

	Title: Position Statement 8: Recency of Practice	
	Date Reviewed: October 2019	Version PS8.19.0
	Approved by: Executive Council	Next Review: October 2020

RECENCY OF PRACTICE

MEDIA RELEASE

The ADOHTA supports the need to ensure its members are providing relevant, professional and competent care to their clients in a safe environment. To ensure practitioners are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled in current oral health care practices they must show that they fulfil the Recency of Practice requirements as stated by The Dental Board of Australia Registration Standard. Recency of practice means that the practitioner has maintained an adequate connection with, and recent practice in the profession since qualifying for, or obtaining the registration. Compliance will ensure safety and competency and maintain the public's confidence in the dental profession.

FURTHER EXPLANATION

Recency of Practice applies to all dental applicants or practitioners who have not practiced in the previous 5 years and are applying for registration, renewing their registration or changing their registration from non-practicing to practicing. This is regardless of whether work has been full time or part time, remunerated or not. This does not apply to new graduates registering for the first time. New graduates must register to practice within the first year of graduation.

'Practice' may be used to broadly describe any professional clinical, academic, research, advisory, regulatory or policy developmental roles, management or administration work within the field of oral care. The practitioner should also be able to declare they have fulfilled other competency indicators, which may include;

- Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and ongoing education e.g. formal seminars, workshops, lectures and conferences.
- Self-directed professional development e.g. subscribing to professional publications, internet access, discussions with other work practitioners and professional colleagues or study groups.
- Maintaining a professional portfolio (which would particularly suit those members involved in education, research or administration)
- Experience in another professional stream e.g. clinical, education, research or administration.

When assessing an application, the Dental Board will also consider the applicant's registration and practice history, the amount of time the applicant has not practiced for and when the person's primary qualification was awarded.

A sample of applications may be audited each year. It is advised to retain records as evidence of your Recency of Practice. ADOHTA advises its members to do more than the board's minimal standards to ensure you maintain your competence, skills and knowledge in your work. ADOHTA recognizes the need to take into account that its members may need to take leave from their profession for extended periods for family or health reasons and in doing so should not be unduly disadvantaged. A flexible approach in applying Recency of Practice requirements will benefit both the practitioner and the profession.

There are however no exemptions to this standard and members should be aware of this when taking leave from the profession. Your Recency of Practice may also be checked if the Board receives a notification about you.

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NON-COMPLIANCE WITH RECENCY OF PRACTICE REQUIREMENT

If applicants fail to meet the Recency of Practice criteria, they may be required to undergo a written, oral or practical examination prior to registration being granted. Depending on the reason for non-compliance, practitioners may be expected to undertake any number of remedial courses including;

- Successfully completing a recognized 'return to practice' course
- Demonstrating competence in an approved setting under direct or indirect supervision
- Undertaking assessment or examination
- Undertaking a specific amount or type of Continuing Professional Development

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as is in force in each state and territory the Dental Board of Australia can;

Impose conditions on your application for registration or renewal of your registration or can refuse your application
 Impose disciplinary proceedings against you

ADOHTA recommends its members who have had a leave of absence from the profession to use the Dental Board's [Recency of Practice/Return to Practice Self-Assessment Tool](#) for Dental Therapists, Dental Hygienists or Oral Health Therapist.

RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ADOHTA believes that regular and ongoing consultative evaluation of its Recency of Practice requirements will help to achieve the primary objectives of the Dental Act by

Ensuring health care is delivered by registrants in a professional, safe and competent way
 Upholding standards of practice within the profession
 Maintaining public confidence in the profession

You should be aware that, at this point, there are no formal workforce re-entry programs available to people who have let their recency of practice lapse. Please ensure you make informed decisions about taking leave from or ceasing practice prior to a decision to do so, as it can be difficult to re-enter the workforce after a long break. This also applies to decisions to limit your practice to one area of your scope- for example orthodontic practice or either dental therapy or dental hygiene practice if you are qualified in both areas.

Reference: Dental Board of Australia Registration Standard: Recency of Practice
 Approved by Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council 27 August 2015