

Return to practice - Decision guidelines relating to registered practitioners who have not held an annual practising certificate (APC) within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of their application

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 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 to practitioners wishing to resume professional practice.

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 registered with the Board and returning to practice after:

- Having not practised or lawfully practised as a psychotherapist in Aotearoa New Zealand during the last three years.

General operational principles

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

- **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 annual practising certificate (APC) or a Board-approved person.¹

Provide a supervisor attestation completed by a psychotherapist or Board-approved person.

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 as a psychotherapist. 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 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 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.
 - 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.

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.

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.

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 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

- Extended period away from practice.
- Resuming practice in a different domain of professional activity from that which had been undertaken previously, for example, a different client group.
- The length of time away from practice is greater than the period of time spent actively practising prior to the break.

Factors perceived to mitigate the risk of loss of competence

- Extensive experience prior to the break that has consolidated professional competence.
- Experience in a related field of endeavour while not engaged in actual practice of psychotherapy.
- 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 the break in practice.

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 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:

- 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.
- Up-to-date Curriculum vitae
- Letter(s) of good standing (if required).