

9 Recency of Practice Standard

Recency of practice refers to how recently, and to what extent, an individual has used their professional skills and knowledge to deliver appropriate and effective services within their profession. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that PACFA registrants maintain a sufficient level of engagement in their profession to practice safely and competently. In meeting this standard, practitioners maintain their professional expertise by keeping their skills and knowledge current.

Does this standard apply to me?

This standard applies to all PACFA registrants except recent graduates¹ in the period of membership following their initial registration and in the following first full year of membership (July–June).

What constitutes “practice”?

The term “practice” is used broadly and significantly more broadly than client contact as defined in PACFA’s Client Contact Standard. Client contact hours are used as PACFA’s measure for registration and annual supervision requirements and are required to be recorded by all registrants in the member portal at renewal of membership.

The term “practice” for the purposes of this standard² includes any role in which the registrant uses their knowledge and professional expertise as a counsellor, psychotherapist, or Indigenous healing practitioner to contribute to the safe and effective provision of services.

- › Practice may comprise direct or indirect client work and can be paid or part of a formal volunteer arrangement and may be full or part-time.
- › The types of roles that constitute practice include, but are not restricted to, client work including individual, couple and group, receiving and/or providing clinical supervision, management, teaching, research, consultancy work and policy development. It is important to note that acceptable roles must use skills and knowledge related to your PACFA registration and within its Scope of Practice.
- › Whilst preparation for and presentation of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity does constitute practice, practice does not include attending a CPD activity.

What must I do?

To meet the requirements of this standard for recency of practice you must complete a minimum of:

- › 150 hours of practice per year, or
- › 450 hours of practice in the previous three-year period.

For the purposes of this standard, one hour of client contact equals two hours of practice (and is thus inclusive of session preparation, session noting and session follow-up).

1. Recent graduate is a person who graduated from a course that meets PACFA’s Registration Standard prior to two years of applying for registration. The date of graduation is as listed on the course parchment.
2. The definition of practice adopted by PACFA has been informed by the May 2024 Membership Standards of the National Alliance of Self-Regulating Health Professionals (NASRHP)

What does this mean for me?

At renewal of registration

At the time of renewal, you are required to declare whether you have complied with the minimum practice requirements of this standard.

Registrants who have an approved leave of absence:

- are exempt from renewing their registration during the period of their leave, and
- are required to record practice hours undertaken for any part of the membership year when applying for a leave of absence.³

During the registration period

Your compliance with this standard shall be audited by PACFA at their discretion.

Evidence

To demonstrate recency of practice you need to have evidence that shows that you have met the minimum requirements of this standard.

Acceptable evidence of recency of practice for registrants who are *self-employed as sole traders* include:

- > PACFA's Annual Verification form signed by both you and your supervisor
- > client logs that you attest to be an accurate record
- > supervision logs signed by your supervisor
- > relevant activity logs and associated verifiable evidence.

Acceptable evidence of recency of practice for registrants who are *employed by an organisation or a company* include:

- > a letter of employment detailing role and working hours
- > an employment contract
- > or evidence as listed above for those who are self-employed.

You must retain records for five years as evidence that you meet the requirements of this standard.

What happens if I do not meet this standard?

If you want to maintain your registration and continue to practice, you will need to apply to PACFA as outlined in the Resumption of Practice Standard and will be invited to provide information to help PACFA determine a course of action.

3. If a registrant has met the Recency of Practice requirements in the two years prior to taking leave, the maximum leave that can be taken is 3 years after which the Resumption of Practice Standard requirements must be met before registration with PACFA can be reactivated. (Please refer to the Resumption of Practice Standard for details)

Document version control

Version	Description	Originator	Reviewed	Approved	Date	Next review
B	Effective July 2025	Professional Standards Committee	PACFA Office	Board	September 2024	2027

For further information, please email admin@pacfa.org.au