



REMAINING COMPLIANT: PSYCHOLOGY PRACTITIONER AUDITS

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As 2014 draws to a close, we face a new calendar year full of professional challenges, including a fresh Continuing Professional Development (CPD) cycle. There is also the possibility of being selected for audit in relation to compliance with the registration standards of our profession.

As AHPRA highlights (see: <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Audit.aspx>):

Each time you apply to renew your registration, you make a declaration that you have (or have not) met the registration standards for your profession. The audit requires that you provide further information to support your declarations.

Every year, the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA), together with 13 other National Health Profession Boards under AHPRA's jurisdiction, randomly samples psychology practitioners of the "general registered type" to establish their compliance with four mandatory standards. Three of these have been the focus of the 2013-2014 Psychology audit process:

- (1) Continuing Professional Development (CPD),
- (2) Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII), and
- (3) Criminal History Check (CHC).

There is, in addition, a "Recency of Practice" (ROP) standard, which is required for registration, but does not currently provide a specific focus for audit.

If you receive an audit notice from AHPRA you are required to provide evidence of compliance with the three standards (or the specific standard outlined in the audit notice) within 28 days – unless there are extenuating circumstances which generally allow, at maximum, a three month extension. Given the random nature of the selection process, as well as our ethical commitment to professional practice standards as part of our profession, the Council strongly advises that your normal, ongoing record-keeping complies with audit requirements, so that you can rapidly demonstrate adherence.

The standards and guidelines for each of the three specified areas are clearly outlined on the AHPRA web-site: <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au>

In summary, they are as follows:

CPD Requirements (Continuing Professional Development registration standard)

- All Psychology practitioners (whether working full-time or part-time) must have completed a minimum of 30 hours of CPD within the previous registration period (1 December to 30 November);
- At least 10 hours of this must be peer consultation: either in an individual or group format, with reflective focus on one's own practice as part of this process. Additional hours are



required if this is in a group format, dependent upon the number of people attending the group.

- Practitioners with “area of practice endorsements” (AoPE) in nine key endorsed practice areas recognized by the Board, must obtain the majority of their CPD within their endorsed area(s) of practice: i.e. a minimum of 16 hours in one area of practice endorsement; 15 hours in each of two endorsed areas of practice; and a minimum of 10 hours within each of three endorsed areas of practice.
- Detailed written documentation must be provided within a portfolio including three main content areas: a learning plan (identifying professional development needs, specific goals and learning objectives, and a CPD plan); a CPD activity log (outlining number of CPD hours undertaken and their breakdown into peer consultation, general or specialty/AoPE allocation); and both a peer consultation and CPD journal providing written reflections on each activity undertaken and its relevance to the initial learning plan. A clear format for these documents is provided both by the PsyBA and the APS (the latter in the form of a convenient on-line logging system which cumulatively logs activities entered and indicates level of compliance with time requirements). All documents indicating CPD compliance must be kept for a minimum of five years.
- Evidence of CPD attendance (in the form of attendance certificates, tax receipt and/or signed log) needs to be provided.

Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) registration standard

- 100% compliance with this standard is expected of all registered practitioners, for each context in which they practice - with a suitable policy including a minimum of \$2million cover, automatic reinstatement and “run-off cover” for at least seven years.
- Evidence of proof includes a “certificate of currency confirming coverage, or letter from an employer declaring that the practitioner is employed and has satisfactory PII coverage”.

Criminal History Check (CH) registration standard

- Covered by the “Referral of Criminal History Information” policy approved by the Psychology Board in August, 2013 – which is implemented when practitioners are audited.

Given the detailed nature of the audit requirements, it is strongly recommended that we all remain up-to-date in relation to them. We are expected to practice in ways compliant with the ethical and legal requirements of our profession, and this is one key way in which we manifest this commitment. It is also worth noting that in dealing with a complaint or notification, the Council will often ask to view a practitioner’s recent CPD history, the thoroughness of which may well influence the outcome, as well as the advice and recommendations offered at the conclusion of the complaint process.

Please see:

- AHPRA: <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/>
 - Audit: <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Audit.aspx>
- APS: <https://www.psychology.org.au>