration standard for more information.

Can I have a year off and still meet the recency of practice standard?

Yes, the recency of practice standard provides for flexibility and enables you to meet the standard over a three-year period. You don't need to practise every year provided that you practise at least 450 hours in your scope of practice over the three-year period prior to applying for registration or renewal of registration.

The 450 hours can be at any time during the three years, in one block or multiple blocks. For example, you could practise in year one, have year two off and practise again in year three.

I have taken a break for maternity/paternity leave. Do I still need to meet the recency of practice registration standard?

Yes. The Board does not consider that taking a break due to maternity or parental leave is different from any other kind of break from practice. The standard allows you to take a break from practice for any reason and the recency of practice requirements can be met by a practitioner over a period of three years.

If you do not meet the registration standard after taking a break for any reason, the Board will take into account your particular circumstances such as:

- what you used to do in your chosen scope of practice
- what you propose to do when you return to practice
- how long a break you have taken from practice, and what, if any, CPD activities you undertook during your break.

You may be required to complete a period of supervised practice, for example, upon returning from a break due to maternity or parental leave. However, this will depend on your particular circumstances.

You need to know that the registration standard doesn't mean that you can't re-register after a break from practice, however, depending on your circumstances, there may be additional requirements as explained above.