

Policy

Application for Retired Fellow Status



Authorising Body:	Board
Responsible Committee(s):	Membership Engagement Committee
Responsible Department(s):	Membership, Events & Publications
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Background

Pursuant to Article 3.3.3 of the RANZCP Constitution, 'The Board may grant Fellowship for life, pursuant to Regulations, to a Fellow of the College who formally declares that he/she has completely and permanently retired from practice as a specialist psychiatrist. A retired Fellow thus granted shall have the same powers, privileges and liabilities as a Fellow but shall not be required to pay any annual subscription or other fee and shall be exempt from any professional development requirements.'

For the purposes of retirement, the following definition of Practice applies:

'Practice as a specialist psychiatrist' is defined by the RANZCP to include all forms of medicine, psychiatry, medico-legal work, and other specialist non-clinical work such as medical administration, academia, and involvement in panels, tribunals and boards.

This policy provides the framework to oversee the implementation of Article 3.3.3 and will be applied on a case-by-case basis by the Membership Engagement Committee and approved by the College Board.

Definition of Practice, CPD obligations and permissible activities while retired

Fellows must consider their own individual circumstances and continuing regulatory obligations when deciding what activities they participate in surrounding retirement.

This Policy provides general guidance and principles only for Fellows approaching or who have retired, and they are encouraged to seek their own advice from their medical defence organisation, employing organisation/institution requirements, and review current guidance from their national regulatory bodies/medical boards when deciding if the activity they wish to engage in is still considered Practice.

A Fellow participating in any of the activities outlined in the RANZCP definition of Practice must remain a practising Fellow of the College and continue to complete Continuing Professional Development requirements, irrespective of remuneration, frequency or duration. Fellows must maintain these educational and professional standards as a requirement of Fellowship, and in the interests of:

- patient safety and public health and safety, and duty of care
- the implied level of professionalism and need for continuous learning as a Fellow of the College
- upholding the reputation of the College
- upholding the reputation and public confidence in the profession of psychiatry

Registration and CPD obligations

The onus remains on the Retired Fellow to not engage in practice, and if they do, they are required to meet both their national registration obligations and College CPD requirements, as well as be a 'practising' Fellow with the College (see 'Returning to practice from retirement').

It is expected that upon declaring their retirement to the College, a Fellow's practising medical registration has also ceased or is not being renewed with their national regulatory body/medical board, other than in exceptional circumstances which are to be disclosed by the Fellow. 'Retired Fellow' is not a recognised registration status with national regulatory bodies/medical boards.

As a requirement of their medical registration, a Fellow must continue to complete any professional development requirements and cannot be retired from the College's CPD program until their practising medical registration ceases.

Australian medical practitioners also have the option of transitioning their registration with the Medical Board of Australia to 'non practising' when they declare their retirement. Non-practising registration removes the requirement to meet CPD obligations.

RANZCP members who hold 'non-practising' status are not automatically required by the College to declare their retirement, unless they are completely and permanently retired from practice as a specialist psychiatrist. The College recognises and supports members who are unable to engage in practice due to personal, health or other circumstances which may prevent them from engaging in practice (whilst not having completely and permanently retired). Subscription fee relief options are available for non-practising members.

Retired Fellows

The College also acknowledges the valued contributions Retired Fellows can make, long after they cease active clinical work. Retired Fellows are encouraged to continue to participate in College activities that call on their years of career experience.

Retired Fellows must consider and undertake their own due diligence on whether the activity that they are proposing to engage in is still considered medical practice according to the regulatory body/board in their jurisdiction, and should consider the same guiding principles that apply to current practicing Fellows in relation to whether the activity they are proposing involves direct patient care, public health and safety, duty of care, the level of professionalism and continuous learning expected of a Fellow of the College, as well as the reputation of the College, the profession and public confidence in the profession of psychiatry.

The College notes that there may be different regulatory requirements for New Zealand medical practitioners concerning the definition of 'practice of medicine'¹ (18 May 2022) and that New Zealand College members should review the requirements of the [Medical Council of New Zealand](#) as part of their own due diligence process before engaging in any activity as a Retired Fellow.

The College recommends that in any activity that a Retired Fellow engages in that they have a responsibility to effectively disclose and communicate their retired status, their current registration status, and they are therefore unable to provide direct patient advice or care. Retired Fellows may wish to communicate this through an additional notation to their FRANZCP postnominal they use, for example 'FRANZCP (Retired) or 'FRANZCP (non-practising)'.

[The Medical Board of Australia](#) (15 March 2012) provides the following non-exhaustive general guidance for Australian practitioners.² Practitioners engaging in the following activities do not necessarily require any registration or may choose to hold non-practising registration:

¹ Available at: <https://www.mcnz.org.nz/our-standards/statements-definitions-and-publications/>

² Available at: <https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies.aspx>

- An examiner or assessor of medical students or medical graduates, when the student or graduate is not treating patients as part of the assessment, provided that the organisation on whose behalf they are acting believes that current practising registration is not necessary for the scope of activity.
- A tutor or teacher working in settings that involve simulated patients or settings in which there are no patients present, provided that the organisation on whose behalf they are acting believes that current practising registration is not necessary for the scope of activity.
- A researcher whose work does not include any human subjects and whose research facility does not require them to be registered.
- A person who speaks publicly about a health or medical related topic and who will not be giving any individual patient advice.
- A person serving on a board or committee or accreditation body, when their appointment is not dependent on their status as a 'registered medical practitioner'.
- A person who may be using skills and knowledge gained from an approved qualification but is not using a protected title, nor claiming or holding themselves out to be registered, such as a person in an advisory or policy role.
- A medical practitioner who is registered overseas and is visiting for any role not involved in providing treatment or opinion about the physical or mental health of any individuals.

Declaration of retirement and fees

A change of status to 'Fellow Retired' occurs by resolution of the Board, upon recommendation from the Membership Engagement Committee.

Fellows who completely and permanently retire from practice must give notice of their retirement to the Board by completing the [FRANZCP Declaration of Retirement Form](#). It is incumbent on Fellows to ensure that they notify the College of their retirement.

The declared date of retirement will be used to determine the date at which retired status becomes effective and any fees which remain outstanding.

Unless already exempted, Fellows remain liable to pay College subscription fees until such time as the Fellow's declaration of retirement is received. A pro-rata rate may be applied to the fees, as detailed below.

Where a Fellow is granted status of Fellow Retired and it is effective for part of the current year, the following pro-rata rates are applied on subscriptions for that year:

- Retired status effective 1 January–30 June: 50% reduction
- Retired status effective 1 July–31 December: 0% reduction.

Retired Fellows will remain liable for any accrued fees that remain unpaid from previous years.

Exemption from College subscription fees extends to fees for optional Faculties and Sections, however it does not extend to other optional services, subscriptions, events or products such as conferences and journals. Retired Fellows remain full members of the College, with full access to member services, benefits and communications.

Returning to practice from retirement

If a retired Fellow at any time resumes practice as a specialist psychiatrist, as defined by the definition of Practice above, they must immediately notify the College in writing to memberhelp@ranzcp.org. Notification must include details of the resumption of practice, and Fellows are normally also required to provide written evidence that their practising medical registration has been fully restored with the relevant medical board, and a letter of good standing (not more than two months old) in support of the Fellow by two other Fellows of the College (who have known the applicant for more than two years). If two such Fellows are not known to the applicant, alternate referees may be accepted in some circumstances. Such a change in status (i.e. back to a 'practising' Fellow) requires approval of the Board upon recommendation from the Membership Engagement Committee. Any outstanding and due College fees must also be paid prior to the applicant's status being reverted to 'practising' Fellow.

REVISION RECORD

Contact: Executive Manager, Membership, Events & Publications

Date	Version	Approver	Description
29/11/14	1.0	B2014/7 R25	New document.
17/03/21	2.0	B2021/3 R17	Updated to explain stringency of definition, and that members' practising medical registration should have ceased or not be renewed.
19/05/24	3.0	B2024/4 R18	Updated definition of Practice, examples of permissible activities once a Retired Fellow, updates to fee calculation method and services available.

NEXT REVIEW: