

Associate Psychologist (AP)

Plain Language Version

About the Associate Psychologist (AP) role

Health New Zealand is making it easier for people to get support with mental health and addiction problems. An important part of this is training more health professionals to provide support.

We have been helping universities to train more students to become psychologists. Psychologists are one type of health professional. In mental health and addiction services they often assess people and provide therapy and psychological support.

At the moment there are not enough psychologists to support everyone who needs it. Some types of therapy and support are less complex. These could be provided by people with some training in psychology, but not as much training as a psychologist.

To help more people to get the support they need, we are working with the New Zealand Psychologists Board, and universities, to develop a new type of health professional. For now, this role is being called an associate psychologist (AP). The final decision on the name will be made later this year.

To become an AP, people will need to finish a university degree and then complete a one-year diploma. They will learn how to support tāngata whai ora, by providing the less complicated types of therapy and support. They will not replace the psychologists who already work in mental health and addiction services. These psychologists will provide the more complex types of therapy and support.

The APs will be registered health professionals. This means that people will need to have a qualification and show that they have the right skills to work as an AP. The APs will have to follow professional standards and a Code of Ethics. They will be supervised by other psychologists.

We are writing a document to support the employers of the new APs.

The New Zealand Psychologists Board is working on deciding:

- What type of knowledge and skills the APs will need to learn
- What type of support and therapy they will offer

How they will be supervised by psychologists. The New Zealand Psychologists Board are asking people for feedback about the new AP role.

Follow the link to the consultation here: [**Consultations | NZ Psychologists Board**](#)

Follow the link to the plain language summary of the NZPB consultation here: **[NZPB AP Consultation Plain Language Document](#)**

Other Useful links

The mental health and addiction workforce plan:

[Mental Health and Addiction Workforce Plan 2024-2027](#)

The announcement of University of Canterbury to provide training for APs:

[New associate psychology role to grow the mental health workforce | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

The announcement of Auckland University of Technology to provide training for APs:

[Auckland University of Technology to offer new psychology training | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

The New Zealand Psychologist Board information to the newly appointed Minister of Mental Health:

[Psychologists-Board-BIM-2024-MMH.pdf](#)