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Advertisements for psychological services need to follow the same scientific principles. Published **guidelines** provide advice on how to advertise and refer to the practice of psychology. A general principle is to not make statements about your practices or approach that may be misleading or create false impressions about what you can do, or overstate the likely outcomes. It is important not to create an unreasonable expectation of benefit, and for the possible limitations of treatments to be clearly explained. Where there is limited evidence for an approach, and the mechanisms of action are speculative, you must fully inform people with a full disclosure of the limitations and status of evidence, risks and possible benefits, and preferably provide them with choices.

Psychology as a science has a number of well-established tools and techniques that have known benefits based on scientific evidence – such as **psychotherapy**. There are other areas which have been discredited or have little credible evidence such as reading thumb prints, extrasensory or paranormal therapies, rebirthing and past lives techniques, and power therapies. There are some who charge thousands of dollars for ‘courses’ based on claims of extraordinary permanent successful change and cure, based on little evidence.

The history of psychology regulation in Australia began in 1965 in response to the perceived threat to the public of **Scientology** and regional psychology boards across Australia continue to protect the title ‘psychologist’ by prosecuting psychologists using unethical practices that exploit vulnerable members of the public, and those who make false claims or misrepresent their qualifications.

Psychologists are registered by the Psychology Board of Australia, so registration should not be referred to as being a ‘member of the Psychology Board’ or a ‘member or registrant of AHPRA’. Similarly, practitioners should not refer to themselves as being ‘endorsed by the Board’ but rather use simple statements such as being a ‘psychologist’ or (if holding an approved area of practice) ‘forensic psychologist,’ since only people who are so registered can use such protected titles.

Advertising statements and marketing practices should be professional, factual and uphold the ethics and integrity of the profession, and not bring it into disrepute. Testimonials by patients are prohibited, offers of discounts or gifts or other inducements (such as incremental reduction in fees based on number of visits) should be avoided, courtesy ‘doctor’ titles without holding a DPsc or PhD are not permitted, and practices should not directly or indirectly encourage over servicing or lengthy and unnecessary treatment.

Psychologists need to be particularly vigilant about statements on the internet and social media sites, and may be successfully prosecuted if due care was not made to control sites and statements that have been found to breach advertising standards and guidelines. Adhering to these guidelines is beneficial to our profession as a whole, and very important for the protection of the public.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair, Psychology Board of Australia

From the Chair

Truth in advertising and professional integrity

Psychology is the scientific investigation of mental processes and behaviour – and registered psychologists apply that science in practice.

We are taught throughout our training about research methods, including their limitations and delimitations, and to respect the careful evaluation of processes and outcomes. We know psychological assessments and treatments based on evidence have been evaluated using recognised methods and the outcomes published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. All we do should therefore be based on good evidence as this is in the public interest.



Psychology practitioner audit update

Audits are an important way for all practitioners to demonstrate to the Boards and the public that they understand, have met, and will continue to meet the mandatory registration standards relevant to their profession. At registration renewal, each practitioner submits their annual statement declaring their compliance with these standards. The purpose of audit is to confirm that the practitioner has complied with these standards.

2017 audit

The 2017 audit of psychology practitioners is now underway and the Psychology Board of Australia is auditing three of the four registration standards:

- Continuing professional development
- Professional indemnity insurance arrangements (PII), and
- Criminal history information.

Practitioners who were randomly selected for audit will have received a notice with requests to submit evidence to confirm compliance with the registration standards. The audit notice and the checklist provide the information the practitioner needs to support their submission of information.

Further information, including what you need to do if you are selected for audit, is available on the [Registration>Audit page](#) of the Board's website.

2016 audit

In 2016, the Board audited psychologists' compliance with two mandatory registration standards: Professional indemnity insurance and Continuing professional development.

Overall it is pleasing to confirm that of the cohort of audited psychologists:

- 96.3% were deemed fully compliant with these standards
- 2.5% elected to surrender their registration or change to non-practising registrations in response to the audit notice, and
- 1.2% were deemed to be non-compliant and regulatory action was required.

However, of the psychologists identified to be not compliant:

- 0.3% had substantially – but not fully – complied with the CPD standard and were reminded of their responsibilities and will be reviewed at their next renewal
- 0.6% did not hold current professional indemnity insurance for the audit period and in addition had made a false declaration about this critical matter at their renewal. These matters are assessed as a significant public risk and regulatory action is underway, and
- 0.3% had not complied with their CPD requirements.

Psychologists are reminded that compliance with the CPD standard is mandatory, unless the psychologist has been granted an exception prior to the expiry of their registration.

The [Guidelines for continuing professional development](#) for psychologists provide further guidance.

Revised registration standard for provisional registration

The Board is pleased to announce that the revised registration standard for provisional registration has been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council and will come into effect on 1 June 2017.

A copy of the approval letter has been published on the website under [News>Ministerial Council Directions and Approval](#), together with an advance copy of the revised standard under [Registration](#).

The revised standard does not introduce any significant changes and current provisional psychologists will not be affected by the revisions to the standard. Key aspects such as the minimum qualification and the provisional psychology training pathways are unchanged.

There are some small changes to the hours required in 4+2 and 5+1 internship plans, and competency #7 has been renamed *working with people from diverse groups*. These changes align with those already introduced in the revised registration standard for general registration that came into effect on 2 May 2016.

This review focussed on clarifying existing requirements and producing a clearly set out and easy-to-understand provisional registration standard that complements the general registration standard. The revised standard includes more detailed definitions of key terms, and links to relevant guidelines and other information on the website. It also uses a clear structure, plain English and up-to-date terminology.

Applications for provisional registration will be assessed under the revised standard from 1 June 2017.

Revised guidelines for the 4+2 internship program

The Board is pleased to announce that it will be implementing its revised *Guidelines for the 4+2 internship program* together with the revised provisional registration standard on 1 June 2017.

The revised guidelines outline an outcome-focused, competency-based internship within a structured practice framework. There is an increased focus on the role of the supervisor and supervisor-based assessment with light-touch oversight by the Board.

The revised guidelines will enable more innovation and technology in the delivery of supervision and training, support employers and industry and ensure the viability of regional and remote internships. There will be greater flexibility to develop and demonstrate the core competencies in different ways in different practice contexts, and promotion of simulated learning environments.

An advance copy of the revised guidelines has been published on the website, together with an advance copy of the revised provisional standard.

Along with these documents, the Board has also published supporting information about moving to the revised guidelines to assist current provisional psychologists and their

supervisors with a smooth transition. This includes detail about how case studies and other assessment tasks already completed will be counted towards the new requirements and a checklist tool to help interns and supervisors work out what they need to do to finish the internship under the new guidelines. These resources and the revised guidelines can be found on the [4+2 internship program page](#).

Transition provisions and a transition period until 1 September 2017 will ensure that nobody is disadvantaged by the revised guidelines. In fact, with the increased flexibilities most 4+2 interns will benefit from the transition to the revised guidelines.

Current interns who will be finishing the internship and applying for general registration after 1 June 2017 can start incorporating new flexibilities available under the new guidelines into their internship plans straight away. Most updates, including adjustments to hours of practice and supervision to meet the requirements under the new guidelines, can be agreed to between the principal supervisor and the supervisee; they don't need to be approved by the Board. Board approval is only necessary for major changes such as a new or significantly revised work role.

Supervisor training provider update

New Board-approved supervisor training providers

At its meeting on 16 December 2016, the Board approved six new providers of master class training. The Board was particularly pleased to approve a number of new supervisor training providers who plan to offer workshops in regional areas.

The Board has approved the following new supervisor training programs (master class only):

Name of provider	Master class topic	Location
Australian College of Applied Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervising for clinical psychology endorsement Supervising to prevent and manage problems of professional competence Supervising the development of case conceptualization and diagnosis competencies Supervising the development of meta-competencies Reflective practice and the scientist-practitioner mindset 	Adelaide Brisbane Melbourne Perth Sydney Regional NSW and VIC (Ballarat and Central Coast) Videoconference for regional and remotely based supervisors
C-BEST - Competency-Based Excellence in Supervisor Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflective Practitioner and Scientist Practitioner meta competencies Best practice in CBT supervision: A competency-based approach Best practice in assessment and evaluation in supervision 	Adelaide Brisbane Hobart Melbourne Sydney Cairns Newcastle

SPOT - Specialist Psychological Outreach Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Clinical Supervision: Translating Professional Competencies into Client Outcomes 	Albany Broome Bunbury Geraldton Kalgoorlie
University of Canberra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process and Complexity in Specialist Supervision 	Canberra
University of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervising for ethical practice in a rural and remote setting Critical reflection and planning for feedback in supervision 	Melbourne Shepparton
James Cook University / Mount Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health (MICRRH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervising for ethical practice in a rural and remote setting Critical reflection and planning for feedback in supervision 	Cairns Emerald Longreach Mackay Mount Isa Rockhampton Townsville

The Board introduced a supervisor training framework in 2013 that is consistent with best-practice regulation, consistent with the Board's standards, and takes a competency-based approach. The aim is to ensure that psychologists and provisional psychologists receive quality supervision, and the public receive quality psychological services.

In order to manage a potential shortfall of master class training workshops for Board-approved supervisors (BAS) who are required to do refresher training by mid-2018, the Board recently invited applications from parties interested in becoming providers of master class training only. These new programs have approval until December 2018, to align with the current five-year approval cycle. The six new providers join the 11 providers approved in 2013.

Go to the [supervisor training page](#) on the Board's website for more information on supervisor training including web links to all the approved providers. Also see the Board's [supervision FAQ](#).

Supervisors with BAS status expiring in 2018

Board-approved supervisor (BAS) status is reviewed every five years, and evidence of completion of at least one, one-day Board-approved master class must be supplied to the Board.

All supervisors who were Board-approved before July 2013 (when the *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers* came in to effect), will need to undertake a master class and **apply** to maintain BAS status **by 30 June 2018**. This includes all supervisors who transitioned to the National Scheme as an approved supervisor in 2010. The majority of Board-approved supervisors have a BAS expiry date of 30 June 2018. You can check your expiry date on the [supervisor online services portal](#).

To help meet demand, the Board has approved six new providers of master classes, as detailed above. This is in addition to 11 existing providers of both full training and master class workshops. You are encouraged to review the master classes on offer across the country. Website links and contact details for all Board-approved providers are available on the [supervisor training page](#) of the Board's website.

If you have not yet completed your training, the Board encourages you to enrol in a master class as soon as possible. This will ensure you have the widest choice of workshop providers, topics and dates. When you have completed your training, you should notify AHPRA by applying to maintain your approval for another five years. The application form to maintain BAS status, MBAS-76, is available on the [forms page](#) of the Board's website. There is no fee for this application, and approval will be for five years from the date that you completed your training program.

If you have not completed the minimum training requirements and lodged your form for renewal before 30 June 2018, your BAS status will lapse. Do not wait until the deadline is approaching to enrol in a training program, as there is no guarantee there will be master class capacity at that time.

For more information on how to maintain BAS status, and other questions related to supervision, see the Board's [supervision FAQ](#).

New guidelines on transitional programs for overseas-qualified practitioners

On 10 April 2017, the Board will publish new guidelines: *Transitional programs for overseas-qualified applicants*, with information for overseas-qualified applicants for registration, and their employers and supervisors.

The transitional program is a three-month period of supervised practice that enables overseas-trained applicants to develop and demonstrate psychological skills and knowledge that are specific to the Australian context. The program has been required for all overseas-qualified applicants since 2013.

The core requirements for successful completion of the transition programs, as set out in the [Registration standard: General registration](#), are:

- demonstrate competence in ethical legal and professional matters and working with people from diverse groups, as relevant to the Australian work context
- complete at least 210 hours of psychological practice in an approved work role, and
- receive at least six hours of professional supervision with a Board-approved supervisor.

There have been no further changes to these core requirements; however the new guidelines provide extra information about the specific skills and knowledge to be covered in the program.

The new guidelines also provide guidance on applying for an exemption for those applicants who have already developed and demonstrated all the required skills and knowledge.

The new guidelines will be published on the website together with other [codes, guidelines and policies](#).

You can find further information about the transitional program and other relevant information for [overseas applicants](#) on the website too – including information about the national psychology exam and applying for assessment of overseas qualifications.

In developing the new guidelines the Board consulted widely on the proposed content; this included publication of a public consultation on a proposed guidelines. The consultation paper and the submissions received are available under [Past consultations](#) on the website.

Psychology regulation at work: Protecting the public in 2015/16

A profession-specific annual report summary that looks into the work of the Psychology Board of Australia over the year to 30 June 2016 has now been published.

The report draws on data from the [2015/16 annual report](#) by AHPRA and the National Boards. Information includes the number of applications for registration, outcomes of criminal history checks and segmentation of the registrant base by gender, age and principal place of practice.

Notifications information includes the number of complaints or concerns received, matters open and closed during the year, types of complaint, and matters that necessitated immediate action to suspend or impose conditions upon a practitioner's registration while an investigation took place.

Find out more in the full [news item](#) on the Board's website.

To download this report, or to view the main 2015/16 annual report and summary reports by state or territory, visit our [microsite](#).

Call for applications for appointment to the ACT, NSW, QLD and NT regional boards of the Psychology Board of Australia

Under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme), the primary role of the National Board of each health profession is to protect the public. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) manages the registration and notification handling processes for health practitioners and students.

The Psychology Board of Australia has established state and territory boards ('regional boards') to exercise its functions in these jurisdictions. The four regional boards provide an effective and timely local response to health practitioners and the public in registration and notification matters.

There are **multiple practitioner member** and **community member** vacancies arising on the regional boards:

- ACT-TAS-VIC Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia (**Practitioner and community members from ACT, TAS and VIC principal place of practice**)
- NT-SA-WA Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia (**Community members only from South Australia**)
- QLD Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia (**Practitioner and community members from Queensland**), and
- NSW Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia (**Practitioner and community members from New South Wales**).

To be eligible for appointment as a practitioner member, you must hold current registration in the profession and be from the state or territory specified above.

Appointments are made by the respective Minister for Health under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

More information about the roles, eligibility requirements and the application process can be found in the information guide and application form available from AHPRA's [Board member recruitment](#) page.

For enquiries, please contact statutoryappointments@ahpra.gov.au

Applications close **Thursday 30 March 2017, midnight AEDST.**

National Scheme news

Health workforce dataset released

AHPRA in conjunction with the National Boards is responsible for the national registration process for 14 health professions. A subset of data from this annual registration process, together with data from a workforce survey that is voluntarily completed at the time of registration, forms the National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS).

The NHWDS includes demographic and professional practice information for registered health professionals and is de-identified before it can be made publicly available.

The NHWDS Allied Health 2015 data has recently been released as a series of fact sheets on each allied health profession, and on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners across all allied health professions, the [NHWDS allied health fact sheets 2015](#). They were published on a new-look website, the [Health Workforce Data website](#), by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

The fact sheets present information specific to each profession, such as information relating to scope of practice, specialties and endorsements where applicable. Aggregate data are also accessible via the [Health Workforce Online Data Tool](#).

The data included are generated through Workforce Surveys, which are provided by AHPRA on behalf of the Department of Health to all health professionals as part of their yearly re-registration. Each survey is slightly different and is tailored to obtain data specific to that profession.

You can find the fact sheet on psychology on the [Publications page](#).

Local insights, National Scheme: State and territory summaries published

Individual annual report summaries for each state and territory, offering insights into how the National Scheme is operating in each jurisdiction, have now been published.

Based on the AHPRA and National Boards annual report for 2015/16, the summaries are available online on AHPRA's [website](#).

Information includes applications for registration by profession, outcomes of criminal history checks and segmentation of the registrant base by gender, profession and specialty.

Notifications information includes the number of complaints or concerns received by AHPRA by profession, types of complaint,

matters involving immediate action, monitoring and compliance, panels and tribunals, and statutory offence complaints.

To download any or all of the state and territory reports, or to view the main 2015/16 annual report, visit our [microsite](#).

AHPRA performance report July-September 2016

The July to September 2016 quarterly performance reports for AHPRA and the National Boards are now available.

The reports, which are part of an ongoing drive by AHPRA and the National Boards to increase their accountability and transparency, include data specific to each state and territory.

Each report covers AHPRA and the National Boards' main areas of activity:

- managing applications for registration as a health practitioner
- managing notifications about the health, performance and conduct of registered health practitioners and offences against the National Law, and
- monitoring health practitioners and students with restrictions on their registration.

The reports are available on the [Statistics page](#).

To provide feedback on the reports please email: reportingfeedback@ahpra.gov.au.

AHPRA online portal for complaints or concerns launches

AHPRA has launched a new online portal to the public offering a clearer and simpler process when making a complaint or raising a concern about registered health practitioners and students.

The portal is an additional channel available through the AHPRA [website](#). Alternatively, individuals can still call 1300 419 495 to make a complaint or raise a concern, while a PDF form also remains available for complainants.

The same standard applies to information and evidence regardless of whether the concern is raised online or by email, phone or form. The portal includes the requirement for a complainant to declare that the information provided in a complaint or concern is true and correct to the best of their knowledge and belief.

The online portal guides users to provide information that more readily enables proper assessment of their concerns. Automated correspondence is issued to all users of the portal, including a copy of their complaint or concern and advice that they will be contacted by a member of the AHPRA team within four days.

The portal is supported by website content about the way AHPRA manages complaints or concerns about health practitioners and students. Consultations revealed the term 'notification' is not commonly understood by the broader community. In response the term 'complaint or concern' replaces the term 'notification' in the portal and the website content.

Further enhancements will be made to the portal based on user feedback.

Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit our website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Prof. Brin Grenyer, Chair, Psychology Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958 Melbourne VIC 3001.

