

Policy for provisional registration in combined 4th and 5th year programs of study

8 October 2020

Summary

Under the *Accreditation Standards for Psychology Programs*, effective from 1 January 2019, higher education providers can offer a program of study that combines the fourth- and fifth-year levels of accredited study (called a 'combined program' in this document). These combined programs typically will be undertaken as part of the [5+1 pathway to registration](#), which involves a five-year sequence of accredited study in psychology followed by a one-year internship.

This policy outlines the Psychology Board of Australia's (Board) approach to granting provisional registration to individuals undertaking these combined programs, and should be read alongside the Board's [provisional registration standard](#).

Background

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) requires the Board to protect the public by ensuring that only psychologists who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered.

The National Law states that provisional registration is granted "to enable the individual to complete a period of supervised practice that the individual requires to be eligible for general registration" (section 62). An individual must be qualified for general registration in order to be eligible for provisional registration.

The Board's minimum qualification for general registration is an approved qualification comprising a four-year sequence of accredited study. This means that provisional registration is granted where individuals meet the Board's minimum qualification requirement for general registration but are yet to satisfy the *eligibility requirement* (i.e. the period of supervised practice). The Board's provisional registration standard sets out the specifics of the eligibility requirement, which is a 'supervised practice program' that may comprise:

- (1) two additional years of accredited study (the higher degree pathway);
- (2) an additional year of study (5th year) followed by a one-year internship (the 5+1 pathway); or
- (3) a two-year internship (the 4+2 pathway, which is being retired with last entry June-2022).

The sequence of study typically completed by someone in the 5+1 pathway is the completion of a three-year Bachelor Degree (or equivalent bridging sequence) followed by a one-year Bachelor Honours Degree (or equivalent) then a one-year Masters Degree (e.g. Masters of Professional Psychology). Students apply for provisional registration before commencing the Masters, using the qualification awarded from their Honours (i.e. fourth year). [Accreditation standards](#) for the profession also allow higher education providers to combine the fourth year (Honours) and fifth year (Masters) into a two-year program. Individuals in these combined programs require provisional registration before commencing the fifth year, as this is part of their two-year 'supervised practice program'.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to individuals undertaking a Board-approved program of study that combines the fourth and fifth year of study (a combined program). The policy applies at the time these students have

successfully completed all fourth year-level requirements and are seeking provisional registration to commence supervised practice in the second year of that program (i.e. their fifth year of accredited study).

Meeting the qualification requirement for provisional registration

The Board will consider provisional registration applications from individuals currently enrolled in a Board-approved program that combines the fourth and fifth year of study where they satisfy all the following criteria:

- (a) Have successfully completed all fourth-year requirements of that program,
- (b) Are continuing study to complete the fifth-year requirements of that program and are currently enrolled in the combined program, and
- (c) Will be awarded an approved fourth-year qualification if they do not complete the fifth-year requirements.

An individual provisional registration application will not be considered complete until higher education providers have directly provided evidence to the Board that an individual meets the above criteria. Individuals must hold provisional registration for the duration of their supervised practice program, which comprises their fifth-year program of study and their one year internship.

Seeking general registration

This policy applies to applications for *provisional* registration only. An individual who obtains provisional registration in accordance with this policy will not be granted *general* registration without providing evidence that they hold an accredited fourth-year qualification and have successfully completed a two-year supervised practice program (e.g. an accredited fifth-year and a one-year internship).

Individuals who complete the combined program will provide evidence that they hold this fourth- and fifth-year qualification when seeking Board approval to commence a one-year internship program.¹

Individuals who do not complete the combined program after being granted provisional registration must provide evidence that they hold a fourth-year qualification (referenced in (c) above) in order to commence a two-year internship (the 4+2 pathway) or an accredited postgraduate program (e.g. Masters of Professional Psychology with another higher degree provider). The 4+2 pathway [is being retired](#) and the last date to submit applications to commence the two-year internship is 30 June 2022.

Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for formulating and approving this policy. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and effectively managed.

Legislation

Sections 52 and 53 of the National Law set out the requirements for general registration. Section 62 sets out the requirements for provisional registration.

The Board's general and provisional registration standards are approved under section 12 of the National Law and can be viewed at the Board's website at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Standards-and-Guidelines/Registration-Standards.

Review

This policy will be in effect from 30 August 2019 and will be reviewed as required.

Last reviewed: 8 October 2020

¹ If an individual goes on to complete further accredited study instead of a one-year internship, evidence of holding a qualification for the fourth- and fifth-year (the combined program) will need to be provided to the Board when the individual renews or re-applies for provisional registration (in addition to evidence that they are enrolled in an accredited postgraduate program).