

Physiotherapists Registration Board of Tasmania

**Managing the
Recency of Practice Provisions
of the
Physiotherapists Registration Act 1999**

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Miss Doreen Bauer, Deputy President, Physiotherapists Registration Board of Victoria

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Julia Drew
Chairman
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Physiotherapists Registration Act 1999**

Background

It is illegal for any person to practise as a physiotherapist in Tasmania unless the person is registered and holds a current practising certificate.

Section 35 (7) of the Physiotherapists Registration Act 1999 requires that:

The Board must not issue a new certificate of registration to a registered person who has not actively practised physiotherapy in the 5 year period immediately preceding the due date unless it is satisfied that the person complies with the requirements specified in section 21(1)(b), (c), (d) and (e) and would, if applying to be registered for the first time, be eligible to apply for that registration

In line with registration requirements in a number of other Australian states, the Board has determined that:

- a) ***Practice of physiotherapy*** has been interpreted to include *clinical practice; research and teaching*¹ as they apply to the physiotherapy profession; and *the management of physiotherapy services*²
- b) ***Sufficient physiotherapy experience*** means that the registered physiotherapist has worked as a physiotherapist for a minimum of one thousand (1,000) hours over a five-year period and has maintained an active interest in the profession through continuing education.

The application for registration or renewal of registration requires physiotherapists to:

- a) Determine the type of practice according to the Board's published definition, and
- b) Swear a statutory declaration on their practice hours for the previous five years.

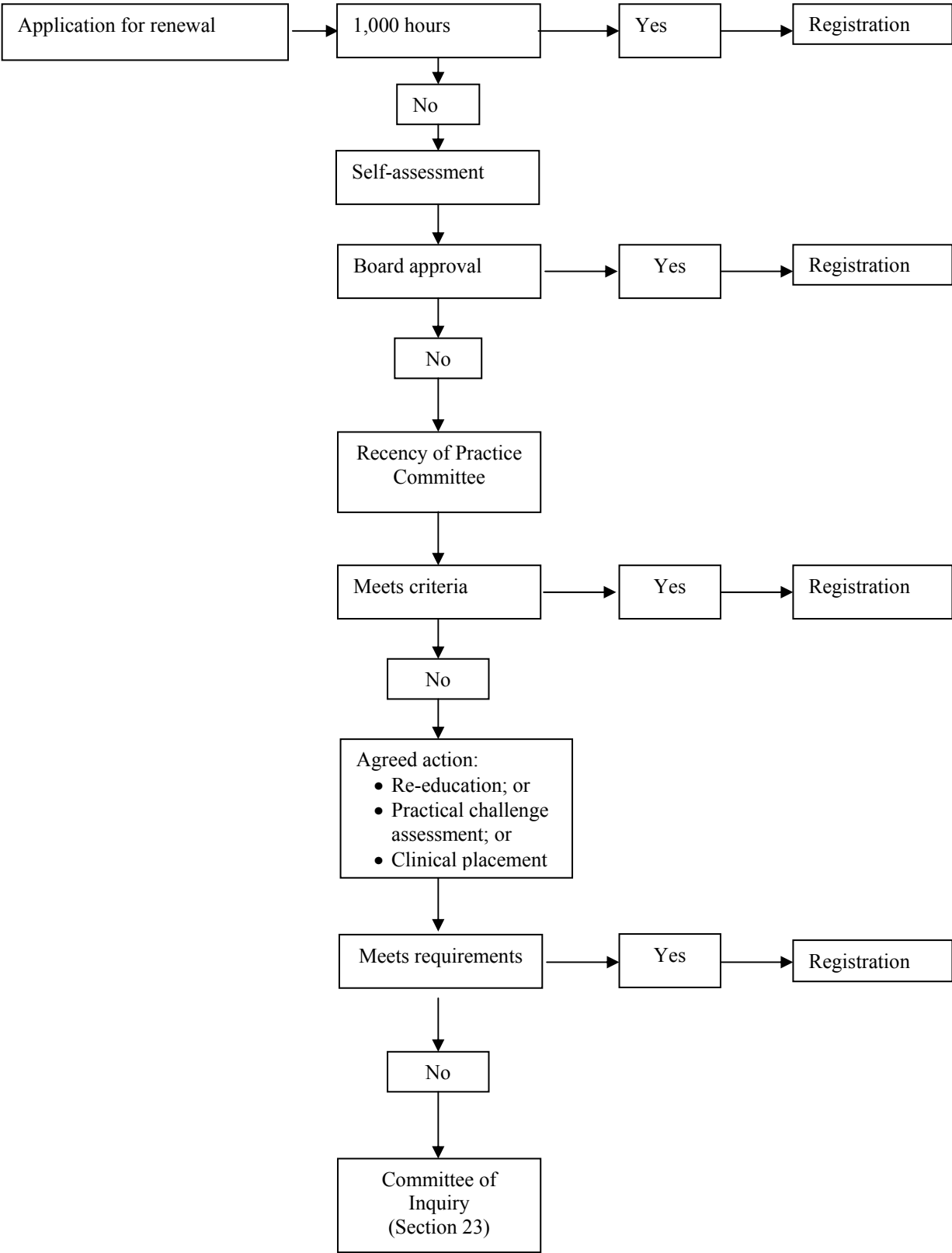
Physiotherapists who are unable to declare that they have undertaken at least 1,000 hours of practice in the previous five years, or a pro rata number of hours for recent graduates, will be invited to enter the Recency of Practice Process which will be applied according to their specific needs.

The Board developed this process through extensive consultation, first with an invited working party and then through comments on the draft document from a range of professional groups and individuals.

^{1,2}

As defined by the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy

Recency of practice process in summary



1. Self-assessment

The self-assessment will provide applicants with the opportunity to have their practice history considered according to weighted criteria. This assessment will include the following:

- year qualifications were completed
- date of initial registration as a physiotherapist
- institution awarding physiotherapy qualifications
- work history, including voluntary activity as a physiotherapist:
 - Type(s) of experience
 - Years of experience
- graduate qualifications
- continuing professional education history:
 - While practising
 - While non-practising
- other relevant professional activity which required physiotherapy qualifications, such as professional association committees or education programs
- other relevant health care exposure, such as a member of a health agency board of management, non-physiotherapy employment in a health agency

The self-assessment has a scoring system (appendix 2). Where the applicant is able to testify to a practice history that scores 90 percent or more of the total score, the applicant should be registered. Where the score is less than 90 percent, the applicant shall then meet with a Practice Assessment Panel.

2. Recency of Practice Assessment Panel

Applicant physiotherapists will have the opportunity to present their case for consideration. Three experienced physiotherapists, drawn from a list maintained by the Board, will form a panel to hear the applicant. The panel, by majority vote, may decide that the applicant does meet requirements and recommend registration, subject to any conditions the panel may recommend.

Where the panel determines that the applicant does not meet requirements, the panel and the applicant will develop a course of action that the applicant could undertake to demonstrate or gain competency.

Physiotherapists will be invited to place their names on the panel list with three being selected as the needs arise. Criteria for panel listing will include:

- registration as a physiotherapist
- acknowledged peer leadership
- familiarity with continuing professional education
- an understanding of entry level competence standards

A specific panel should include members with diverse experience in terms of:

- Type of practice, clinical, teaching and management
- Public and private practice
- Years of practice.

A panel should also be gender appropriate, the majority being the same sex as the applicant.

Applicants will be able to expect that the panel will meet at a time and location that does not place undue stress on their personal circumstances. That is, a panel may meet in the evening or in a regional centre appropriate to the applicant's home address.

The applicant will be required to meet all reasonable costs incurred by the Assessment Panel in undertaking its review.

3. Action options

3.1 Re-education

The applicant, in consultation with the Recency of Practice Assessment Panel, may develop a re-education plan that meets the specific needs of the applicant.

The plan must specify the objectives, time frames, and assessment methods to be used. The Plan may include a Practical Challenge Assessment (3.2) and or a period of Supervised Practise (3.3).

The panel will consider a range of continuing and formal education activities which provide tuition in the three key areas of practice and in professional generic skills in accordance with the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy. The Panel may assist in the development and selection of an appropriate program.

The program will specify a time within which the education requirements are to be completed and will require regular progress reports.

3.2 Practical challenge assessment

An applicant may elect to undertake a practical challenge assessment in an approved physiotherapy service where experienced clinicians are available to supervise the assessment and appraise the performance. This assessment will usually be conducted over one week. It should be noted that this assessment may not be undertaken in a physiotherapy service where the applicant proposes to work.

The applicant will be responsible for all reasonable costs incurred by the Board in conducting a Practical Challenge Assessment.

The challenge assessment will require performance, at entry level standards, in the three core clinical areas:

- musculo-skeletal
- neurological
- cardio-thoracic physiotherapy (ambulatory/community patients)

Performance criteria will include ability to:

- undertake an assessment
- develop a problem list and/or physiotherapy diagnosis
- develop a suitable care plan, including goals and objectives, treatment, time lines, and patient education
- demonstrate safe patient handling
- demonstrate selected therapy techniques
- demonstrate generic professional skills:
 - communication

- management
- problem solving
- time allocation
- priority setting
- medico-legal issues
- understanding of current issues in health care

The examination will be conducted at a similar standard to that undertaken in the AECOP Clinical Examination.

The assessing clinicians will provide the Board with a confidential performance appraisal which the Board will consider, along with other information which may be provided by the Practice Assessment Panel, in determining if the applicant should be registered.

If, in the judgement of the Board, the applicant has not met practice standards, the applicant will have the deficits explained and will be advised about the action options.

3.3 Clinical placement

A clinical placement in an approved physiotherapy service may be organised for a time agreed between the applicant and panel. The placement will cover core competencies and, where deemed appropriate, the experience relevant to the future needs of the applicant. There will be a fee for this service, set by the Board and payable to the service conducting the placement.

On completing the clinical placement, the applicant must undertake a Practical Challenge Assessment or may be required to undertake an agreed re-education program, see 3.1.

Who needs current registration?

It is illegal for any person to practise as a physiotherapist in Tasmania unless the person is registered and holds a current certificate of registration. The Physiotherapists Registration Board of Tasmania is required by the Government of Tasmania to ensure the provisions of the Physiotherapists Registration Act 1999 are fulfilled. Physiotherapists need to understand that the Board is there to protect the public by ensuring the provisions of the Act are fulfilled.

The Board has determined that the practice of physiotherapy includes clinical practice; research and teaching as they apply to the physiotherapy profession; and the management of physiotherapy services. This means that physiotherapists must be registered and have a current practising certificate if they are doing any work, whether paid or voluntary, in which they use their physiotherapy title in any way.

The following physiotherapists must be registered:

- clinical practitioners: full-time, part-time, locum, casual or occasional
- practitioners working in associated practices, such as occupational health, where the position description required the person to have qualifications such as physiotherapy
- physiotherapists working with sporting teams of any level where expertise as a physiotherapist is used, especially in designing training regimes or in injury management
- physiotherapy service managers, including managers of allied health services, if the position was dependent on the person having qualifications such as physiotherapy
- physiotherapist managers of private physiotherapy practices, regardless of patient practice status
- physiotherapists providing advisory services arising from their qualification as a physiotherapist
- physiotherapy teachers³
- physiotherapists providing voluntary service in schools, nursing homes, or community groups where qualifications as a physiotherapist are used
- presenters and participants in physiotherapy or other courses with “hands on” components.

While physiotherapists are responsible for ensuring the currency of their registration, employers also have a legal responsibility for ensuring their staff are registered. Employers should maintain copies of the current practising certificates for all employees, auditing them at least annually by the 31 January.

Physiotherapists who change their address need to remember that they are required to notify the Board of the change within two weeks of it coming into effect.

Physiotherapists also need to remember that it is illegal to practise physiotherapy in any way without professional indemnity insurance.

³ This role applies only to teachers who are physiotherapists, it does not suggest that non-physiotherapist teachers of physiotherapy students are practising physiotherapy

Appendix 2

Weightings used by the Recency of Practice Panel to evaluate self assessment applications.

1. Year of graduation
The year of graduation, that is when the physiotherapy qualification was completed, may impact on the assessment if there is limited evidence of further or continuing education
2. Work history, including voluntary activity as a physiotherapist:
 - a) type(s) of experience
 - b) years of practice
 - c) activity in past five years*The amount and type of practice undertaken previously should be documented in sufficient detail to provide a clear picture of your experience. Be careful to include all practice experience in clinical, teaching, research and management areas.*
Maximum 40 points
3. Graduate qualifications
This includes certificates, diplomas or degrees, those directly relevant to physiotherapy practice will be weighted more positively than qualifications in other domains.
Maximum 10 points
4. Continuing professional education history over the past five years:
 - a) while practising
 - b) while non-practising*This includes lectures, seminars, workshops, courses and conferences as well as self-directed learning through journal reading. Relevance to physiotherapy practice should be noted where this may not be evident from the title.*
Maximum 40 points
5. Other relevant health care exposure
This may include work in a health agency or government department; membership of a health agency board of management; research or teaching in an associated discipline, and voluntary activity with your professional association
Maximum 10 points

Assessment process

Applicants for renewal of registration will have their circumstances carefully evaluated to determine their status under the Recency of Practice Regulation.

The first step will be the submission of a self-assessment which will provide applicants with the opportunity to have their practice history considered according to weighted criteria.

The self-assessment has a scoring system. Where the applicant is able to testify to a practice history that scores 90 percent or more of the total score, the Board may approve the applicant's registration. Where the score is less than 90 percent, the applicant shall then meet with a Practice Assessment Panel for further review, possibly leading to a recommendation for registration or for a course of action that will lead to the demonstration of competency and, thus, registration.

It is essential that the self-assessment be complete and in sufficient detail to allow the Board to decide the next step.