

**Policy for higher degree students  
applying for general registration**

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Psychology  
Board of  
Australia

RETIRED DOCUMENT

## Summary

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), requires the Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only psychologists who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered. The Board must be certain that applicants meet the Board's registration standards before granting general registration. As such, applicants undertaking doctoral or combined degrees who seek general registration before completing the postgraduate qualification must demonstrate that they have completed what is substantially equivalent to the qualifications required by the *General registration standard*.

## Definitions

This policy takes the position that the term *qualification* in the *General registration standard* refers to a university qualification and any subsequent internship or supervised practice completed under a relevant authority or professional body.

## Responsibilities

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

## Scope

This policy applies to psychologists who are enrolled in an accredited higher degree and who are applying for general registration in Australia.

## Legislation

Section 52 of the National Law, and the Board's *General registration standard* approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010, set out the requirements for general registration. This registration standard can be viewed at the Board's website at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au).

## Requirements

The Board has determined that the qualifications that lead to general registration are:

- a) an accredited Masters degree, or
- b) a five-year accredited sequence of study followed by a one-year, Board-approved internship (5+1), or
- c) a four-year accredited sequence of study followed by a two-year, Board-approved internship (4+2) or

- d) a qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to either (a), (b) or (c).

In addition to the completion of an approved qualification, the Board may require the candidate to pass an examination before accepting an application for general registration.

Applicants who have not yet completed their postgraduate qualification and wish to have their application for general registration assessed as d) a qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent must have progressed sufficiently in their doctorate, clinical PhD or combined degree to the point where they are deemed to have completed the equivalent of an accredited Masters. This means that the thesis writing has progressed sufficiently to be equivalent in size and scope to a Masters thesis at that institution.

As part of an application for general registration, the applicant must arrange for submission of an official academic transcript and statement:

1. that is signed by the applicant and the Head of School (or their nominee) on a Psychology Board of Australia form (PDEC-76), and
2. which certifies
  - a. that the candidate has completed all coursework and practicum placements at the level of participating in the Masters program, and
  - b. that the thesis writing has progressed sufficiently to be equivalent in size and scope to a Masters thesis at that institution.

A psychologist who obtains general registration in accordance with this policy will be permitted to apply to begin a registrar program leading to area of practice endorsement in accordance with the requirements for entry into the registrar program in the *Guidelines on area of practice endorsements*. However, the psychologist will not be eligible to apply for the relevant endorsement until he or she has graduated with the relevant qualification and completed the registrar program.

## Authorisation

Psychology Board of Australia

Date of issue: 1 August 2011

## Review

This policy will be in effect from 1 August 2011. The Board will review this policy at least every three years.

Last reviewed: 16 November 2012