

# DIAGNOSTIC CAPACITY OF REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGISTS IN AUSTRALIA

## Key Facts

All psychologists with general registration in Australia are qualified to assess and diagnose mental health conditions. This includes the capacity to inform educational accommodations, functional assessments, disability support, and employment-related recommendations.

Diagnosis is a core component of general registration. The Psychology Board of Australia, the national regulator, requires all registered psychologists to meet competencies in psychological assessment and diagnosis.

Endorsement is not required to diagnose. An Area of Practice Endorsement (AoPE) (e.g. clinical, counselling, educational) is not a separate registration type and does not confer exclusive diagnostic rights.

## Psychology Board of Australia

The Psychology Board of Australia (part of Ahpra) is the statutory regulator responsible for overseeing the registration and practice of psychologists under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

The Psychology Board:

- Sets the standards for registration as a psychologist in Australia
- Approves education and training programs
- Develops and enforces professional competencies, guidelines, and codes of conduct
- Administers the National Psychology Exam
- Oversees compliance with the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law

The Board recognises three registration types only:

- Provisional (in training)
- General (fully qualified, independently practising)
- Non-practising

An Area of Practice Endorsement (AoPE) is a notation to general registration. All psychologists with general registration have the same legal capacity to assess and diagnose mental health and psychological conditions.

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## Core Diagnostic Competencies Required for General Registration

Under the *General Registration Standard*, psychologists must demonstrate:

- Competency in psychological assessment and measurement
- Ability to use diagnostic systems such as the DSM 5TR
- Capacity to make informed diagnostic judgments based on assessment outcomes

These competencies are developed through accredited training programs, including:

- 4+2 and 5+1 internship pathways
- Postgraduate coursework and supervised practice
- The National Psychology Exam, which assesses readiness to practise independently

## Legal and Professional Recognition

- Courts, government departments, and statutory bodies across Australia have accepted diagnoses from registered psychologists.
- The legal system recognises the competency of psychologists to provide diagnostic opinions for Centrelink, Medicare, schools, and tribunals.

## Clarifying Misconceptions

Misconception	Fact
Only clinical psychologists can diagnose	False – All psychologists with general registration can diagnose
AoPE is a separate type of registration	False – AoPE is a notation, not a separate registration
Psychologists need endorsement to contribute to school or disability supports	False – psychologists without endorsement routinely do so and are qualified to do so

## Recommended References

1. General Registration Standard
2. Professional competencies for psychologists- effective 1 December 2025
3. 4+2 and 5+1 Internship Guidelines
4. National Psychology Exam Curriculum

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## Professional Responsibility

Each psychologist must ensure that they:

- Operate within their scope of competence
- Seek supervision or referral when working outside their experience
- Follow the Code of Ethics and Board's Code of Conduct

## AAPi's Position

AAPi strongly advocates for recognition of the full scope of practice of all registered psychologists, regardless of endorsement status.

Restricting diagnostic rights based on endorsement is inconsistent with the regulatory framework, training pathways, and legal precedent in Australia.

For further clarification or advocacy support, contact:

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