



INFORMATION ABOUT REGISTERING AS A PSYCHOLOGIST IN NEW ZEALAND

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Introduction

The New Zealand Psychologists Board administers the registration of psychologists under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (**HPCA**) Act 2003.

The Board recommends that those seeking registration in New Zealand purchase a copy of the HPCA Act to familiarise themselves with this legislation and for future reference. The HPCA Act can be downloaded from www.legislation.govt.nz.

Information for all Applicants

Processing Applications

A checklist of documents required with your Application for Registration is on the application form. All required documentation and the correct fee must be received before the application can be processed. The Board is unable to process incomplete applications and cannot accept uncertified copies of any official documents.

The Board will endeavour to acknowledge (by email, if provided) receipt of your application form and documentation within 5 working days of receipt in the Board's office. You need to allow 3 - 4 weeks for the assessment of your application from the date of acknowledgment of receipt. Complete applications are processed on a regular basis. In fairness to all practitioners, no application will be 'fast-tracked' ahead of any other.

Scopes of Practice Definitions and Prescribed Qualifications

Seven scopes of practice have been prescribed for psychologists in New Zealand. Applicants who qualify for the psychologist scope may or may not also qualify for a vocational scope of practice (see qualifications section below for further details). Psychologists who hold a vocational scope of practice are deemed to also hold the "Psychologist" scope.

A copy of the full scopes of practice and prescribed qualifications (as gazetted) is available from the Board's website.

(1) "Intern Psychologist"

An intern psychologist within a special purpose scope is defined as rendering or offering to render to individuals, groups, organisations or the public any psychological service involving the application of psychological knowledge, principles, methods, and procedures of understanding, predicting, ameliorating, or influencing behaviour, affect, or cognition. Such practice is undertaken within an individual's area and level of expertise and with due regard to ethical, legal, and Board-prescribed standards. For New Zealand trained applicants, all 1500 hours must have been completed while the student was registered as an Intern Psychologist.

An Intern Psychologist scope of practice may be granted to applicants who have completed formal academic studies that have provided them with the foundation competencies required for safe practice in a supervised internship setting and who are enrolled in a Board-accredited postgraduate diploma or doctoral course of studies.

(2) "Trainee Psychologist"

A trainee psychologist within a special purpose scope is defined as rendering or offering to render to individuals, groups, organisations or the public any psychological service involving the application of psychological knowledge, principles, methods, and procedures of understanding, predicting, ameliorating, or influencing behaviour, affect, or cognition. Such practice is undertaken within an individual's area and level of expertise and with due regard to ethical, legal, and Board-prescribed standards.

A Trainee Psychologist scope of practice may be granted to applicants who have completed formal academic qualifications that have provided the foundation competencies required for safe practice in a supervised setting and who are entering Board-approved supervised practice for the purpose of achieving full registration.

(3) "Psychologist"

A psychologist within this general scope is defined as rendering or offering to render to individuals, groups, organisations or the public any psychological service involving the application of psychological knowledge, principles, methods and procedures of understanding, predicting, ameliorating, or influencing behaviour, affect, or cognition. Such practice is undertaken within an individual's area and level of expertise and with due regard to ethical, legal, and Board-prescribed standards.

The following qualifications are prescribed for registration as a Psychologist in the general scope of practice:

A minimum of a Masters degree in psychology from a Board-accredited educational organisation, or an equivalent qualification. Eligibility for the Psychologist scope of practice requires a Board-approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

(4) "Clinical Psychologist"

Clinical Psychologists apply psychological knowledge and theory derived from research to the area of mental health and development, to assist children, young persons, adults, and their families with emotional, mental, developmental, or behavioural problems by using psychological assessment, formulation, and diagnosis based on biological, social, and psychological factors, and applying therapeutic interventions using a scientist-practitioner approach. Such practice is undertaken within an individual's area and level of expertise and with due regard to ethical, legal, and Board-prescribed standards.

The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration in the Clinical Psychologist scope of practice:

A minimum of a Masters degree in psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an accredited postgraduate diploma in clinical psychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for a Clinical Psychologist scope of practice shall require a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

(5) "Counselling Psychologist"

Counselling Psychologists apply psychological knowledge and theory derived from research to the area of client empowerment and enhancement, to assist children, young persons, adults, and their families with personal, social, educational, and vocational functioning by using psychological assessments and interventions and preventative approaches that acknowledge ecological, developmental, and phenomenological dimensions. Such practice is undertaken within an individual's area and level of expertise and with due regard to ethical, legal, and Board-prescribed standards.

The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration in the Counselling Psychologist scope of practice:

A minimum of a Master's degree in psychology from a Board-accredited educational organisation and a Board-accredited postgraduate diploma in counselling psychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for a Counselling Psychologist scope of practice shall require a Board-approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

(6) "Educational Psychologist"

Educational Psychologists apply psychological knowledge and theory derived from research to the area of learning and development, to assist children, young persons, adults, and their families regarding their learning, academic performance, behavioural, social, and emotional development, by using psychological and educational assessments and applying interventions using systemic, ecological, and developmental approaches. Such practice is undertaken within an individual's area and level of expertise and with due regard to ethical, legal, and Board-prescribed standards.

The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration in the Educational Psychologist scope of practice:

A minimum of a Masters degree in psychology from a Board-accredited educational organisation and a Board-accredited postgraduate diploma in Educational Psychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for an educational scope of practice shall require a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice. [Note: A Masters degree in Education may be considered equivalent to a Masters degree in Psychology where its content is sufficiently 'Educational Psychology' in nature.]

(7) "Neuropsychologist"

Neuropsychologists apply scientific understanding of the relationship between the brain and neuropsychological function within applied clinical contexts. This approach forms the basis for the assessment, formulation, and rehabilitation of people who have sustained brain injuries or other neurological conditions. Neuropsychologists work with people of all ages who have neurological problems such as traumatic brain injury, stroke, epilepsy, toxic and metabolic disorders, brain tumours, and neurodegenerative diseases. Such practice is undertaken within an individual's area and level of expertise and with due regard to ethical, legal, and Board-prescribed standards.

The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration in the Educational Psychologist scope of practice:

A minimum of a Master's degree in Psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an accredited Postgraduate Diploma in neuropsychology, or equivalent qualification. Eligibility for the Neuropsychologist scope of practice shall require a Board-approved practicum or internship involving no less than 1500 hours of supervised practice.

Character and Reputation of Applicants (Fitness)

Character References - The HPCA Act requires that a practitioner be a fit and proper person to be registered. References will be required to ensure this is the case. At least one reference must be written by a psychologist registered by the New Zealand Psychologists Board. (For overseas applicants who do not know a New Zealand-registered Psychologist, a reference from a senior psychologist who is registered, chartered, or licensed with a government-mandated registration authority overseas will be an acceptable alternative. A copy of that referee's registration certificate or licence must be included with the reference letter).

All character references must be originals, signed and dated no earlier than 3 months before the date on the application form, and must have been written specifically in support of the registration application.

Record of Criminal Conviction(s) – New Zealand Applicants: The Board requires every New Zealand applicant to provide a Record of Criminal Convictions. Please complete the relevant pages of the NZ Police Vetting form (which gives the Board authorisation to request disclosure from the NZ Police Vetting Service regarding any interaction you may have had with the NZ Police) and return it with your application forms. If you have resided overseas you will also need to provide a Police Clearance Certificate (such as FBI Criminal Conviction Information/Fingerprint Information in the USA) or an equivalent form detailing any convictions you have had in any country in which you have lived in the past **5 years**. The record must not be more than six months old.

Record of Criminal Conviction(s) - Overseas Applicants: The Board requires that you provide a record of criminal convictions (e.g., Police Clearance Certificate (South Africa), FBI Criminal Conviction Information/Fingerprint Information (USA), NIS Criminal Record Information Certificate (UK)) or equivalent documentation to inform the Board about any convictions you may have had in your former country or countries of residence. The record must not be more than six months old.

NOTE: A conviction does not necessarily preclude the granting of registration. Any convictions will be considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis. If you have a conviction, you should also submit an explanatory letter about the conviction to the Board.

Communication Skills

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic Module) is the only English test currently approved by the Board. The minimum pass mark required is 7.5 overall, with no less than 7.0 on each section. If English is not your first language and your qualifications were not completed in the English language, please provide a certified copy, or the original, of your results on the IELTS test. If your qualifications were taught in English in a multilingual university please provide documentation from the university confirming this.

Certification of Documents

Certified copies of documents in both your original language and the official English translations are required. These translations must be done by an official translation agency either on their letterhead or bear their stamp.

Practising Certificate

To be able to practise in New Zealand psychologists are required to hold a current practising certificate. If you intend to practise in New Zealand you can apply for a practising certificate after the Board has approved your registration. Your practising certificate must then be renewed at the start of each financial year (1 April).

It is unlawful to practise as a psychologist without a practising certificate.

Certificate of Registration (Optional)

A formal Certificate of Registration can be ordered from the Board. These optional Certificates are produced on A4 card personally signed by the Board Registrar and ready for framing. You can order one by downloading the Certificate of Registration Payment form from our website and submitting it with your payment.

Standards of Practice

"The Core Competencies for the Practice of Psychology in New Zealand" and the "Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa /New Zealand 2002" are available on the Board's website under the **Resources** tab. Core competencies include cultural competencies. New Zealand-registered psychologists are expected to be culturally competent with all cultures but particularly to safeguard the wellbeing of Māori. The practice of psychology in New Zealand reflects paradigms and worldviews of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi.

Application Fees

Please refer to the "Fees" page on our website for current information.

Additional Information for Applicants who Qualified Overseas

Each overseas application is assessed on an individual basis for equivalence of the applicant's qualifications to New Zealand qualifications. In order to assist in the accurate assessment of qualifications, overseas applicants should supply to the Board as much information as possible about the course content of their degrees/diplomas. Information relating to any internships or practical training undertaken as part of a university degree/diploma is particularly relevant. Information about current registration with a recognised authority (e.g., State or National registration authority) is also relevant and very helpful.

Assessment of Qualifications

If you are uncertain whether your qualifications would be sufficient for registration, you could elect to use the **Self-Assessment of Eligibility** tool - this can be found under the **Looking to Register** tab and is used primarily by overseas-trained people considering registration as a psychologist in New Zealand. The results of the self-assessment do not guarantee full registration as the final decision regarding registration is only made after a much more detailed and formal assessment.

Registering as an Intern Psychologist

University (PGDip and DCLinPsych) students undertaking internships as part of their degree or postgraduate diploma are required to be registered with the Board. These students are registered in the "Intern Psychologist" scope of practice with conditions related to supervision.

All applicants must complete the standard application for registration form taking care to tick the "Intern Psychologist" box in the scope of practice section. A letter from the Programme Leader or Course Director should be provided stating that the applicant has been enrolled in the course and noting an approximate date of course completion.

Registration requirements for Intern Psychologists are noted on the application form and include providing a record of criminal convictions and three character references (one of which must be from a psychologist registered in NZ). Students entering training programmes that have not yet been accredited by the Board will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will need to submit details of their internship placement and supervision arrangements along with their application form.

This registration process establishes an Intern on the Register of Psychologists for the duration of his or her post-graduate study, but only permits practice within the confines of that study. On successful completion of the Masters and Post Graduate Diploma (or Doctorate of Clinical Psychology) the Intern can apply for full registration in the scope he or she has qualified in.

Note to Employers - Employers should check that Intern Psychologist employees appear on the Board's Register before allowing them to practise.

The Supervision to Registration Scheme (Trainee Psychologists)

This registration is for candidates who have completed formal academic qualifications that have provided them with the foundation competencies required for safe practice in the approved supervised setting, and who are entering a Board-accredited supervised practice scheme to achieve full registration.

This option, known as the 'Supervision to Registration' scheme, is currently only available to employees of the Department of Corrections or the New Zealand Defence Force, which are Board-accredited to provide supervision leading to registration. Trainee Psychologists must hold a current practising certificate, which will include supervision conditions.

Contact Details for the New Zealand Psychologists Board

Street Address:

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Wellington 6011
New Zealand

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Marion Square
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Contact details for Registration matters:

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