

FAQ for recency of practice

25 February 2022

1. What is recency of practice?

Recency of practice refers to how recently you have practiced your profession, as well as the nature and extent of that practice.

2. Why is there a recency of practice registration standard?

All National Boards must set recency of practice requirements to help registered practitioners maintain safe and competent practice within their scope or area of practice.

When a practitioner renews their registration, they must also make a declaration that they have met the requirements set out in the [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#).

This registration standard applies to chiropractors applying for initial registration or renewal of registration. It does not apply to students, practitioners who have non-practising registration, or recent graduates applying for registration for the first time.

3. What does area of practice mean?

Area of practice means the professional role and services that an individual chiropractor is educated and competent to perform.

Your area of practice may include both clinical and non-clinical practice. You do not need to practise in a clinical role to meet the [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#); you can be recent in non-clinical practice without being recent in clinical practice.

It is every chiropractor's professional responsibility to work within the limits of their competence and to reflect on and understand their own learning needs.

If you change your area of practice from not being directly involved in the delivery of clinical services to being directly involved, this is a possible risk to the safety of the public.

Such risks can relate to the recency of your clinical knowledge, the recency of your diagnosis and management skills and the recency of your skills in providing manual therapies.

It is the Board's expectation that if you propose to change your area of practice from non-clinical to clinical practice, you need to reflect on and plan your individual learning needs appropriately. This will enable you to have a supported return to clinical practice and ensure the services you provide to the public are safe and to the expected standard.

4. What is considered 'practice'?

The Board's definition of 'practice' is broad and inclusive. Practice means "any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. Practice in this context is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge (working) 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".

5. What is the difference between clinical and non-clinical practice?

Practitioners need to satisfy the recency of practice requirements in the areas in which they seek to practice.

Clinical practice is where you are using your current knowledge, skills and attitudes as a chiropractor, whether remunerated or not, by directly providing or supervising the delivery of clinical care to patients.

Non-clinical practice is where you are using your current knowledge, skills and attributes as a chiropractor, whether remunerated or not, in a way that is **not** directly providing or supervising the delivery of clinical care to patients.

While a chiropractor who satisfies the requirements for recency of clinical practice is assumed to be sufficiently recent in their clinical knowledge, diagnostic and management skills as well as their manual therapy skills to practice in either clinical or non-clinical areas, a practitioner who has recency only in *non-clinical practice* may have deficits in one of more of these areas depending on their individual circumstances. This will mean they cannot automatically be considered recent in clinical practice.

6. What are the Board's recency of practice requirements?

If you are undertaking clinical practice, the Board requires that a minimum of 450 hours of clinical practice in the previous three years with no continuous absences greater than two years or 150 hours clinical practice in the previous 12 months.

If you do not satisfy the requirements for recency of *clinical practice*, to meet the recency of *non-clinical practice* requirements, you must have carried out at least 450 hours of clinical and/or non-clinical practice in the previous three years and had no continuous absences from practice that are greater than two years, or have carried out 150 hours *non-clinical practice* in the previous 12 months.

7. What should I do if I am planning to take a break from practice?

Practitioners planning a break from practice, should familiarise themselves with the Board's [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#).

The standard provides important information which will allow you to plan for your return to practice by ensuring you maintain your recency of practice, regardless of your period of absence.

If you are planning a break from practice, but anticipate returning to chiropractic practice at some point in the future, it is important that you consider the following questions:

- Do I want to return to practice?
- How long will my absence from practice be?
- How quickly will I want to return to practice?
- Can I meet the continuing professional development requirements while I'm taking a break?

Whether you're taking parental leave, or intending to travel, it's a good idea to plan ahead for an absence.

8. I will be working overseas. Should I keep my general registration current in Australia?

Practising chiropractic overseas can count for the purposes of meeting the Board's recency of practice and CPD requirements if you keep detailed records.

Evidence could include certificates of service from employers that record details of hours (part-time or full-time).

If you decide to maintain your general registration you are expected to meet all the [Board's registration standards](#).

9. I'm taking parental leave. What should I do to keep my registration and practice current?

If you decide to maintain your general registration during your period of maternity or parental leave, you will need to ensure you meet all the [Board's registration standards](#) including CPD and PII requirements.

You will need to be mindful of the requirements as set out in the Board's [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#). The registration standard provides flexibility in meeting the requirements. If you are unable to meet the required 150 hours of practice in the previous 12 months, you must meet the minimum 450 hours of practice required over a three-year period. Provided that you are not absent from practice for more than two years, you can complete the 450 hours at any time during the three years.

10. What should I consider if I decide to move to non-practising registration?

If you are not going to practise for a period of time or are working overseas you can consider switching to non-practising registration. Non-practising registration has a lower fee and no CPD or PII requirements. However, you should consider your circumstances and the requirements for applying for general registration again in the future including recency of practice requirements.

If you hold non-practising registration you cannot undertake any practice whether it is paid or not.

11. What happens if I don't meet the Board's recency of practice requirements?

It depends on your length of absence from practice and can range from a period of supervised practice to completing a written and practical exam. Details are provided in the [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#).

If the Board requires you to undertake supervised practice before returning to independent clinical practice, it will consider any relevant information you can provide to determine the length and level of supervision under the [Supervised practice framework](#). In preparing for supervised practice, you will need think about nominating a supervisor and preparing a proposed supervised practice plan. The [FAQs](#) can give further guidance for supervisees, supervisors and employers.

12. How do I apply for registration with the Board when I want to return to practice?

If you currently hold non-practising registration, you can submit an application for general registration as a chiropractor for current non-practising registrants (AGNP-10).

If you do not currently hold registration you can submit an application for general registration as a chiropractor (AGEN-10).

These forms can be found on the [Forms](#) page.

13. I currently hold non-practising registration. How long will it take to process a request for renewal of registration?

We find that the main cause for delay in processing applications is when the information provided by an applicant is incomplete. To facilitate the quick processing of applications, applicants are encouraged to lodge their application early and to thoroughly check their application to ensure that they have provided full and complete information.

With a straightforward application, applicants would normally expect applications to be processed within a month although this may be longer during peak periods (for example, during the annual renewal period).

14. How can I request more information?

You can contact [Ahpra](#) to request information about applying for registration or renewal, changing your registration type or the progress of an existing application.

For further information

The [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#) and [Supervised practice framework](#) provide more information about this process. You need to be familiar with them and read them carefully.