



# INFORMATION ABOUT REGISTERING AS A PSYCHOLOGIST IN NEW ZEALAND

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## A. Introduction

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

It is recommended by the Board that those seeking registration as a psychologist 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 purchased from Bennett's Government Bookshops, or downloaded from:  
[www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0048/latest/DLM203312.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0048/latest/DLM203312.html)

## B. Scopes of Practice Definitions

Six scopes of practice are 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).

A copy of the scopes of practice and prescribed qualifications as gazetted is available in PDF format for your information from the Board website.

### (1-2) "Intern Psychologist" and "Trainee Psychologist"

A psychologist within a 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.

### (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.

### (4) "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.

### (5) "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.

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**(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.

## **C. Qualifications for Registration**

### **(1) + (2) "Intern Psychologist" and "Trainee Psychologist" Scopes of Practice**

A limited Psychology ("Trainee Psychologist" or "Intern Psychologist") scope of practice may be granted to applicants:

- who have completed formal academic qualifications that have provided the (applicant) with the foundation competencies required for safe practice in the approved supervised setting, and
- who are entering Board approved supervised practice (or internship) for the purpose of achieving full registration. *[This includes the Supervision 2000 Scheme and Board-accredited training programmes, e.g. students of Post Graduate Diploma programmes whilst enrolled in their final year. 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 with their application form].*

### **(3) "Psychologist" Scope of Practice**

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 an accredited educational organisation, or an equivalent qualification. Eligibility for a general scope of practice requires a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

(Note: "Accredited" means accreditation of the educational organisation, or an educational course, by the New Zealand Psychologists Board for the purpose of registering psychologists).

### **(4) "Counselling Psychologist" Scope of Practice**

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 an accredited educational organisation and an 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.

(Note: "Accredited" means accreditation of the educational organisation, or an educational course, by the New Zealand Psychologists Board for the purpose of registering psychologists).

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## **(5) "Clinical Psychologist" Scope of Practice**

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 scope of practice shall require a Board approved practicum or internship involving 1500 hours of supervised practice.

(Note: "Accredited" means accreditation of the educational organisation, or an educational course, by the New Zealand Psychologists Board for the purpose of registering psychologists).

## **(6) "Educational Psychologist" Scope of Practice**

The following qualifications have been prescribed for registration as a psychologist in the educational vocational scope of practice:

A minimum of a Masters degree in psychology from an accredited educational organisation and an 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: "Accredited" means accreditation of the educational organisation, or an educational course, by the New Zealand Psychologists Board for the purpose of registering psychologists).

A Masters degree in Education may be considered equivalent to a Masters degree in Psychology where its content is sufficiently 'Educational Psychology' in nature.

## **D. 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 7 days of receipt in the Board's office. You need to allow 4-6 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.

## **E. Overseas Applicants**

Each overseas application is assessed on an individual basis for equivalence of the applicant's qualifications to New Zealand qualifications. *(See also Non-binding Assessment of Qualifications for registration.)*

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 Board) is also relevant and very helpful.

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## F. Registering as an Intern Psychologist

An Intern Psychologist is normally enrolled in a Board-accredited Post Graduate Diploma or Doctorate course in psychology and is undertaking practical training where they will be working with the public. 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 with their application for registration form.

All applicants must complete an application for registration form taking care to tick the "Intern Psychologist" box in the scope of practice section. A letter from the Head of Department, Course Director or Head of School should be provided stating that the applicant has been enrolled in the course, noting an approximate date of course completion. Payment of the registration fee can be deferred until completion of the programme and full registration is sought.

Contact the Board's Deputy Registrar (Registration) for more information. (See contacts)

## G. Supervision Leading to Registration ('Supervision 2000' scheme)

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 2000' scheme, is currently only available to employees of the Department of Corrections, New Zealand Defence Force, or Child, Youth & Family Services (CYFS), which are Board-accredited to provide supervision leading to registration. Trainee Psychologists must hold an Annual Practising Certificate (APC), which will include supervision conditions.

Contact the Board's Deputy Registrar (Registration) for more information. (See contacts)

## H. 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 who could supply a reference, a reference from a senior psychologist who is registered, chartered or licensed with a recognised professional body overseas will be an acceptable alternative. A copy of that referee's registration certificate or licence must be included with the character reference letter).

All character references must be 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) - NZ Applicants:** The Board requires that every NZ applicant obtain a Record of Criminal Convictions from the Ministry of Justice. This lists only convictions and sentencing from court appearances and does not include Youth Court charges. An application form for your Record of Criminal Convictions can be obtained from your local District Court. Alternatively, you can download a copy from the Ministry of Justice website: <http://www.courts.govt.nz/privacy/> or contact The Privacy Unit, Ministry of Justice, National Office, PO Box 2750, Wellington, Telephone 04 91-888-00. Do not have your Record of Criminal Convictions sent directly to the Board. You should view it before sending it to the Board with your application. The record should be no more than six months old.

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**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 form to inform the Board about any convictions you may have had in your former country or countries of residence. The record should be no 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 consider sending an explanatory letter about the conviction to the Board to accompany the record.*

## **I. Communication Skills**

The International 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.

## **J. Annual Practising Certificate**

To be able to practise in New Zealand after registration has been approved, you are required to hold an Annual Practising Certificate. This must be applied for after the Board has approved registration if you intend to practise in New Zealand. The APC fee is payable each year whether you work as a psychologist for the entire year or only a part of it. The Board's financial year is 1 April to 31 March.

In New Zealand, it is illegal to practise as a psychologist without a practising certificate.

## **K. Certificate of Registration (Optional)**

A formal Certificate of Registration may be obtained on payment of a fee after registration is approved by 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 and sending it to the Board with your payment.

## **L. Standards of Practise**

"The Core Competencies for the Practice of Psychology in New Zealand" and the "Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa /New Zealand" are available on the Board's website. 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.

## **M. Non-Binding Assessment of Qualifications for Registration**

Non-binding assessment is used primarily by overseas-trained practitioners who are considering registration as a psychologist in New Zealand. An initial non-binding assessment of qualifications will give an applicant an idea of how the Board rates the equivalence of their qualifications in relation to the minimum standard of qualifications required for registration in New Zealand. The results of a non-binding assessment do not guarantee full registration, as the final decision regarding registration is only made after a much more detailed and formal assessment.

To assist us to provide a better assessment please provide the following (where applicable):

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- Transcripts (in English) of your qualifications programmes and copies of your degree certificates.
  - Details of the internship(s) you have completed.
  - Evidence of registration or licensure in another country.
  - A work history detailing your employment and experience.
  - Evidence that you have successfully undertaken an IELTS English language test if English is not your first language.

## **N. Application Fees**

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

## **O. New Zealand Psychologists Board Contact Details**

**Street Address:**

Level 9  
Tourism & Travel House  
79 Boulcott Street  
Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

**Postal Address:**

PO Box 10-626  
Wellington 6143  
New Zealand

**Contact Person for Registration matters:**

Bill King  
Deputy Registrar (Registration)  
Email: Bill.King@nzpb.org.nz  
Phone: (+64 4) 471 4588

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