

Quick reference guide

August 2021

Becoming a registered chiropractor

Introduction

This quick reference guide has been developed by the Chiropractic Board of Australia Board (the Board) to help you understand the process of registering as a chiropractor and the obligations of holding registration as a chiropractor in Australia.

1. Why is registration necessary?

Protection of the public is the Board's number one focus. By becoming a registered chiropractor, you are offering proof to the Board and the public that you have current, verifiable and relevant qualifications to provide chiropractic services and you conduct yourself to the standards and expectations of the Board and the National Law.

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory ([the National Law](#)), protects the public by ensuring that only registered health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified can practice using the protected title of 'chiropractor'.

All chiropractors must be registered with the Board in order to practise in Australia. Under the National Law you cannot call yourself a chiropractor, claim to be a chiropractor or perform manipulation of the cervical spine if you are not registered.

Claiming to be a registered chiropractor or 'holding out' (giving the impression you are a registered chiropractor or doing something that can only be done by a registered chiropractor when you are not) is an offence under the National Law. The maximum penalty that a court may impose is \$30,000 (in the case of an individual) or \$60,000 (in the case of a body corporate).

[FAQ and a fact sheet](#) on the Board's website explain more about who needs to be registered under the National Law.

2. Do I qualify for registration as a chiropractor?

In order to apply for registration as a chiropractor you must be qualified in the profession by either:

- holding an approved qualification¹
- holding a qualification that the Board considers substantially equivalent, or based on similar competencies, to an approved qualification
- having successfully completed an assessment required by the Board, such as the overseas-qualified practitioner assessment process conducted by the Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA), or
- having been registered as a chiropractor in Australia under previous legislation.

¹ See <https://www.chiropracticboard.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx>

3. Are you eligible for registration as a chiropractor?

You are eligible for registration in the profession if you meet the requirements for registration as stated in the Board's approved registration standards which include, but are not limited to:

- continuing professional development (CPD)
- criminal history
- English language skills
- professional indemnity insurance (PII), and
- recency of practice.

Please review the [chiropractic registration standards](#) related to each of these requirements before you apply for registration.

You must renew your registration annually to continue to practice and remain on the national [Register](#) of practitioners. The registration renewal date for chiropractors with general or non-practising registration is 30 November each year. More information about how to [renew registration online](#) is also available on the Board's website.

What if I hold a qualification from outside of Australia or previously held chiropractic registration overseas?

If you are a chiropractor who is currently registered by the New Zealand Chiropractic Board you are eligible to apply for general registration in Australia under the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997* without sitting any further examination or assessment.

All other overseas-qualified chiropractors wishing to practise in Australia are required to complete the Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA) assessment pathway before being eligible to apply for general registration.

4. Which registration type is right for me?

There are four registration types available for chiropractors: general, limited, non-practising and student.

- **General registration** is for chiropractors who have met the Board's requirements for registration in Australia and can practise in Australia. General registration allows practice as a chiropractor.
- **Limited registration** is for chiropractors who are not qualified for general registration but may be registered under specific circumstances, such as for overseas-qualified chiropractors to carry out teaching or research, or to present at or attend a seminar in Australia.
- **Non-practising registration** allows a person to remain on the national *Register of practitioners* and continue to use the protected title of 'chiropractor'. However, non-practising registrants must not provide chiropractic treatment or an opinion to an individual, even if they do not charge a fee.
- **Student registration** is for students currently completing an [approved program](#) of chiropractic study. Students need to be on the student register for the duration of their education and training.

If your program is not listed on the Board's website, there is a risk that you will not graduate with an approved qualification and you will not be able to register and practise as a chiropractor.

For more detail on registration types, fees and how to register, visit the [Board's website](#).

5. What are the professional expectations of a registered chiropractor?

Being a registered chiropractor means you have to comply with a number of ethical and professional obligations, as well as several statutory requirements.

You are expected to:

- practise within the context of the skills and competencies you received from your education and training
- practise according to the ethical and professional standards set by the Board
- maintain your recency of practice

- develop your skills and competencies as a professional by completing further education and professional development required by the Board's *Continuing professional development registration standard*, and
- maintain appropriate professional indemnity insurance as in the *PII registration standard*.

As a registered chiropractor you are expected to be sufficiently competent to:

- practise professionally, ethically and legally with safety and efficacy with the application of evidence-based practice as the primary consideration in all aspects of your practice
- communicate and collaborate effectively at all times with patients and others
- understand patients' health status and related circumstances, critically analysing these and form a clinical impression
- work in collaboration with patients, exploring the care options available and developing agreed, evidence-based care and management plans, and
- coordinate the safe and effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of patient care and management plans.

Registered chiropractors are required to know, understand and follow the [codes and guidelines](#) relating to practising as a chiropractor in Australia.

The [Code of conduct](#) for is an important resource to help you understand a chiropractor's ethical and professional obligations.

The code describes your duty to make the care of patients your first concern and to practise safely and effectively in an evidence-based and patient-centered manner. You must be ethical and trustworthy in your approach. Patients trust health practitioners to not take advantage of them and to display qualities such as integrity, truthfulness, dependability and compassion. Patients also rely on health practitioners to protect their confidentiality.

Other [documents](#) have been developed to help clarify the Board's views and expectations on a range of issues. You may also refer to our [FAQ and fact sheets](#) on the Board website.

Professional and legal advertising obligations

The National Law expressly prohibits certain types of advertising of a regulated health service or a business that provides a regulated health service, including:

- false or misleading advertising
- offers of gifts, discounts or inducements without disclosure of terms and conditions
- use of testimonials
- creating an unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment, and
- encouraging the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of regulated health services.

In recent years, a number of chiropractors have been found guilty of false or misleading claims while advertising their practice. To understand your obligations around advertising, please review the [Advertising resources](#). If chiropractic advertising does not meet your legal or professional obligations, Ahpra and/or the Board will take action against you.

As a registered chiropractor you are ultimately responsible for any material deemed to be advertising that relates to your practice of the profession. Even though you may buy advertising, website and/or marketing packages in good faith, if you do not comply with the [Guidelines for advertising a regulated health service](#) and the National Law requirements, you will still be held responsible for any non-compliant advertising.

6. What is the definition of practice?

The current definition of 'practice', as outlined in the Ahpra [glossary](#) and adopted by all National Boards is:

Practice means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a registered health practitioner in their profession (in this case, chiropractic practice). For the purposes of registration, practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge, in a direct non-clinical relationship with patients, 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.

This definition is intended to be broad and inclusive. It allows individuals with qualifications as a health practitioner to be registered in Australia if they are using their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner, regardless of whether they are or are not providing direct patient care.

The *Recency of practice registration standard* states that you must have recent practice, which means you need to have been involved in the direct delivery of clinical services for 150 hours in the previous 12 months or 450 hours in the previous three years with no absences of greater than two years to be able to provide clinical services.

7. What if my circumstances change after becoming registered as a chiropractor (and before I need to renew)?

Under section 131 of the National Law you must advise the Board in writing within 30 days if there is a change to your principle place of practice, address, and/or name.

You are also need to, under section 130, advise the National Board in writing within seven days if:

- you are charged with an offence that is punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more
- you are convicted of or the subject of a finding of guilt for an offence punishable by imprisonment
- you no longer have appropriate professional indemnity insurance in place
- your right to practice at any facility is withdrawn because of health, conduct or performance issues
- your billing privileges are withdrawn by Medicare
- a complaint is made about you to one of the entities listed in section 219 of the National Law, including Medicare and other state and Commonwealth bodies having a function in relation to the provision of services by chiropractors, or
- your registration in Australia or in another country is suspended, cancelled or made subject to restrictions.

8. Where can I go for more information and advice?

The Chiropractic Board of Australia

We are the National Board responsible for:

- setting the standards chiropractors must meet to be registered
- registering chiropractors who are suitably trained and qualified, meet the minimum standards, and are fit and proper persons
- investigating and managing concerns or complaints about the performance, conduct or health of registered chiropractors (except in New South Wales and Queensland which are co-regulatory jurisdictions)
- developing standards, codes and guidelines, and
- approving (or not approving) courses that have been accredited by the accreditation authority.

The Board is a part of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) and is supported by Ahpra in its regulatory role. The National Scheme has public safety at its heart.

For more information go to the Board's website at www.chiropracticboard.gov.au.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)

Ahpra administers the National Scheme and provides operational and administrative support to the National Boards in their core role of protecting the public. AHPRA is responsible for the efficient and effective operation of the National Scheme and is responsible for statutory offence matters, for example, advertising offences. Registrants should contact Ahpra for registration and renewal enquiries.

For more information go to Ahpra's website at www.ahpra.gov.au.

The Council of Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA)

CCEA is the independent accreditation authority for the chiropractic profession and is assigned functions under the National Law by the Board. The CCEA is responsible for:

- developing and recommending accreditation standards for National Board approval
- assessing programs of study and education providers to determine whether accreditation standards are being met, and
- assessing overseas-trained chiropractors so as to be eligible to apply for registration.

For more information go to CCEA website at www.ccea.com.au.

For more information

- Visit the [Registration](#) section of the Board's website.
- Lodge an [online enquiry form](#).
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers).