

Psychology Assistant

Plain Language Version

This is intended for the Psychology Assistant webpage on the Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora website. Approval for content for the public webpage is required at the bottom of this document. Proceed to website manager once the content is approved and signed and keep record of this signed copy.

About the Psychology Assistant 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. This role was previously called an associate psychologist (AP), but the final decision is to call it a Psychology Assistant.

To become a Psychology Assistant, 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 Psychology Assistants 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 a Psychology Assistant. The Psychology Assistants 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 Psychology Assistants.

The New Zealand Psychologists Board is working on deciding:

- What type of knowledge and skills the Psychology Assistants 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 asked people for feedback about the new Psychology Assistant role this closed 16 June 2025.

Other Useful links

The mental health and addiction workforce plan:

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

The announcement of the approved scope of practice and competencies for Psychology Assistants

[Psychology Assistants to grow workforce | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

NZPB announcing the Psychology Assistants

[Press Release: Decision on Proposed Psychology Assistant Role](#)

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:

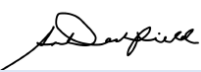
[Auckland University of Technology to offer new psychology training | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

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

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

Approval and signature:

This document is approved for uploading to the Psychology Assistant webpage on the Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora website. Any change to this content is to be circulated back to the designated signatory for further approval.

Signature: 

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