

PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD OF QUEENSLAND

File Number: S37 / S58 / S95

Policy Topic: **ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANT PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE PROFESSION CLAIMED BY APPLICANTS FOR REGISTRATION**

AMENDMENT TO POLICY APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON 11 DECEMBER 2003

Date of Approval: 17 February 2005

BACKGROUND

In fulfilling its role under the *Psychologists Registration Act 2001* (the Act), the Board has a responsibility to promote high standards of practice of the profession by registrants and to protect the public by ensuring that services are delivered by registrants in a professional, safe and competent way.

To be eligible for general registration under the Act an applicant for registration must have an approved qualification, be fit to practise the profession and have gained “relevant practical experience in the profession”. If the applicant has not gained “relevant practical experience in the profession” the Board must impose probationary conditions on the registrant’s general registration and the registrant may practise the profession only in accordance with the Supervised Practice Program for the profession. A probationary registrant will become eligible for general registration upon satisfactory completion of the Supervised Practice Program.

The Board has designed a Supervised Practice Program to provide probationary registrants with a minimum two year period of experience in the practice of the profession under the supervision of an experienced psychologist. The Supervised Practice Program ensures that probationary registrants receive training and experience in six core professional Competencies of practice, knowledge and expertise within the profession of psychology. Probationary registrants must demonstrate sufficient competence in these core Competencies in order to meet the requirements for general registration as a psychologist in Queensland before the dispensation of probationary conditions.

Applicants for general registration under the Act may claim to have “relevant practical experience in the profession”. The Act allows the Board to exercise its discretion in determining if an applicant has “relevant practical experience in the profession”.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the matters that the Board will generally take into account in the exercise of its discretion in determining whether “relevant practical experience” is held as well as outline circumstances where the Board will be inclined to reject claims of “relevant practical experience.”

Under section 58 of the Act an applicant for registration has “relevant practical experience in the profession” if the applicant has experience in the practice of the profession that is substantially equivalent to the nature and extent of the practice of the profession under the Supervised Practice Program. The Act outlines a number of factors the Board may consider in determining whether an applicant has “relevant practical experience in the

profession”.

A stated intended consequence of this section of the Act was to allow the Board discretion to recognise applicants for registration who had either wholly or partially gained “relevant practical experience in the profession” in Queensland **before the introduction of the Supervised Practice Program** when the Act commenced on **1 May 2002** and ensure that applicants in that category were not disadvantaged.¹ This section may also apply to applicants for registration who have obtained “relevant practical experience in the profession” **overseas or in another State or Territory of Australia** so that these applicants are also not disadvantaged by the fact that they have not undertaken the Psychologists Board of Queensland’s Supervised Practice Program.

The Board has identified the need to publish a policy on the assessment of criteria properly constituting “relevant practical experience in the profession” pertaining to applications for general registration. The policy is directed toward ensuring consistency and fairness in the interpretation of the expression “relevant practical experience” in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The Board first approved a policy on 21 November 2002 and amended this policy on 11 December 2003. The Board or its delegate, the Registration, Supervision and Training Committee of the Board will apply and consider the following policy which will now take precedence over all previous policies:

POLICY

1. Subject to Core Competencies as equivalent and applicable to the Supervised Practice Program being achieved the Board considers the following criteria to be “relevant practical experience in the profession” if held by an applicant for registration:
 - 1.1 Completion of a minimum two year coursework postgraduate program in psychology in Australia approved by the Board as a pathway for undertaking the Supervised Practice Program; or
 - 1.2 Completion of a minimum two year coursework postgraduate program in psychology outside Australia, from a program assessed by the Board as being equivalent to a postgraduate program in psychology in Australia approved by the Board as a pathway for undertaking the Supervised Practice Program; or
 - 1.3 Completion of a minimum two years of supervised practice of the profession in another State or Territory of Australia or in another country which applied core competencies either equivalent to or substantially the same as the core competencies of the Supervised Practice Program. In order for the Board to consider the supervision as being sufficient:
 - (i) the applicant must be able to provide original documentation supporting the completion of this supervised practice, including records of supervision, supervised practice of the profession and professional development undertaken and supervisor’s reports; and
 - (ii) the applicant’s practice of the profession must have been undertaken under the supervision of a psychologist, (that is, a person holding qualifications, experience and, if applicable, registration/charter/license considered by the Board to be the equivalent of a person holding general registration with the Psychologists Board of Queensland and meeting the

¹ Clause 58 Explanatory Note to Psychologists Registration Bill

eligibility requirements for an approved supervisor).

- 1.4** Completion of a minimum period of two years supervised practice of the profession in Queensland **before** the introduction of the Supervised Practice Program when the Act commenced on **1 May 2002**. In order for the Board to consider the supervised practice of the profession to be “relevant practical experience in the profession”:
- (i) the applicant must be able to provide original documentation supporting the completion of this supervised practice, including records of supervision, supervised practice of the profession and professional development undertaken and supervisor’s reports; and
 - (ii) the applicant’s practice of the profession in Queensland must have been undertaken under the supervision of a psychologist who, at the time supervision occurred, was registered with the Psychologists Board of Queensland and was at the time capable of being considered by the Board as eligible to supervise probationary (conditional) registrants.
- 2.** In certain cases the Board may request supervisors to sign statutory declarations to ensure that applicant’s supervision records are authentic and were signed by the supervisor on the date stated.
- The Board has an obligation to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements for registration and if necessary will further investigate and if necessary prosecute any claim in an appropriate case where misleading or deceptive information has been provided in respect of a particular application.
- 3.** The Board may determine that an applicant who meets at least one of criteria 1.1 to 1.4 above may also be required to provide evidence of having met the Core Competencies as would be required in the Supervised Practice Program in order to be considered to have “relevant practical experience in the profession”.
- 4.** In order to achieve uniformity of practice standards for unrestricted registrants the Board will not, except in extraordinary circumstances, recognise or provide credit for any supervision or practice of the profession that an applicant for registration claims to have undertaken in Queensland outside of the Supervised Practice Program and after its commencement date on 1 May 2002 or after the date upon which the applicant attains conditional registration whichever is the later. The Board may however allow credit for any supervision undertaken before 1 May 2002 if it is capable of acceptance within the policy guideline stated above.
- 5.** In deciding whether an applicant for registration has “relevant practical experience in the profession”, additionally the Board will only consider any practice of the profession undertaken by the applicant since the applicant obtained the minimum qualification or its equivalence which would otherwise be required by the Board as a pre-requisite for conditional registration.