

Restrictions on Independent Practice: Policy and Guidance

Policy

Candidates are registered as Candidate Psychologists on the Conditional Register and hold a Candidate Psychologist Conditional Licence. Since January 2008, a restriction on that conditional licence has specified that candidates are not permitted to engage in their own independent practice until they are granted a Practising Licence. The intention of this practice restriction is to ensure that candidates have access to registered psychologists for collegial support, consultation and supervision in the workplace. Under the Regulated Health Professions Act, a conditional licence ceases to be valid where a registrant fails to comply with the conditions or restrictions on their licence (RHPA s. 45(2)(c)).

NSRP's Supervision Handbook includes a requirement for periodic contact between the candidate's NSRP Supervisor and his/her workplace supervisor. It is intended that this process will be one of the assessment methods used for monitoring and evaluating the candidate's progress. Candidates need to ensure that they have signed the appropriate consent forms allowing their manager/supervisor to provide feedback to their NSRP Supervisor. Preferably this manager/supervisor would be a psychologist. If however a psychologist is not available then another manager/supervisor who can provide evaluative feedback to the NSRP Supervisor would be acceptable. In this instance the candidate must have another psychologist for collegial support and consultation, in addition to his/her NSRP Supervisor.

As of January 2012, candidates on the Conditional Register are required to ensure that their NSRP Supervisor receives a copy of any performance evaluations that are conducted during their employment.

Policy Statement

Candidates are not permitted to conduct an independent practice. A primary purpose of the candidacy period is to assess the candidate in the core competency areas. Until the candidate has been assessed as ready for independent practice, has passed the required examinations, and has been granted a Practising Licence, all independent practice activities are viewed as inappropriate.

Candidates may have provided services under previously acquired credentials. Nonetheless, any related activities which fall within the scope of the practice of psychology are considered to be within NSRP's jurisdiction and must be supervised.

Guidance

NSRP has reviewed several scenarios in private practice related to this policy, and provides the following guidance.

In addition to providing workplace support, NSRP looks to have a Workplace Supervisor whom clients can contact regarding potential concerns about the candidate's practice. Clients should be advised of this option during the informed consent process. It is also important that the Workplace Supervisor is able to provide feedback to the Candidate's NSRP Supervisor when the Supervisor reaches out for employer contact. The Candidate's Workplace Supervisor should therefore be privy to client feedback and potential client concerns that they could share with the Candidate's NSRP Supervisor.

Candidates should include the name of the Workplace Supervisor and their NSRP supervisor as part of their informed consent process. Some clients may be reluctant to come to a Workplace Supervisor, and identifying the NSRP supervisor provides another pathway, if there are concerns. Related advice is also provided in the following guidance documentation: https://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Grievance_Policy.pdf

The practice setting is free to develop a Grievance brochure that outlines resolution options of whom can be approached if a client has concerns (e.g., the practice could develop a flowchart or graphic to help clients interpret the process). Contacting the NSRP Supervisor may be just one of several options.

With all of the above in mind, NSRP wants to ensure there are arrangements that fully support the candidate's practice during the period of candidacy when there is an independent practice restriction in place.

In force since January 2012 (policy) and December 2022 (guidance). Amalgamated, updated to reflect the Regulated Health Professions Act framework (conditional licence / Practising Licence), and updated, 2026. Issued by the Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology (formerly the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology). Policy originally issued January 2008 and revised January 2012; guidance issued December 2022.

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