

FAQ – Recency of practice

This FAQ provides supplementary information for registrants in meeting the Paramedicine Board of Australia's (the Board's) [Registration standard: Recency of practice](#).

The recency of practice registration standard applies to all registered paramedics and those applying for registration except for:

- students;
- recent graduates applying for registration for the first time; and
- practitioners with non-practising registration.

The public has a right to expect that paramedics will provide safe and effective care. The Board's requirements will help you provide safe and competent health services following a break in practice.

Regulatory principles

The Board has endorsed a set of regulatory principles, which inform the Board's approach to decision making. The principles are:

- The longer you have been away from practice, the greater the potential risk to the public.
- The Board's primary consideration is the protection of the public.
- Protecting the safety of the public requires informed decision-making about the extent of an individual's time away from clinical practice and the extent to which that is relevant to their ability to practice. To do this, the Board:
 - identifies the risks that it is required to respond to;
 - assesses the likelihood and possible consequences of the risks; and
 - responds in a way that manages risks proportionately so the Board can adequately protect the public.
- The Board's response to risk considers the need to uphold professional standards and maintain public confidence in the profession.

The Board uses the minimum regulatory force necessary to manage the risk.

What must I do?

To meet this registration standard, you must complete a minimum of:

- a. 150 hours of practice in the previous 12 months; or
- b. 450 hours of practice in the previous three years; or
- c. 750 hours of practice in the previous five years with no continuous absence from practice of greater than two years.

This standard sets minimum requirements to maintain recency of practice. Meeting these requirements doesn't automatically satisfy your professional and ethical responsibilities to ensure that you recognise and work within the limits of your competence and maintain adequate knowledge and skills to provide safe and effective care.

By declaring on an application that you meet the Board's recency requirements, you are saying that you have the required minimum practice hours within your current scope of practice.

Are there exemptions to this standard?

There are no exemptions to this standard.

What does this mean for me?

When you apply for registration

When you apply for registration as a paramedic, you must meet this registration standard. This includes practitioners who are applying for new or additional types of registration, such as changing from non-practising to general registration.

You don't need to meet this registration standard if you are a recent graduate applying for registration for the first time and it is within two years of finishing your qualification.

At renewal of registration

When you renew your registration, you **must** declare if you comply with this registration standard.

During the registration period

Your compliance with this registration standard may be audited from time to time. It may also be checked if the Board receives a notification (complaint) about you.

Other possible consequences

The National Law establishes other possible consequences if you don't meet the recency of practice requirements in this standard, including that registration standards, codes or guidelines may be used in disciplinary proceedings against you as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional practice or conduct for the profession (section 41 of the National Law).

I work part-time - will I meet the standard?

You can work part-time or temporarily and still meet the requirements of the standard.

For example:

- Working one day a week (7.5 hours a day) for at least five months in a year should be enough to meet the standard, so long as the total hours worked meets the minimum number of hours required in the standard.
- Working one day a month (7.5 hours a day), will probably not be enough to meet the standard.

Can I have a year off and still meet the recency of practice standard?

Yes, the recency of practice standard allows you to be flexible in how you meet the standard over a one, three, or five-year period. You don't need to practice every year if you practiced in your scope of practice for at least 450 hours over the previous three-year period or 750 hours over the preceding five-year period before applying for registration or renewal of registration.

The block of hours can be at any time during the three or five-year period, in one block or multiple blocks. For example, you could practice in year one, have year two off and practice again in year three.

The following table shows some of the ways you can meet the minimum requirements of the registration standard.

Year	Practitioner A	Practitioner B	Practitioner C	Practitioner D	Practitioner E	Practitioner F
2020	150 hours	100 hours	100 hours	50 hours	150 hours	100 hours
2019	150 hours	100 hours	50 hours	0 hours	0 hours	0 hours
2018	150 hours	100 hours	300 hours	400 hours	0 hours	300 hours
2017	150 hours	0 hours	0 hours	0 hours	0 hours	0 hours
2016	150 hours	450 hours	0 hours	0 hours	0 hours	350 hours

My role is non-clinical – can I still meet the requirements?

The definition of practice¹ is broad and can include both clinical practice and non-clinical roles. You may not have any direct contact with patients, but if your work relates to your practice of the profession, you can meet the recency of practice standard, if you have practiced at least the minimum number of hours in your chosen scope of practice.

For example, if your scope of practice involves a teaching, research or policy role relating to your profession, you may be able to use these roles to meet the standard.

I do a mix of clinical practice and some administration work – will I meet the standard?

It's your responsibility to make sure that you are safe and competent in your scope of practice. The definition of practice is broad and includes both clinical and non-clinical practice. If the administrative work and/or clinical practice you perform fall within the practice definition, you will satisfy the requirements for recency of practice in the standard.

If you have not completed the required number of hours to remain safe and competent in the clinical aspects of your scope of practice, you may be required to carry out some supervised practice, further education and training, or an assessment or examination, to assess your competence to practice.

What happens if I don't meet the requirements?

If you haven't completed the minimum hours required by the registration standard, you will need to advise the Board when you renew your registration. This will not necessarily prevent you from renewing your registration and continuing to practice or returning to practice.

To assure your recency, the Board may require you to carry out some supervised practice, further education and training, or an assessment or examination to ensure you are safe and competent to practice. In making this decision, the Board will consider:

- your experience
- the length of your absence from practice
- the amount of practice completed
- the role/scope of practice you wish to undertake
- CPD activities or relevant study undertaken

¹ Practice means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a health practitioner in their profession. Practice in this context is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge (working) in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

- professional activities
- any other relevant factors

You will need to provide the Board with this information in a submission when required.

What does scope of practice mean?

Scope of practice is the professional role and services that an individual health practitioner is trained, qualified and competent to perform. A practitioner's scope of practice may include clinical and/or non-clinical practice. If your scope of practice is in a non-clinical role, you do not need to practice in a clinical role to meet the recency of practice standard. However, depending on the amount of time away from clinical practice, you may need to meet more requirements to return to clinical practice.

The Board's code of conduct requires paramedics to recognise and work within the limits of their competence and scope of practice.

I'm changing/extending my scope of practice – what do I need to do?

If you are changing your scope of practice, you may be required to complete extra training to ensure you are competent in the new scope of practice.

The requirements vary depending on the change that you are making.

- a. If you are narrowing your scope of practice, there are no extra requirements.
- b. If you are extending your scope of practice to a new area, you must undertake the training that your peers would reasonably expect before taking up the new area of practice.
- c. If you are making a substantial change to your scope of practice (for example, moving from a non-clinical role such as an administrative role back to clinical practice), you must develop a professional development plan for approval by the Board, that details the activities that you intend to do to ensure your competence in the new scope of practice.

You **must not** practice in the new scope of practice until the Board has approved your professional development plan.

The Board will consider several factors when reviewing your professional development plan, and you may be required to carry out some supervised practice, further education and training, or an assessment or examination to assess your competence to practice in this new role to ensure you remain safe and competent.

What happens if I'm audited?

If you are audited, you will need to give evidence that you have met the requirements of the standard. The evidence that you give will depend on your practice. You may give evidence of your employment which could include:

- pay advice; or
- correspondence from your employer/s; or
- other evidence of practice that you have carried out.

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