



Psychotherapy & Counselling  
Federation of Australia

# **PACFA Membership and Registration Requirements and Annual Renewal Requirements**

## **1. Application Requirements**

### **1.1 Provisional and Clinical Membership and Registration Requirements**

Provisional and Clinical membership of PACFA are individual PACFA membership categories which include PACFA registration. Provisional and Clinical registration with PACFA is also available to eligible members of PACFA Member Associations.

There are three pathways to PACFA membership and registration in the practising categories. Approval of applications under any of these pathways leads to practising membership or registration with PACFA at either Provisional and Clinical level.

- i) Accredited Training Pathway
- ii) Equivalent Training Pathway
- iii) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

For Applicants who have completed an Accredited training program, there is a certification option which will enable specific types of professional recognition in circumstances where government or other stakeholders have specified that the training must be accredited by government in accordance with the AQF. PACFA will continue to advocate for the accreditation of alternate pathways in line with current policy developments in relation to the AQF.

#### **i) Accredited Training Pathway**

Applicants for Provisional membership or registration who have completed Accredited training programs can demonstrate completion of training that meets the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards which are based on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) standards and levels of learning. See [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au).

To meet the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards, the qualification must be approved by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA), the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) at either the undergraduate or postgraduate levels (AQF level 7 to 9) or PACFA.

Training programs in counselling or psychotherapy accredited by PACFA are automatically recognised by PACFA for the purposes of PACFA membership. PACFA accreditation ensures that the curriculum, volume of learning and supervised practice requirements have been assessed as meeting the PACFA Training Standards.

Programs that are accredited by TEQSA or ASQA at AQF level 7 to 9 but which are not accredited by PACFA are not automatically recognised by PACFA for the purposes of PACFA membership. These programs must be assessed by PACFA, at the time the membership application is received, against the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards in terms of curriculum, volume of learning and supervised practice requirements.

An additional assessment fee applies to applications from graduates of Accredited training programs that are not accredited by PACFA.

### ***Curriculum***

The curriculum must cover all of the subject areas detailed in the PACFA Training Standards addressing subject knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills in the discipline of counselling and psychotherapy.

### ***Volume of Learning***

The minimum volume of learning requirements listed below apply to any program, whether undergraduate or postgraduate.

400 hours of instruction (minimum) (applicable to AQF level 7-9). This may be made up of:

- i) 200 hours direct person-to-person learning of which 60 hours may be synchronous online (e.g., interactive webinars).
  - This equates to 140 hours, which must be solely taught face-to-face, plus 60 hours of synchronous training
  - The central focus of this person-to-person learning is on interpersonal and/or therapeutic skills development
- ii) 200 hours of learning may be conducted via online asynchronous training for theory-based studies.

### ***Supervised practice***

A minimum of 40 hours of face-to-face counselling or psychotherapy practice (client contact) with 10 hours of supervision (related to client contact) must be completed within or in tandem with training and assessed as successful by the training provider. Successful completion of supervised practice is required to be evidenced by a log signed by the responsible supervisor(s).

For Clinical Membership and Registration, an additional 75 hours of post-qualifying supervision linked to 750 additional hours of post-qualifying client contact, accumulated over a minimum two-year period, are required. Hours of supervised client contact that are completed post-training may be undertaken via synchronous video conferencing or telephone.

### **ii) Equivalent Training Pathway**

The requirements for the Equivalent training Pathway are the same as the requirements above, except that the training program is not accredited by TEQSA, ASQA or PACFA.

Applicants under this Pathway can demonstrate completion of training that is *equivalent to* PACFA Training Standards. As the program is not accredited by PACFA, the program must be assessed by PACFA against the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards in terms of curriculum, volume of learning and supervised practice requirements.

Applicants who may apply under this Pathway may include but are not limited to:

- Graduates of psychotherapy training programs, whose training is assessed by PACFA as equivalent to the PACFA Training Standards and also assessed by the College of Psychotherapy as meeting the Entry Requirements for the College of Psychotherapy; (to meet the College of Psychotherapy's Entry Requirements, applicants are expected to demonstrate their formation as a psychotherapist through their training, supervised practice and personal therapy);
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practitioners, whose training is assessed by PACFA's College of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices (CATSIHP) as having training or formation as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practitioner that is *equivalent to* PACFA Training Standards;
- Graduates of counselling training programs, whose training is assessed by PACFA as being equivalent to the PACFA Training Standards; and

An additional assessment fee applies to applications under this Pathway.

Members and Registrants who are approved via the Equivalent Training Pathway may progress to Clinical Membership and Registration upon completion of the additional 75 hours of post-qualifying supervision linked to 750 additional hours of post-qualifying client contact, accumulated over a minimum two-year period. Hours of supervised client contact completed post-training may be undertaken via synchronous video conferencing or telephone.

NOTE: As the training for the Equivalent Training Pathway is not accredited by TEQSA or ASQA, the certification option currently under development by PACFA will not necessarily be available to Members and Registrants who join via this Pathway, though as noted above, PACFA will continue to advocate for the recognition of alternate training pathways in line with current policy developments in relation to the AQF.

### **iii) Recognition of Prior Learning**

Where an applicant's professional training, supervision and development do not fit the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards or equivalent, they may apply to PACFA for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Provisional or Clinical membership or registration.

Applicants who may apply via RPL may include but are not limited to:

- Psychotherapists or counsellors whose training in psychotherapy or counselling does not meet all of the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards but who have other relevant training and/or substantial, relevant supervised practice experience, as assessed by the relevant PACFA College;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing practitioners whose training as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Healing Practitioner does not meet all of the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards but who have other relevant training and/or substantial, relevant supervised practice experience, as assessed by the College of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices (CATSIHP);

- Graduates from cognate fields (such as psychiatry, psychology, social work or occupational therapy) whose training is accredited by TEQSA or ASQA at AQF level 7 to 9 and who complete additional training in psychotherapy or counselling that does not meet all of the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards but who have other relevant training and/or substantial, relevant supervised practice experience.

RPL applicants must demonstrate how the totality of their training and experience is equivalent to the requirements of the PACFA Training Standards. Refer to the *Guidelines for RPL Applications* for more details of the evidence required to demonstrate equivalence.

An additional assessment fee applies for applications via RPL.

Members and Registrants who are approved via RPL may progress to Clinical Membership and Registration upon completion of the additional 75 hours of post-qualifying supervision linked to 750 additional hours of post-qualifying client contact, accumulated over a minimum two-year period. Hours of supervised client contact that are completed post-training may be undertaken via synchronous video conferencing or telephone.

NOTE: The certification option will not necessarily be available to Members and Registrants whose entry to PACFA is via RPL, though efforts to advocate for the recognition of this equivalence will be made in line with current policy developments in relation to the AQF.

## **1.2 Academic Membership Requirements**

Educators who deliver counselling or psychotherapy training and researchers in counselling or psychotherapy who do not meet the PACFA Training Standards may be eligible for Academic membership of PACFA where they can provide evidence of:

- A relevant qualification at Masters level or higher from a cognate field; and
- A continuing contribution to counselling and/or psychotherapy education or research in a work-related role.

Academic membership is a non-practising membership category so it does not include PACFA registration. Educators and researchers who are also practising as counsellors or psychotherapists as required to apply under one of the pathways leading to Provisional and Clinical Membership or Registration.

## **2. Annual Renewal Requirements**

Clinical and Provisional and Academic Members of PACFA, including Registrants belonging to PACFA Members Associations, must demonstrate that they have met the applicable Renewal Requirements for ongoing professional development, supervision, ethical practice and professional indemnity insurance on an annual basis.

### **2.1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Provisional and Clinical Members and Registrants and Academic Members**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements are intended to support the obligation of professional counsellors and psychotherapists to maintain currency within their profession and with

new developments in clinical practice. Members and Registrants must undertake a minimum of 20 hours of CPD in the period 1 July to 30 June each year. The following categories of CPD apply:

**Category A:** Minimum annual requirement – 15 hours

The whole annual requirement of 20 CPD hours may be accrued from Category A only.

**Category B:** Maximum claimable annual allowance - 5 hours

The 20 hours of CPD must be accrued in the 12 months prior to membership renewal i.e. between 1 July and 30 June in the previous 12 months. The CPD requirements for a registration period of less than 12 months can be taken pro rata in the first year of membership or registration. Pro rata CPD will be calculated on a monthly basis, for example, for 6 months of registration, the requirements will be halved to 10 hours.

For details, refer to the *PACFA CPD Policy*.

## **2.2 Guidelines for content of CPD**

- CPD should be relevant to ongoing **clinical** practice as a counsellor and/or psychotherapist.
- CPD should be relevant to the core competencies of counselling and/or psychotherapy practice.

For details refer to the *PACFA CPD Policy*.

## **2.3 Clinical Supervision**

### **2.3.1 Supervision Requirements for Clinical and Provisional Members and Registrants**

Clinical and Provisional Members and Registrants who have accrued up to 400 client practice hours over the year must have undertaken 10 hours of formal supervision linked to their practice.

Clinical and Provisional Members and Registrants who have accrued more than 400 client practice hours over the year must have undertaken 15 hours of formal supervision linked to their practice.

It is recommended that practitioners with a full-time practice seek additional hours of supervision proportional to the client practice hours they accrue.

Supervision may be individual or in a group setting with no more than six participants.

### **2.3.2 Peer Supervision for Clinical Members and Registrants**

PACFA Clinical Members and Registrants who are eligible to participate in Peer Supervision may claim a maximum of 50% of the required 10 (or 15) hours of supervision as Peer Supervision.

Peer Supervision can only be claimed by Clinical Members and Registrants who have been listed as PACFA Clinical Registrants continuously for at least five years prior to the commencement of peer supervision. Where a Registrant has not been listed as a Clinical Registrant with PACFA for 5 years prior to the commencement of peer supervision, evidence of prior eligibility for clinical registration (i.e. evidence that the Registrant had completed 750 post-qualifying client contact hours linked to 75 hours of post-qualifying supervision hours) AND evidence of the 5 years supervised practice since becoming eligible for clinical registration is to be provided, in order to be eligible to claim Peer Supervision.

Peer supervision is a formal process in which practitioners contract to provide collegial feedback, critique and enhancement of each other's clinical practice. Colleagues or peers work together for mutual benefit, and rotate the roles of supervisor and supervisee. Peer supervision can be undertaken as a dyad or within a group of no more than six participants.

#### **2.4 Renewal Requirements for Mental Health Practitioners and Accredited Supervisors**

For PACFA **Accredited Mental Health Practitioners**, it is **recommended** that:

- 5 hours of the 20 hours of CPD relates specifically to mental health practice. This requirement may involve activities from Categories A or B.
- 5 hours of the 15 hours supervision relates specifically to mental health practice.

For PACFA **Accredited Supervisors** it is **recommended** that:

- 5 hours of the 20 hours of CPD relates specifically to supervision practice. This requirement may involve activities from Categories A or B.
- 5 hours of the 15 hours supervision relates specifically to supervision practice.

#### **2.5 Other Renewal Requirements**

As part of the annual renewal process, Provisional and Clinical Members and Registrants and Academic Members are also required to:

- Renew their individual membership of PACFA or demonstrate current membership of a PACFA Member Association;
- Complete a signed declaration that they agree to adhere to the PACFA Code of Ethics and Complaint Procedures; and
- Complete a signed declaration that they hold Professional Indemnity Insurance.

