

Return to Practice Policy

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Related Policies/ Procedures:	<i>Mandatory Declarations Policy Recency of Practice Policy Practitioner Accreditation Policy Scope of Practice Framework Policy</i>	Delegated Officer	<i>Regulations Officer</i>

Return to Practice Policy

Policy Overview

The Return to Practice Policy provides an alternate pathway for exercise and sports science professionals who cannot demonstrate recency of practice to hold ESSA accreditation. Return to Practice programs are a quality assurance measure aimed at ensuring individuals can maintain currency and the ability to practice safely and effectively.

Application/Scope

Return to practice programs apply to individuals at the time of initial accreditation, renewal of accreditation and reinstating accreditation after a period of non-accreditation where the requirements of the [Recency of Practice Policy](#) cannot be demonstrated.

Non-compliance with this Policy and associated policies and procedures may breach the ESSA Code of Professional Conduct and Ethical Practice and attract disciplinary action.

Definition

CPD – means continuing professional development.

Good Standing – means a person of reputable conduct and no known ethical or disciplinary history.

Lapsed accreditation – means non-renewed accreditation.

Leave of absence – means a formal break from membership and/or accreditation. Leave of absence may be taken for study, travel, parental leave, or other reasons.

Mentor – means an appropriately qualified and experienced person who provides support and advice to ensure safe practice of an exercise and sports science professional.

Non-accreditation – means a period where the accreditation status is not current due to lapse, leave of absence or suspension.

Non-practising – means a period where an individual has not practiced or does not meeting the recency of practice threshold.

Practice – means any role, whether paid or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a practitioner in their profession. Practice includes the direct provision of services to clients and other activities using professional knowledge and skills in a direct clinical or non-clinical way. It also includes non-direct relationships with clients, such as working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles; and any other roles that impact on safe and effective delivery of exercise and sports science services.

Recency of practice threshold – as defined in the [Recency of Practice Policy](#).

Return to practice program – means a structured program of activities that may be required of an individual exercise and sports science professional to maintain their eligibility for accreditation on returning to practice.

Supervisor– means an appropriately qualified individual, as determined by ESSA, who directly or indirectly supervises practice and provides structured support and monitoring to ensure safe practice of an exercise and sports science professional.

Policy

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements of a pathway to gain initial accreditation, renewal of accreditation or return to practice after a period of non-accreditation, where recency of practice cannot be demonstrated, see the [Recency of Practice Policy](#).
- 1.2 The Return to Practice Program applies to:
 - 1.2.1 exercise and sports science professionals who have not practiced for more than 3 years
 - 1.2.2 exercise and sports science professionals who have not met the required practice threshold hours during their accreditation period and/or during periods of non-accreditation
- 1.3 The Return to Practice program is additional to the annual accreditation requirements.

2 ESSA Requirements

- 2.1 ESSA’s Return to Practice program involves undertaking a structured plan of activities to support safe and effective practice. The program may include:
 - 2.1.1 supervised practice
 - 2.1.2 mentorship
 - 2.1.3 additional Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
 - 2.1.4 other activities at the discretion of ESSA
- 2.2 The Return to Practice Program must be completed as determined by ESSA.
- 2.3 The Return to Practice Program requirements will vary dependent on the professional's duration spent non-practising; see **Table 1**.
- 2.4 Return to practice program activities for individuals who have not practised in **five years or more**, will be determined at the discretion of ESSA. ESSA will consider the following factors when determining the program activities:
 - 2.4.1 ESSA accreditation type/s and practice history
 - 2.4.2 length of time away from practice
 - 2.4.3 any practice prior to period of non-accreditation
 - 2.4.4 any CPD completed during a period of non-accreditation
 - 2.4.5 intended area of practice upon return
 - 2.4.6 support resources accessible to the individual

Table 1.

3 Years and below		More than 3 years, less than 5 Years		5 years and above	
Pre return	Nil. <i>Individuals should complete CPD to ensure their currency.</i>	Pre return	Individuals must complete and submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring Plan • CPD Plan • Evidence of 10 CPD points including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - minimum 7.5 points from Further Education activities • Any other activities as determined by ESSA. 	Pre return	Program requirements will be at the determination of ESSA.
Post return	Nil	Post return	Individuals must complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 hours of mentoring within 12 months of reinstating. • Any other activities as determined by ESSA. 	Post return	Program requirements will be at the determination of ESSA.

2.5 Mentors and Supervisors must:

- 2.5.1 have relevant qualifications and experience to the practice activities being undertaken by the exercise and sports science professional
- 2.5.2 be an individual of good standing
- 2.5.3 meet any other requirements as determined by ESSA

2.6 CPD and mentoring plans must be submitted to ESSA before commencing the Return to Practice program.

3 Exemptions

- 3.1 Failure to engage or complete the program in the stipulated timeframes, may lead to suspension of accreditation status.
- 3.2 Extensions may be granted to the timeline defined within the Return to Practice Program, in extenuating circumstances and at the discretion of ESSA.

4 Supplying Evidence

- 4.1 ESSA may request evidence of completion of return to practice activities at its discretion, and through ESSA’s annual accreditation audit.
- 4.2 Evidence must be supplied to ESSA on request.



5 Record Keeping

5.1 Evidence of completion of the Return to Practice Program must be kept for a minimum of 7 years.

Policy Modification History *This section will be managed by the Operations Manager*

Date:	Version no.	Details:	Author/Reviewer
December 2012	1	New Policy	
January 2016	2	Updated to reflect AES and international/RTP examination details	
August 2017	3	Updated to reflect AES, ASpS and AHPM requirements, and NASRHP compliance	
January 2018	4	Updated to reflect 2018 CPD Points System Category changes	
December 2018	5	Updated to reflect 2019 CPD requirements and removal of SCPD module	
January 2020	6	Updated to reflect reinclude of Standards & Compliance Professional Development requirement	Standards Manager
October 2021	7	Scheduled Policy Review	Standards Manager