

Return to practice – Decision guidelines relating to practitioners who have not held an annual practising certificate (APC) within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of their application but who have been consistently practising psychotherapy outside of Aotearoa New Zealand

The following decision guidelines have been developed to assist te Poari o ngā Kaihaumanu Hinengaro o Aotearoa (the Board) and its committees in making fair, reasonable and lawful decisions that are consistent and equitable.

In order to mahi/work legally as a psychotherapist, it is necessary to:

- be registered with the Board
- hold a current annual practising certificate (APC).

To that end, the objectives of this policy are to:

- ensure there is a monitoring and oversight process during the resumption of the Aotearoa New Zealand practice phase
- identify factors that may increase the risk of loss of competence and factors that may mitigate this risk
- support practitioners to update their skills and knowledge
- assure the public of professional competence while avoiding unnecessary barriers.

The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act) establishes a threshold that stipulates that the Board must not issue an APC unless it is satisfied that the applicant meets the required standard of competence.

According to HPCA Act section 27(1)(d) and (f), the Board is required to give consideration to:

- psychotherapists who have not held an APC for 3 years or more
- psychotherapists who have not within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of application lawfully practised the profession the application relates to.

The Board must determine whether the applicant meets the required standard of competence before an APC is issued (HPCA Act section 29) and may impose conditions or vary existing conditions to safeguard the safety of the public.

This policy focuses on competence to practise.

This document contains information for practitioners who are already registered and returning to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand after:

- Having not practised or lawfully practised in Aotearoa New Zealand during the last three years but who have been practising psychotherapy outside of Aotearoa New Zealand.

General operational principles

A returning psychotherapist is expected to demonstrate responsibility for ensuring their own competence by undertaking to and/or providing:

- **Letter of good standing:** Provide a letter of good standing from all health registering/licensing authorities and employers they have been registered/licensed with and/or employed by overseas.
- **Curriculum vitae:** Provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae, including professional development and professionally relevant activities undertaken since an annual practising certificate (APC) was last held.
- **Supervision:** Engage with a psychotherapist who is an experienced clinical supervisor to supervise their return to clinical practice. This person must be a psychotherapist registered in

either the Psychotherapist Scope of Practice or Psychotherapist Scope of Practice with Child and Adolescent Specialism with a current APC or a Board-approved person.¹

Provide a supervisor attestation to the practitioner's competence completed by a psychotherapist (Aotearoa New Zealand or overseas) who they have recently worked with for a minimum of 6 months continuously. Overseas supervisors will need to provide a CV so that the Board can assess them as having sufficient psychotherapy training, knowledge, skills and professional development.

- **Self-appraisal:** Provide the Board with a self-appraisal that outlines how they have maintained currency of their psychotherapy knowledge during the time they have not been practising psychotherapy in Aotearoa New Zealand. This self-appraisal should be detailed and provide specific information (i.e. courses undertaken, books read etc.). The self-appraisal may be developed with the psychotherapist's clinical supervisor and will be guided by the Psychotherapist Core Clinical and Cultural Competencies.
- **Return to practice plan:** Provide the Board with a return to practice plan developed in conjunction with their supervisor that demonstrates how they intend to manage and monitor their practice of psychotherapy as a psychotherapist. This plan should cover:
 - at least the next 12 months and show specifically how the psychotherapist intends to develop their psychotherapy knowledge and skills.
 - the frequency and duration of supervision and the intensity of the plan will be determined by the length of time away from active practice. It will also take into account the factors that are perceived to increase or mitigate the risk of loss of competence (see below).
 - A return to practice plan may be waived with the agreement of the Board committee.
- **Checklist:** Provide the board with a completed Checklist: Return to practice (appended).

Proposed condition(s)

To ensure the safety of the public, the Board may propose to put a condition on a psychotherapist's scope of practice.

This condition may require the practitioner's supervisor will be required to provide the Board with quarterly reports on the practitioner's progress, and the practitioner will be expected to provide a quarterly report of their number of client hours per week.

In addition, this condition will normally require the practitioner to undertake weekly or fortnightly supervision for an allocated time period. Frequency and duration of supervision will relate to the practitioner's caseload, experience, self-appraisal and return to practice plan.²

The condition will be removed at the end of the allocated time period or earlier, provided the Board is satisfied with the progress of the practitioner, taking into account their supervisor reports, and concludes that the practitioner is not a risk to public safety.

Condition(s) - examples

Supervision arrangements as stipulated by the Board

This condition requires a psychotherapist to have supervision as stipulated by the Board – for example, a psychotherapist returning to mahi/work after a period of not practising.

Competence to practise in the Aotearoa New Zealand context

This condition requires a psychotherapist, within 12 months, to provide the Board with evidence that they are competent in the following areas: Te Tiriti o Waitangi and relevance to

¹ See the Board's psychotherapist supervision policy.

² These conditions may be varied in accordance with the guidelines in this policy and approval of the Board.

psychotherapy practice in bicultural Aotearoa. Cultural and social dynamics and safety specifically relevant to bicultural Aotearoa. Understanding of the Aotearoa health sector and Aotearoa law relevant to psychotherapy practice.

Loss of competence – examples

Factors perceived to increase the risk of loss of competence

- Resuming practice in a different domain of professional activity from that which had been undertaken previously, for example, a different client group.

Factors perceived to mitigate risk of loss of competence

- Activity that has maintained knowledge and familiarity with contemporary research during the break in practice.
- Resuming practice in the same domain of activity as that prior to leaving Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Board reserves the right to not issue an APC in circumstances where the risks of loss of competence are deemed too high to be addressed by a return to practice plan and supervision.

Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- a lack of consolidated experience prior to requesting an APC
- academic knowledge now deemed to be significantly out of date.

Having not maintained adequate currency of practice will not exclude a practitioner from applying for an APC. The information provided will guide the Board as to the level of support the practitioner is likely to need when returning to practice.

<i>Approved by: The Board</i>	<i>Policy in effect from: December 2014</i>
<i>Previous review dates: April 2021</i>	<i>Date to be reviewed: April 2023</i>

Checklist: Return to practice

Applicant name: Click or tap here to enter text. Registration number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Supervisor name: Click or tap here to enter text. Registration number: Click or tap here to enter text.

The following checklist has been developed to assist te Poari o ngā Kaihaumanu Hinengaro o Aotearoa (the Board) and its committees in making fair, reasonable and lawful decisions that are consistent and equitable regarding:

- psychotherapists who have not held an annual practising certificate (APC) for 3 years or more
- psychotherapists who have not within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of application lawfully practised in the profession the application relates to.

A returning psychotherapist is expected to demonstrate responsibility for ensuring their own competence by undertaking the following:

- Provide a supervisor attestation to the practitioner's competence completed by a psychotherapist (Aotearoa New Zealand or overseas) who they have recently worked with for a minimum of 6 months continuously. Overseas supervisors will need to provide a CV so that the Board can assess them as having sufficient psychotherapy training, knowledge, skills and professional development.
- Engage with a psychotherapist who is an experienced supervisor to supervise their return to clinical practice. This person must be a fully qualified practitioner registered in either the Psychotherapist Scope of Practice or Psychotherapist Scope of Practice with Child and Adolescent Specialism with a current APC or a Board-approved person.
- Provide the Board with a self-appraisal that outlines how they have maintained currency of their psychotherapy knowledge during the time they have not been practising psychotherapy. This self-appraisal should be detailed and provide specific information (i.e. courses undertaken, books read etc.). The self-appraisal should be developed with the psychotherapist's clinical supervisor and will be guided by the Psychotherapist Core Clinical Competencies.
- Provide the Board with a return to practice plan developed in conjunction with their supervisor that demonstrates how they intend to manage and monitor their return to the practice of psychotherapy. This plan should cover at least the next 12 months and show specifically how the psychotherapist intends to develop their psychotherapy knowledge and skills.
- APC application with appropriate fee.
- Up-to-date Curriculum vitae
- Letter(s) of good standing (if required).
- Completed checklist.

Supervisor attestation:

I, Click or tap here to enter text.(*supervisor*), support Click or tap here to enter text.(*applicant*) with their return to practice application. I can confirm that I have worked in conjunction with the applicant and provided input where necessary.

Signature: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap here to enter text.