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| **Decision guidelines relating to practitioners who have not held an APC within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of their application but who have consistently been practising psychotherapy outside of NZ.** | |
| The following decision guidelines have been developed to assist the Board and its Committees in making fair, reasonable and lawful decisions which are consistent and equitable.  In order to work legally as a psychotherapist it is necessary to:   * be registered with Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New Zealand (the Board); and * hold a current Annual Practising Certificate.   **To that end, the objectives of this policy are:**   * to ensure there is a monitoring and oversight process during the resumption of the New Zealand practice phase; * to identify factors that may increase the risk of loss of competence and factors that may mitigate this risk; * to support practitioners to update their skills and knowledge; * to assure the public of professional competence while avoiding unnecessary barriers to practitioners wishing to resume professional practice. | |
| **Preamble** | The HPCAA establishes a threshold which stipulates that the Board must not issue an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) unless it is satisfied that the applicant meets the required stand of competence.  According to Section 27 (1)(d) and (f) of the HPCAA, the Board is required to give consideration to:   * psychotherapists who have not held an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) for three years or more; or * psychotherapists who have not within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of application, lawfully practised in the profession the application relates to.   The Board must determine if the applicant meets the required standard of competence before an APC is issued (Section 29 of the HPCAA) and may impose conditions or vary existing conditions to safeguard the safety of the public.  This policy focuses on competence to practise.  **This document contains information for practitioners who are already registered and returning to practice in New Zealand after:**   1. Having not practised or lawfully practised in New Zealand during the last three years but who have been practising psychotherapy outside of New Zealand. |
| **General operational principles** | A returning psychotherapist is expected to demonstrate responsibility for ensuring their own competence by undertaking to:   1. Provide a letter of good standing from all health registering/licensing authorities and employers they have been registered/licensed with and/or employed by overseas. 2. Provide an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae, including professional development and professionally relevant activities undertaken since an APC was last held. 3. Engage with a Board approved experienced supervisor to supervise their return to clinical practice. This person must be a fully qualified practitioner registered in either the Psychotherapist Scope of Practice or Psychotherapist Scope of Practice with Child and Adolescent Specialism with a current APC, or a Board approved person[[1]](#footnote-1). 4. Provide a supervisor attestation to the practitioner’s competence, completed by a psychotherapist (NZ or overseas) whom they have recently worked with for a minimum of six months continuously. Overseas supervisors will need to provide a CV so that the Board can assess them as having sufficient psychotherapy training, knowledge, skills and professional development. 5. Provide the Board with a self-appraisal that outlines how they have maintained currency of their psychotherapy knowledge during the time they have not been practising psychotherapy in New Zealand. This self-appraisal should be detailed and provide specific information i.e. courses undertaken, books read etc. The self-appraisal may be developed with the psychotherapist’s clinical supervisor and will be guided by the Psychotherapist Core Clinical Competencies[[2]](#footnote-2).   Practitioners may be asked to provide a remedial plan. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.  The Board reserves the right to not issue an APC in circumstances where the risks of loss of competence are deemed too high to be addressed by a return to practice remedial plan and supervision. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:   * a lack of consolidated experience prior to requesting an APC * academic knowledge now deemed to be significantly out of date.   Note: Having not maintained adequate currency of practice will not exclude a practitioner from applying for an APC. The information provided will guide the Board as to the level of support the practitioner is likely to need when returning to practice. |
| **Remedial Plan**  **(if required)** | If requested, practitioners will provide the Board with a remedial plan developed in conjunction with their supervisor that demonstrates how they intend to manage and monitor their return to the practice of psychotherapy in New Zealand.  The frequency and duration of supervision, and the intensity of the remedial plan, will be determined by the length of time away from NZ and will take into account any factors perceived to increase or mitigate the risk of loss of competence (see below). |
| **Proposed condition/s** | To ensure the safety of the public the Board may propose to put a condition/s on a psychotherapist’s scope of practice.  This condition may require the practitioner to undertake weekly supervision for an allocated time period. Frequency and duration of supervision will be determined by the practitioner’s experience, caseload, self-appraisal and remedial plan[[3]](#footnote-3).  The practitioner’s supervisor will be required to provide the Board with quarterly reports on the practitioner’s progress, and the practitioner will be expected to provide a quarterly report of their number of client hours per week.  The condition will be removed at the end of the allocated time period or earlier, provided the Board is satisfied with the progress of the practitioner, taking into account their supervisor reports, and concludes that the practitioner is not a risk to public safety. |
| **Competence to practise in the New Zealand context** | Psychotherapists returning to New Zealand should update their knowledge on the following:  The Treaty of Waitangi and relevance to psychotherapy practice in bicultural NZ;  Cultural and social dynamics and safety specifically relevant to bicultural NZ;  Understanding of the New Zealand Health sector and the New Zealand legal system including working with the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) (including the HDC Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights Regulation), and the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (HPCAA). |
| **Examples of factors that increase and mitigate risk** | |
| Perceived to increase the risk of loss of competence | * Resuming practice in a different domain of professional activity from that which had been undertaken previously. For example a different client group. |
| Perceived to mitigate risk of loss of competence | * Activity which has maintained knowledge and familiarity with contemporary research during the break in practice. * Resuming practice in the same domain of activity as that prior to leaving New Zealand. |

***Date Approved: December 2014***

**Checklist: Return to Practice**

Applicant name: Reg No:

Supervisor name: Reg No:

The following checklist has been developed to assist the Board and its Committees in making fair, reasonable and lawful decisions which are consistent and equitable regarding:

* psychotherapists who have not held an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) for three years or more; or
* psychotherapists who have not within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of application, lawfully practised in the profession the application relates to.

A returning psychotherapist is expected to demonstrate responsibility for ensuring their own competence by undertaking to:

Engage with a psychotherapist who is an experienced supervisor to supervise their return to clinical practice. This person must be a fully qualified practitioner registered in either the Psychotherapist Scope of Practice or Psychotherapist Scope of Practice with Child and Adolescent Specialism with a current APC, or a Board approved person[[4]](#footnote-4).

Provide the Board with a self-appraisal that outlines how they have maintained currency of their psychotherapy knowledge during the time they have not been practising psychotherapy. This self-appraisal should be detailed and provide specific information i.e. courses undertaken, books read etc. The self-appraisal should be developed with the psychotherapist’s clinical supervisor and will be guided by the Psychotherapist Core Clinical Competencies.

Provide the Board with a remedial plan developed in conjunction with their supervisor that demonstrates how they intend to manage and monitor their return to the practice of psychotherapy. This plan should cover at least the next 12 months and show specifically how the psychotherapist intends to develop their psychotherapy knowledge and skills.

APC application with appropriate fee.

Letter/s of Good Standing and CV (if required)

Completed checklist.

**Supervisor declaration:**

I (supervisor) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ support (applicant) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with their return to practise plan. I can confirm that I have worked in conjunction with the applicant to develop this plan and provided input where necessary.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. See the Board’s supervision policy [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Checklist: Returning to work after a break in practice developed which is to be completed and returned to the Board on application. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. These conditions may be varied in accord with the guidelines in this policy and with the approval of the Board [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See the Board’s supervision policy [↑](#footnote-ref-4)