



Return to Practice Policy

Policy Domain:	Education
Policy Area:	CPD
Policy Author:	CPD Committee
Contact:	Director, Education Services
Version:	1.00
Approval Details:	Professional Standards Committee
Effective Date:	January 2018
Review Date:	December 2019
Related Policies/Regulations	Recency of Practice, Mandatory Participation, AHPRA Regulations

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a pathway for safe return to clinical practice for a Fellow who is returning to practice after a period of absence of longer than 3 years.

SCOPE

The guidelines outline a plan for the support and encouragement of a Fellow returning to practice after a period of absence of longer than 3 years. It covers who will guide the plan and what needs to be included in the plan.

DEFINITIONS

Continuing Professional Development is the means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives.

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

THE POLICY

The aim of the Return to Practice Plan is to enable a Fellow who has had a prolonged period of absence from clinical practice or an element of practice to return to active clinical practice by demonstrating the same standard of safe practice as his/her peers.

Pursuant to 5(c) of the Continuing Professional Development Registration Standard and 1(c) of the Recency of Practice Registration Standard issued by the Medical Board of Australia, and the Recency of Practice Policy issued by the Australasian College of Dermatologists, a plan for Re-entry to Practice and Professional Development must be provided to the Australian Medical Board for consideration for any absence from practice that is greater than three years.

When a Fellow has been absent from practice for a period greater than three years it is important that the Fellow is supported and encouraged prior to returning to practice, and during the beginning period of recommencement of practice.

The Fellow is required to apply in writing to the Honorary Secretary for resumption of practice. They should include the following documentation:

- An application to resume practice
- An explanatory letter of explanation outlining reasons for wishing to resume practice
- A signed 'Good Character' declaration
- And payment of College membership subscriptions

The Hon Sec will discuss the application with the CPD Committee and if the Fellow is deemed able to resume practice a Plan for Re-entry will be instituted.

Re-Entry to Practice Plan

The details of the Re-entry to Practice Plan will vary from Fellow to Fellow depending on a number of factors including, but not limited to, length of absence, reasons for the absence, requirements as determined by the Fellow, mentor and supervisor.

As part of the Re-entry to Practice Plan two people need to be assigned to the Fellow returning to practice.

1. A Mentor

A Fellow of the College who practices near to the Fellow who is returning to practice will need to be assigned as a Mentor to help support and encourage the Fellow as they return to practice.

- a. The mentor will be in place for at least 12 months
- b. The mentor will have completed, or be willing to complete, the College Mentoring program
- c. The mentor will meet regularly with the Fellow to review progress

2. A Supervisor

A Fellow of the College who would be willing to supervise the Re-entry to Practice Plan Fellow.

- a. The supervisor would be in place for the duration of the Re-entry to Practice Plan.
- b. The supervisor would be similar to a Supervisor of Training for Trainee Positions.

In order to begin to devise a Plan for Re-entry to Practice the following questions need to be considered:

1. How does the Fellow want to practice?
2. What is the Fellow capable of practicing?

Depending on the reason for the absence the Fellow may not be able to perform all aspects of practice as they once did. It is important therefore to be sensitive to the needs and abilities of the Fellow.

A target level of scope and capability needs to be agreed upon by both the Fellow and the College. Then a plan needs to be devised to help the Fellow reach that target.

The Plan needs to include the following aspects:

1. Goals and expected outcomes as discussed between the Fellow, mentor and supervisor
2. Timeline
 - a. A clear timeline that has knowledge and skill milestones needs to be constructed.
 - i. The timing of the milestones is to be discussed with the Fellow returning to practice so that they are clear, precise and manageable.
3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
 - a. If minimum CPD has been maintained during the absence from practice then it will not be necessary to complete any CPD requirements prior to recommencement of practice. However continuation of CPD activities will be required.
 - b. If minimum CPD has not been maintained during the absence from practice then a minimum of one year's pro rata of CPD activities relevant to the intended scope of practice must be completed prior to recommencement.
4. Assessment of knowledge and clinical skills

- a. The assessment of knowledge and clinical skills can be done as a continuing assessment under the purview of the Supervisor.
 - b. A training logbook should be maintained
 - c. In certain cases it may be necessary for the Fellow to undertake assessment tasks from the Training Program eg. ProDAs, Derm-CEXs, Vivas
5. A final assessment using a SITA form will be completed and submitted to the CPD Committee and / or NExC for evaluation of the Fellow's progress and competency to return to practice unsupervised. If the Fellow is considered not yet able to practice the Re-entry Plan will continue.

REFERENCES / REGULATIONS

Continuing Professional Development Registration Standard, Medical Board of Australia
Recency of Practice Registration standard, Medical Board of Australia