

Self assessment tool for psychologists

**How to do a self-assessment against the general
registration competencies**

The *Professional competencies for psychologists* describe the threshold professional competencies that all practitioners must meet in order to **apply** for general registration as a psychologist in Australia. Psychologists must also meet the threshold professional competencies relevant to their scope of practice to **renew** registration. The following template aims to help practitioners actively consider whether you are meeting all the competencies, and to help you design your continuing professional development (CPD) learning plan each year.

The *Professional competencies for psychologists* are in effect from 1 December 2025.

Step 1: Read the continuing professional development (CPD) standard and guidelines

Task: Become familiar with the Psychology Board of Australia's (the Board) expectations for CPD.

Reflection: CPD is a requirement for all health professions regulated by the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Why is CPD so important that it is mandatory for all psychologists? What factors do you consider when you are writing your learning plan and scheduling your CPD for the year? Are there any improvements you could make in your approach to designing your CPD after reading the CPD standard and CPD guidelines?

Step 2: Read the Professional competencies for psychologists

Task: Know what the minimum threshold is for safe and effective psychological practice in Australia.

Reflection: What do you notice about the competencies for safe and effective psychological practice? How does this inform your understanding of the competency requirements and help you plan your CPD each year?

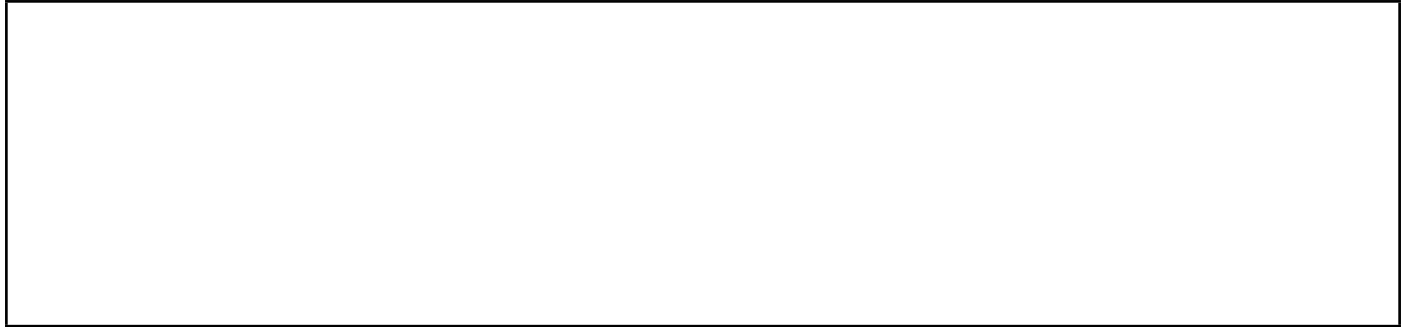
Step 3: Consider how the competencies apply to your scope of practice

Each of the eight core competencies for general registration have a broad competency title, and several specific competency descriptors. While not all descriptors will be relevant to every psychologist's work role, **all eight competencies are relevant to every psychologist and every work context.**

Task: Operationalise each of the eight competencies in your work context. Begin by identifying your scope of practice (your job description may help here). Then map the competencies to your scope of practice. Identify the knowledge and skills that are needed to practise safely within your specific scope of practice.

Reflection:

- Which competencies are most important for your scope of practice? Are there some competency descriptors that are not as relevant to your scope of practice?
- Are there any surprises for you in this mapping task?
- When planning your CPD, do you tend to emphasise activities in one competency more than another, or do you plan CPD activities across all eight competencies?
- What are the implications of these CPD planning patterns for meeting competencies and optimising public safety?

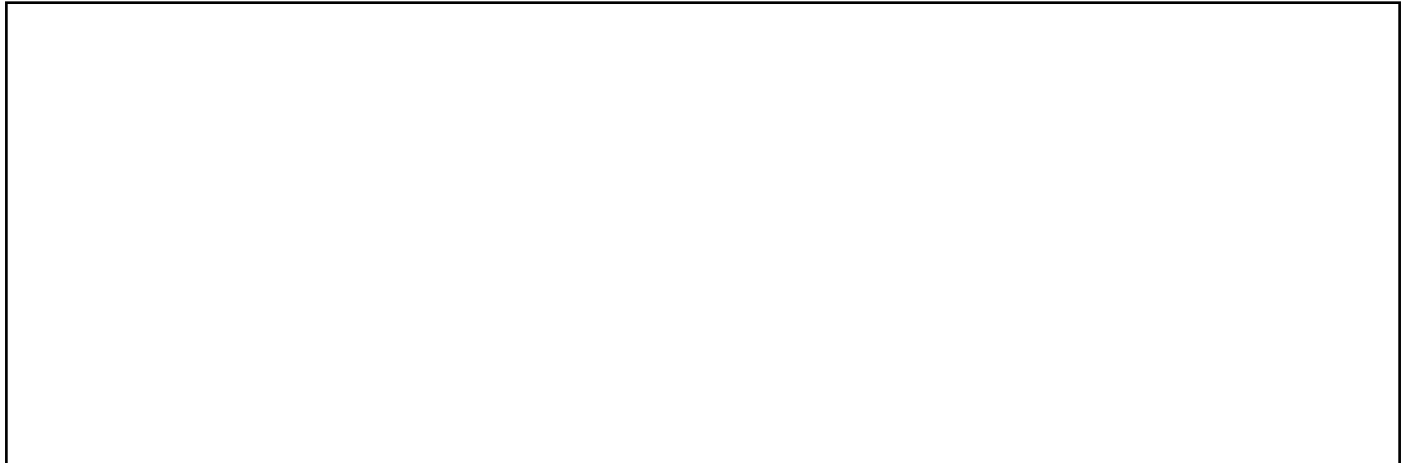


Step 4: Evaluate your own professional knowledge, skills and attributes against the general registration competencies as relevant to your scope of practice. Notice where there are gaps and opportunities to make improvements

Task: Using your mapping results from step 3, identify whether you meet, don't meet, or exceed each of the eight general registration competencies. Pay particular attention to identifying your knowledge and skills in Competency 3, 7 and 8 where we have made enhancements. Obtain feedback from peers, supervisors and/or your workplace to help you self-assess.

Reflection: The following questions may help you in your evaluation.

- a. Where do you excel/exceed the threshold professional competency? Would you like to further grow and strengthen these competencies?
- b. What competencies do you meet? What might you need to do to keep these competencies from falling below the threshold professional competency? What could you do if you wanted to develop these competencies?
- c. Find out where your knowledge and skill gaps are. Are these areas outside of your scope of practice (this is not something of concern) or are these competencies essential for your current job (act quickly to address identified gaps)? Remember that if a psychologist fails to maintain at least the threshold level of professional competency in all areas *relevant to their individual scope of practice*, they could pose a risk to the public. Do you need to restrict any of your job duties to keep the public safe? Who do you need to talk with about this (e.g. supervisor, manager, peer supervision group)?
- d. Have you received formal training in all of the eight core competencies, or are there some areas where you have never received training, and/or where additional training is required?



Step 5: Create an outcome-focused learning plan that identifies your CPD needs and goals for the year as identified through your self-assessment against the general registration competencies

Task: Make a plan to **meet, refresh, extend or improve** your knowledge and skills in relation to the core competencies for general registration, your job description, career stage and individual scope of practice. You can use the learning plan templates in the CPD guidelines, one provided by your professional association, or one you devise yourself. Plan to engage in genuine and deep learning with the goal of practising safely and effectively.

Helpful tips

- Prioritise **meeting and improving** the competencies that are relevant to your work context. Determine the depth and breadth of your learning needs based on your current work role and the self-assessment of your knowledge and skills that you have just completed.
- Consider including learning goals that **extend or refresh** your learning:
 - **Extending** – focus on areas that are outside of your scope of practice that you would like to get some training in (e.g. when you are planning to change jobs or extend your area of work)
 - **Refreshing** – focus on areas where you were once competent but no longer have recency (e.g., WISC – Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children or WAIS – Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale)
 - **Being curious** – focus on areas you would like to explore, such as a new area of professional interest.
- Include a variety of learning modes in your learning plan such as: reading, workshops, seminars, conferences, professional podcasts or DVDs, active CPD, master classes, supervision, and reflective and reflexive professional practice.

Step 6: Review and adjust your plan as needed.

Task: Commit to carrying out regular self-assessment against the general registration competencies as relevant to your scope of practice. Self-assessment is a dynamic process because our scope of practice is constantly changing as our careers develop, we change jobs, and expand into new areas of practice and in response to emerging evidence regarding best practice.

Reflection: Think about your career journey:

- How has your scope of practice changed over time?
- How have you identified your knowledge and skill strengths and gaps in your career to date? How have you created a plan to rectify deficits, move into a new area of practice, or return to an area that has not been studied or practised for some time?
- What wisdom do you have that you could apply to ensuring you meet the updated competencies?

A note about applying this six-step process to the updated competencies

Since the updated competencies improve on the current competencies that have been in use since 2010, psychologists will not be starting from a basis of 'no competence'. We expect that many practitioners will already be meeting (or exceeding) the minimum threshold competencies described in the *Professional competencies for psychologists*, while others will identify areas where they need to do learning activities.

As psychologists we continually learn over our career journey, and the publication of updated competencies will simply focus your learning (as needed) for the upcoming CPD cycle/s. There is no additional regulation imposed. In addition, there is no change to our model of CPD. It will continue to emphasise individual responsibility for self-directed learning and offer practitioners flexibility and choice in the strategies used to meet the threshold professional competencies.

While this self-assessment fact sheet focuses on general registration competencies, if you hold an area of practice endorsement (AoPE), you will need to self-assess against the general registration competencies **and** the relevant competencies for your AoPE and incorporate both into your CPD plan. You can use the same six-step process to self-assess against the relevant AoPE competencies.

Resources

- Professional competencies for psychologists
- [Continuing professional development standard](#)
- [Guidelines for continuing professional development](#)
- Fact sheet: How to do a self-assessment