

Frequent questions on renewing your annual practising certificate (APC)

Applying for an APC

I forgot my password

You can click the “[forgotten my password](#)” button on our website. An email will be sent to you with a link to reset your password, which will be valid for 12 hours.

Check your junk folder if you do not receive the email within 5-10 minutes. Do not click the button multiple times.

A guide on this can be found [here](#).

How do I complete the online form?

Once you have logged on to the website, there is a link to the form available under the “Practising intentions (APC)” tile. This [online guide](#) provides further information.

I'm not currently practising, should I get an APC?

You have several options, depending on what your future practice plans are.

- *Apply for a practising certificate*

If you are not practising for a short period, you may choose to renew your APC. This means that you can commence practice again as soon as you are ready, without having to apply for a practising certificate. There are some benefits to renewing your APC before it expires – including that you have continuous permission to practise. In contrast, **if you defer applying for an APC until you are ready to start practising again, you must wait until your practising certificate has been issued before you can start practice.**

There is unlikely to be a cost saving to you in deferring your application unless you are only planning to practise in the last four months of the APC cycle. Council has a reduced fee for applicants who apply to practise in the last four months of the relevant practising cycle (from 1 June for dentists and dental specialists, or from 1 December for all other oral health practitioners).

- *Apply for non-practising status (retention)*

You cannot practise without an APC. This means that, once your APC expires, you cannot perform any tasks that fall within the scope(s) of practice in which you are registered.

If you apply for retention on the register, you will remain on the register but will show up on our online register as not currently practising.

Circumstances when this option might suit include (for example):

- parental leave
- recovery from an illness, surgery or an accident
- travelling/OE
- unemployment or career break.

Things to consider:

- If you do not hold a current APC for your scope/s of practice, you are not required to participate in the recertification programme – but we strongly encourage you to complete the programme if you intend to return to practise in New Zealand in the future.
- Council has a reduced fee for applicants who apply to practise in the last four months of the relevant practising cycle:
 - from 1 June for dentists and dental specialists
 - from 1 December for all other oral health practitioners.

This means there is unlikely to be a cost saving to you in deferring your application unless you are only planning to practise in the last four months of the APC cycle.

- There is no limit to the length of time that you can be on retention. However, if you are non-practising for three years or more before applying for an APC, your APC will not automatically be issued. Your application will be referred to Council for consideration under Council's [recency of practice](#) policy.
- There is an annual fee to maintain your non-practising status.

You can see all of Council's current fees [here](#).

- *Apply for removal from the Register*

If you do not intend to practise in New Zealand again, or you are planning a long break, you can request removal from the Register. Council will consider your application before deciding whether to approve it. You will not be removed from the Register if there are outstanding disciplinary matters.

Things to consider:

- There is no cost to be removed from the register, and removal is not necessarily final.

If you decide to return to practice at a later date, you can apply to have your name restored to the Register (note, a fee applies for this application, as well as a fee for an APC if you are also returning to practice). If your name is restored to the register (and depending on how long you have been out of practice) Council may then need to consider your application for an APC under its [recency of practice](#) policy. **You cannot commence practice until your APC has been issued.**

- Removal from the Register means that Council will not maintain contact with you. You may miss out on important updates about regulation of the profession.

[I am applying for an APC after a break from practice. Will my APC be issued?](#)

As with all applications for a practising certificate, you will need to make a number of declarations about your competence and fitness to practise. One of the questions Council asks is about the recency of your practice. If you have been away from practice for three years or more, Council will need to consider your application under its [recency of practice](#) policy.

[I will be taking maternity leave shortly after the new APC cycle starts. Can I have a refund for the part of the year that I won't be practising?](#)

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer refunds for practitioners who cease practice during the practising cycle.

What happens if I apply for my APC after my last APC expired?

Council expects that all oral health practitioners who intend to keep practising will submit a complete application (including the fee and any levy) before their APC expires.

- For dentists and dental specialists, APCs expire on 30 September every year.
- For all other oral health practitioners, APCs expire on 31 March every year.

If you submit a complete application before your APC has expired, the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (HPCA) provides cover until your new APC is issued – that is, you are “deemed to hold” an APC until the APC is issued or you are advised otherwise.

Once your APC has expired, it is an offence under the HPCA Act to practise your profession. If you apply for an APC after your APC has expired, the “deemed to hold” provision does not apply, and **you must not practise until your new APC has been issued.**

If you apply for an APC after the expiry date, and you held an APC the last year, then you will be charged a “late” [administrative fee](#).

If you are late applying for your APC, Council will issue your APC as soon as possible, however, we will also need to consider whether disciplinary action is required. This will depend on:

- Whether you have been practising, and if so, for what period;
- Whether you have been late applying for an APC in the past, and if so, whether you have previously been warned about the possibility of disciplinary action;
- Whether there were any mitigating or aggravating circumstances relevant to your late application; and
- Any other information that is relevant.

This can be stressful for you and can have significant consequences in terms of your disciplinary record. To reduce the risk to you, we highly recommend that you:

- Add an annual reminder to your diary a month ahead of the APC expiry date;
- Complete your application as soon as you receive notice from Council that the application portal is open, or after receiving further reminder emails from us; and
- Follow up with us if you have not received your APC within a week of applying for it.

I have been unable to complete my resuscitation training. Does this mean my APC won't be issued?

It is important that you renew your resuscitation certification every two years. If you have not been able to complete your refresher course before renewing your APC, please upload a copy of your booking for the first available course.

If there is to be a small gap between the expiry of your resuscitation certification and your refresher course, we recommend that you revisit your most recent training material to refresh your memory on the various protocols and algorithms. There are also a few questions that you should consider so that we can be assured that patients will be cared for in an emergency situation while you are waiting to complete your course:

- Should a medical emergency occur between now and when you complete your resuscitation training, how would you approach this?
- Are you familiar with the ‘emergency situations – quick reaction guide’ included as Appendix B on pages 30 - 38 of the [medical emergency practice standard](#)?

Do other staff within your practice, such as the dentists and/or dental assistants, have current resuscitation training? And are there documented systems in place for them to provide you with assistance in a medical emergency?

Why do you need to know if I've had an eye test?

The purpose of the eye test question is to:

- remind you that your eye health is important and regular testing is advisable
- assist us to find out the number of practitioners who voluntarily check their eye health with two-yearly eye tests.

You may answer "No" to the question or choose not to disclose whether you had an eye test. It will not stop the issue of your practising certificate.

Recertification

My peer has not yet completed the recertification confirmation form?

You can still complete your recertification declaration as part of your APC application and submit the form before your peer responds.

Please remind your peer to complete the confirmation before the end of the APC cycle (30 September for dentists and 31 March for other oral health practitioners).

I was unable to meet one or more of the recertification requirements. Will this impact on obtaining an APC?

An adverse response to the recertification requirements by yourself or your peer will not pause your APC application. The monitoring of compliance with the recertification requirements occurs separately from the APC process.

Council will review recertification compliance after the APC cycle, and may contact you and/or your peer for further information or advise of next steps.

I have not nominated a professional peer yet.

All registered practitioners, unless exempt, are required to nominate their professional peer for the new recertification programme. The new programme started on:

- 1 October 2021 for dentists and dental specialists
- 1 April 2022 for other oral health professions.

If you have a peer but have not recorded your peer on your practitioner portal, please do so immediately. Your peer will then receive a confirmation form to complete on your engagement with the recertification programme.

Regardless of whether or not you have a peer, you must complete the recertification declaration page in the APC form.

Council will contact you after the APC cycle if you do not have a peer, or if you or your peer could not confirm compliance with all the recertification requirements.

Who is exempt?

The recertification programme is mandatory for practitioners who hold an APC, unless they have registered for less than six months, or they have been formally advised that they are exempted.

Practitioners who have been registered for less than six months, or formally exempt from participating in the recertification programme will not see a recertification page on their APC form.

Fees

What is the disciplinary levy for and do I have to pay it?

Yes, you must pay the disciplinary levy that is charged.

APC fees provide the bulk of funding for the Council's day-to-day operations. These include the management of competence and fitness cases, database management, practice audits, strategic projects, staff and Council member costs, communications, and capital expenses.

The disciplinary levy is for a separate purpose. It is set annually for each oral health profession to provide funding for current disciplinary cases and for the costs of future disciplinary cases as they arise. These include the costs of professional conduct committees and proceedings of the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal. In addition, Council can impose a special disciplinary levy at any time, to recover extraordinary discipline costs outside of the budgeted provisions.

How do I get a receipt?

Council no longer provides receipts for payments. Instead, invoices are issued which show that a balance of \$0.00 is due. You can access these invoices on your practitioner portal under the "Invoices" tile, about two to five working days after making payment.

A guide on how to access these invoices is available on our website [here](#).