



Psychotherapy and Counselling
Federation of Australia

Certified Practising Counsellor

Welcome Pack

Contents

Welcome to PACFA	4
About PACFA, the Board and Constitution	4
Our colleges	4
Our branches	6
Our committees	6
Our interest groups	6
PACFA organisational chart	7
Making the most of your PACFA registration	8
Logging in to the portal	8
Membership certificate	8
'Find a Therapist' search directory	9
Using the PACFA logo and post-nominals	10
Your digital badge	10
Jobs board	11
Other member opportunities	11
Maintaining your PACFA membership	12
Annual renewal requirements	12
Continuing professional development (CPD)	12
Supervision	13
How to update your logs	14
Being audited	15
Insurance	15
Membership benefits and support	16
Practice resources	16
PACFA publications	16
Discounted and free professional development events	17
Low-cost supervision directory	17
Ethics hotline	17
Changes to your registration	18
To upgrade to Clinical registration	18
Taking a leave of absence from your membership	18
Contacting us	18



Welcome to PACFA

We are delighted to welcome you to PACFA as a Certified Practising Counsellor, our trademarked title for provisional members.

Your membership demonstrates the high quality of your training and commitment to our profession.

You have joined thousands of other highly qualified mental health professionals in choosing PACFA to represent you as your peak body.

If you need additional information, please check our website at pacfa.org.au and if you still have questions or require support, please [contact us](#).

About PACFA, the Board and Constitution

PACFA is a democratic, member-led organisation, governed by a Board of elected members. The Board governs by the Constitution. We have a small team of staff in our Melbourne office, however most of our leaders are volunteers who are practitioners and experts in their field.

We are a not-for-profit organisation, created through the merger of several well-established professional counselling and psychotherapy groups in the 1990s.

PACFA advocates for the profession to government and external bodies, provides training and ethical standards that our members must abide by, and conducts research to support the evidence base of counselling and psychotherapy.

Our colleges

Our colleges are the professional home within PACFA for members who share experience or interest in a particular area of therapy.

The colleges are designed to provide a forum for our members to collaborate, meet like-minded people, and foster professional development.

As an individual PACFA member, membership of one college is included with your membership fee. If you wish to join a second college, there is a small annual membership fee.

Our colleges are:

- College of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices
- College of Counselling
- Australian College of Counselling and Psychotherapy Educators
- College of Creative and Experiential Therapies
- College of Psychotherapy
- Australian College of Relationship Counsellors.



If you did not indicate which college you would like to join in your application, you will have been added to the College of Counselling, for which all PACFA members are eligible. Some colleges have specific membership criteria separate to the PACFA training standards.

Membership of the College of Counselling as a Clinical member entitles you to use our 'Registered Clinical Counsellor' badge and title. Membership of the College of Psychotherapy as a Clinical member entitles you to use 'Registered Clinical Psychotherapist'.

We recommend you maintain this membership and use this title while you learn more about the colleges. You can change or add a college membership at any time by contacting the [office](#).

The College of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices (CATSIHP) is an Indigenous-led College within PACFA. CATSIHP emerged following a call from Bundjalung and Jiman woman Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson to take action to address the trauma of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

CATSIHP was formed in 2019 to provide leadership, representation and advocate and promote self-determination, cultures, values and belief systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through increasing access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healers and practitioners and improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The [Indigenous Healing Practice Training Standards](#) were released in November 2022.

The standards define the key features of Indigenous Healing Practice and aim to provide a flexible, nationally consistent, high-quality framework to recognise, support and further advance registered Indigenous Healing Practice within PACFA and in Australia more broadly.

Top tip: For latest news and updates, like/follow PACFA on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

Our branches

We have branches in each state and territory, apart from the Northern Territory, providing a regional focus for members in that geographic area. Branches may undertake local outreach, offer professional development, and build a vibrant community of practitioners through networking and peer support. Each branch has a Leadership Group to guide branch activities; these groups welcome new members.

Our committees

A range of PACFA committees have been established to undertake key areas of work relating to PACFA's mission and to inform the Board. Ad hoc committees and working groups are also formed from time to time to work on particular issues or events.

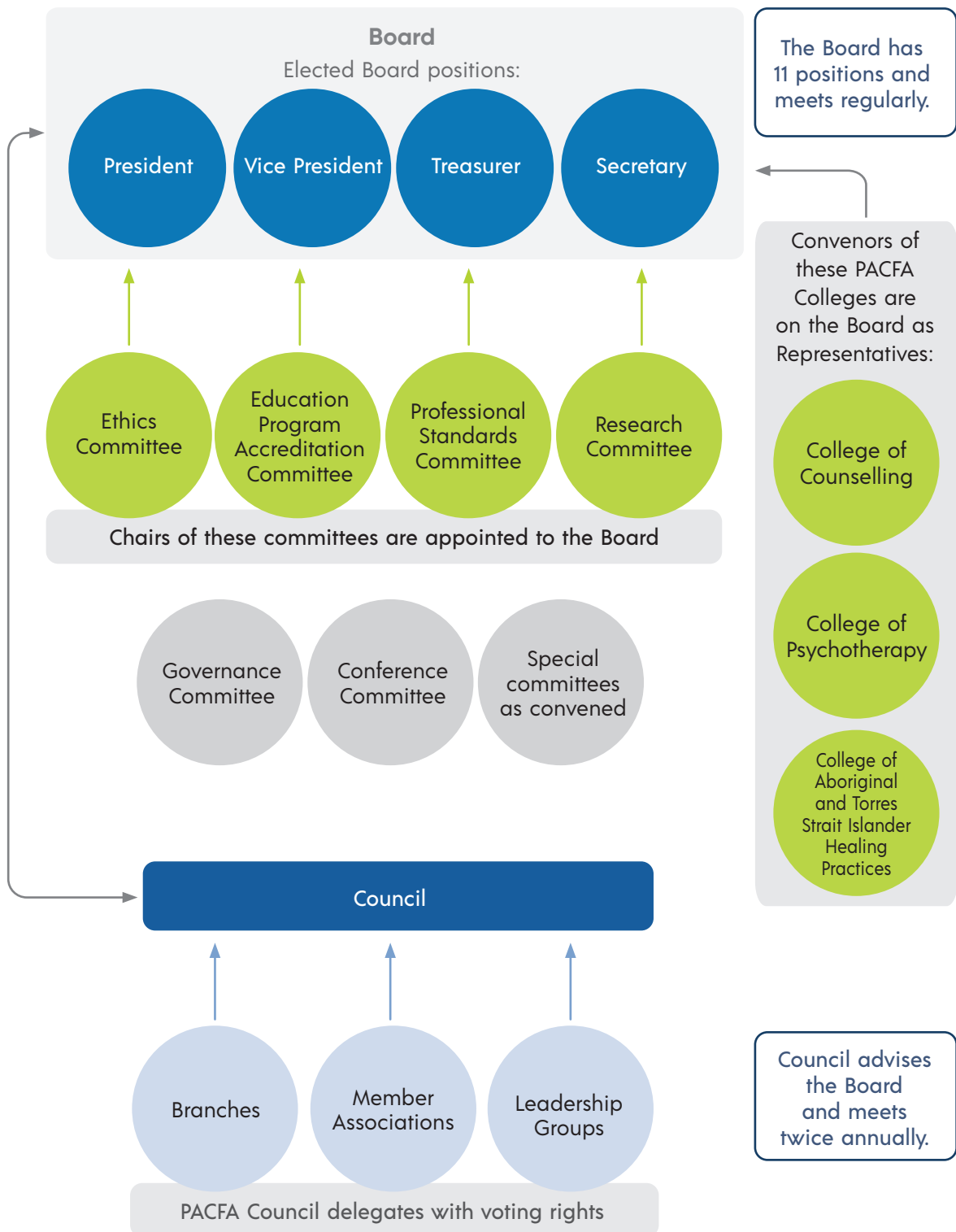
Committees are [Education Program Accreditation Committee](#), [Ethics Committee](#), [Conference Committee](#), [Governance Committee](#), [Professional Standards Committee](#) and [Research Committee](#).

Opportunities to join committees are advertised in PACFA's monthly e-news.

Our interest groups

PACFA interest groups are informal groups of members who come together to explore aspects of practice and to provide networking, learning and support opportunities. See the [interest groups available to join](#).

If you have an idea for a college or interest group, and think there is wide interest in a particular area of practice, please [contact the office](#).

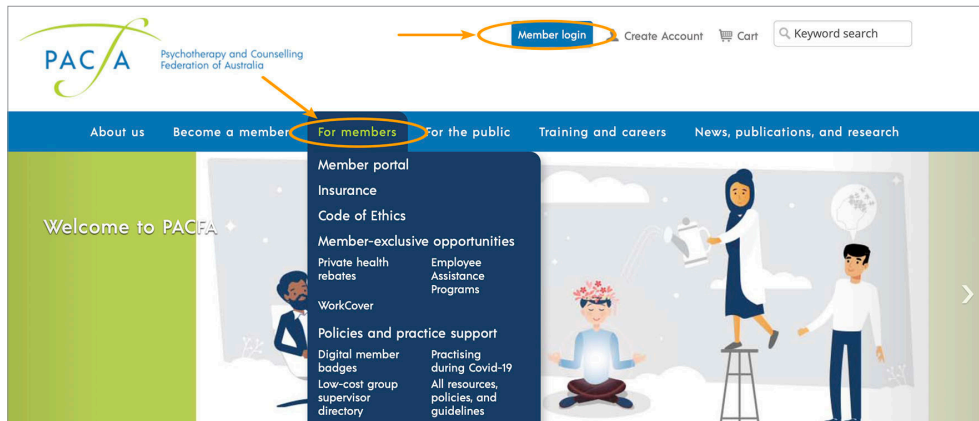


Making the most of your PACFA registration

Logging in to the portal

Using the username (usually your email address) and password you created with your membership application, you can access the Member Portal.

Go to pacfa.org.au, and log in here:



If you have forgotten your username or password, click the 'Forgot username' or 'Forgot password' links and you will be asked to provide your email address to be emailed your username/prompted to change your password.

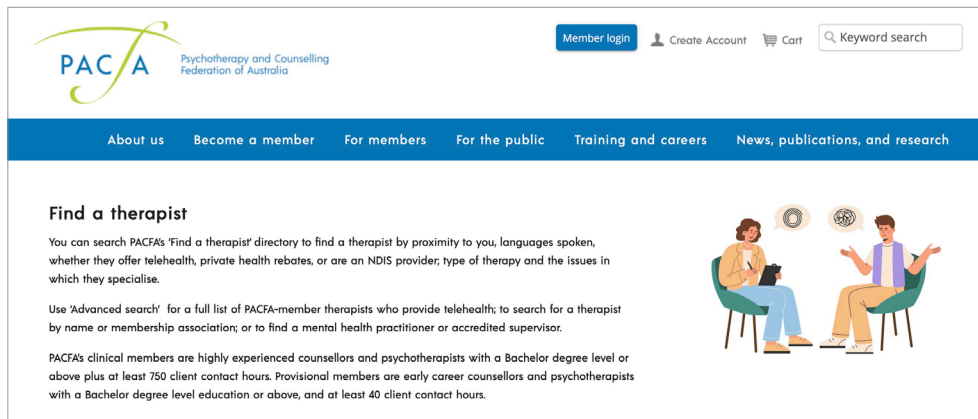
Membership certificate

You can download a copy of your membership certificate at any time on your portal.

1. Go to pacfa.org.au
2. Go to 'For members', and select the first option 'member portal'
3. Log in to your account
4. You will automatically be redirected to your profile
5. Scroll down slightly – underneath your PACFA registration number there is a blue button 'membership certificate'
6. Click to download your certificate to your desktop.

'Find a Therapist' search directory

As a PACFA member, you will now appear on our 'Find a Therapist' [directory](#).



This function is used by members of the public searching for a therapist and is referred to by external organisations such as Beyond Blue, The Australian Patients Association, and Griefline, among others.

As a new member, your page only has basic details listed. We highly encourage you to personalise your profile and add information to promote yourself on this platform. You can add anything that accurately represents your practice, such as modalities for which you are qualified, languages you speak fluently, and biographical information.

Please **do not** untick the 'primary address' box next to your practice address on your therapist profile, as this is required for you to appear in a search of the directory.

Top tip: Add a photo of yourself to personalise your page and attract more clients. JPG images of approximately 1MB work best.

Only PACFA staff can change the qualifications listed on your profile. For any new qualifications you would like to add to your page, a copy of these must be emailed to membership@pacfa.org.au. We can add formal qualifications specifically related to your practice that are a Bachelor degree or above (AQF 7 or above).

[Watch this short video](#) on how to personalise your 'Find a Therapist' profile and make it stand out from the crowd.

Using the PACFA logo and post-nominals



As a member, you can use our logo on your communication and promotional materials, such as websites, presentations, and business cards. You have been sent the logo file with your membership confirmation—if you need another copy contact us.

When you use the logo, you must also display your registration number in the following format:

Register No. 12345

Your digital badge



Soon after you receive your membership confirmation, you will receive your digital badge. The badges are trademarked titles which are exclusive to PACFA members.

Your badge and title show clients, stakeholders, and government that you have met PACFA's strict standards for membership, that you abide by our Code of Ethics and scope of practice, and are a highly-skilled mental health professional.

We encourage you to use your badge and title wherever possible, including on all your promotional materials. We have also provided a file with both your badge and our logo for use in your email signature.

The badge allocated to you is dependent on both your college membership and the level of your PACFA membership. If you think you have been allocated the wrong badge, [contact us](#).

[View our digital badge FAQs.](#)



Jobs Board

The PACFA Jobs Board is provided to registered PACFA practitioners only, as a member benefit and to ensure employers access our highly qualified members for psychotherapy and counselling positions.

To view the Jobs Board:

1. Go to pacfa.org.au
2. Go to 'For Members', then 'Member-exclusive opportunities', and select 'Jobs Board'
3. You will be prompted to sign in, and will be redirected to the Jobs Board.

Contact the job advertiser directly if you have any queries.

Top tip: The PACFA office adds new listings all the time so make sure to keep an eye out for opportunities.

Other member opportunities

You may be eligible for other member-exclusive opportunities such as providing services for Employee Assistance Programs and work-related injury schemes.

Maintaining your PACFA membership

Annual renewal requirements

The PACFA membership year follows the financial year, from July–June, meaning your PACFA membership expires on 30 June. In May each year, the renewal period opens, which means members can log their requirements, complete the declaration forms, and pay for the next year of registration. No matter what time in the year you joined PACFA, **every member renews at the same time in May–July**. If you do not renew by 30 September your membership will be suspended.

Members are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD and 10 hours of supervision annually. There is no minimum on client hours, however, if you complete more than 400 hours of client contact your requirement for supervision increases to 15 hours. If you joined PACFA part-way through the financial year, your required number of hours will be worked out pro-rata; for example, if you joined in October, your requirement is 15 hours of CPD and 7 hours of supervision.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

The total number of required CPD hours per year is 20. This can be split into a **minimum** number of 10 hours of Category A, and a **maximum** number of 10 hours Category B. Category A CPD is mandatory, and you may complete all 20 hours from Category A if you wish. Category B is optional. The CPD you complete must be directly related to your clinical practice, and you may choose PACFA-run CPD or external CPD. Make sure to keep attendance certificates and/or receipts for any externally run CPD for a minimum of three years.

*Top tip: As a member you have **free** access to all PACFA webinar recordings—these can go towards your Category B requirements.*

Category A CPD

Minimum annual hours: 10

Active participant in CPD such as in-person courses, workshops, seminars, conferences or online facilitated learning.

Category B CPD

Maximum annual hours: 10

Passive learning such as watching a recorded webinar, reading journal articles, teaching or formal presentations, peer learning groups.

For more information or to check whether CPD you are interested in counts for our requirements please see the [CPD Policy](#).

Events that are run by PACFA which you watch **live** (in full) will automatically be added to your logs, however you will need to manually add any **recordings** you watch.



Supervision

What is considered to be supervision for the purposes of PACFA registration?

Clinical supervision is a contractual, collaborative process which monitors, develops and supports supervisees in their clinical role. In clinical supervision the central focus is on both the optimum treatment outcome for the client and the professional development and self-care of the supervisee. The process of clinical supervision is seen to encompass a number of significant components, including a formal agreement between supervisor and supervisee. It is an opportunity for the supervisee to present relevant material regarding their clinical practice via case discussion, recordings of client sessions, role plays, etc., allowing a space for reflective review by the supervisee and feedback by the supervisor. The supervisory relationship and process of supervision are congruent with the developmental needs of the supervisee.

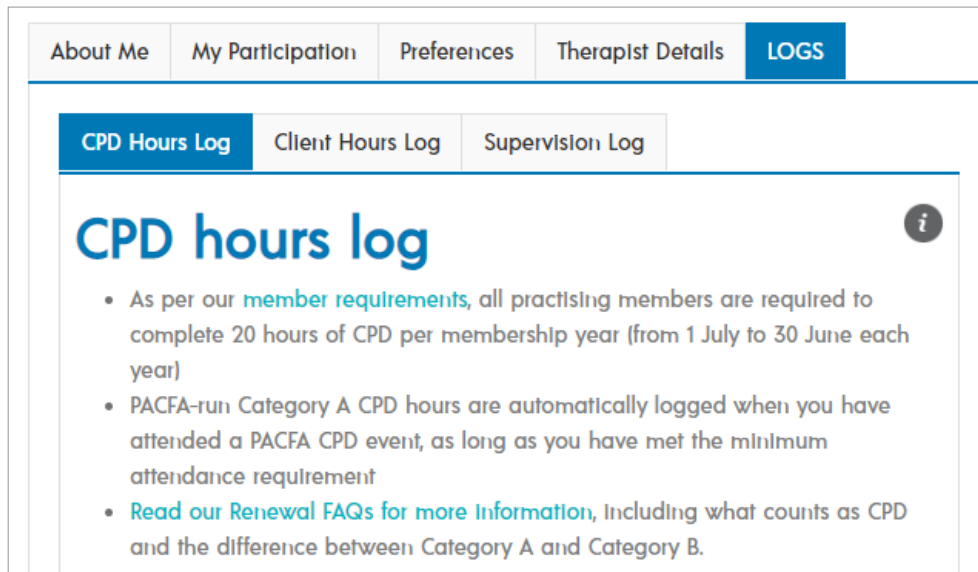
You do not need to use a PACFA-accredited supervisor, however your supervisor needs to be experienced in your field and more senior than you. This should not be a shift supervisor or manager, unless you are receiving clinical supervision on your client contact from them. Psychologists and social workers are acceptable supervisors. Supervision can be one-to-one or in a group of no more than 6.

If you do use a PACFA-accredited supervisor, you can be sure that they have received in-depth supervision training and have significant clinical experience. They will also be familiar with PACFA requirements and our Code of Ethics. Read more about [PACFA-accredited supervisors](#) and how they may support you with [low-cost group supervision](#).

To become an Accredited Supervisor, members must have a minimum of 5 years post training experience as a qualified psychotherapist, counsellor or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practitioner. To be an Accredited Supervisor, you must also have a minimum of 3 years as a PACFA Clinical Registrant or 3 years as a member of another comparable professional association at an equivalent membership level, and have completed supervisor training that meets [PACFA's Supervision Training Standards](#).

See the list of [PACFA-accredited supervision courses](#).

How to update your logs



Members receive an email each year when their renewal is due. However, to make the renewal process as smooth as possible, we encourage members to fill in their CPD, supervision, and client hours logs as they go.

To access your logs:

- Head to pacfa.org.au
- Go to 'For members'
- Select the first option, 'Member portal'
- Log in to your account
- You will be automatically redirected to the logs page.

Watch our video guide on how to complete your logs. We have updated our website, so it may look a little different to the video, however all steps are the same.

If you attended live CPD run by PACFA, this will automatically be added to your CPD log. You will need to add manually to your log any CPD you have completed that was run by other organisations or recordings of PACFA-run CPD.

Being audited

Once in a three-year period the PACFA office contacts each of our members to advise they will be audited to provide evidence they have met their annual renewal requirements.

When renewing membership, PACFA registrants log client hours, CPD hours and supervision hours but do not have to provide evidence such as receipts or certificates. Instead, members sign a declaration with their renewal that they have met the requirements.

It is at the audit stage that members have to provide evidence of meeting membership requirements, such as signed supervision and client verification logs, and CPD certificates. PACFA asks members to keep this evidence for a minimum of 3 years for auditing purposes. (Completed PACFA CPD is automatically recorded in our database.)

When you are audited, the PACFA office will email you, advising you of the year for which you need to supply your CPD/supervision documents. You will be given time to return your documentation. If you fail to complete the audit there may be consequences for your registration.

Insurance

Part of PACFA's regulatory duties is to ensure each of our registrants are maintaining the best ethical practices.

Each PACFA registrant is required for the duration of their membership to hold current professional indemnity and public liability insurance. This can be provided by the member's employer or can be their own policy.

PACFA has negotiated a discounted rate with Insurance House for excellent cover. If you wish to purchase this, it is available at any time of the year. The insurance follows the membership year and so needs renewing every year at the same time as your membership – June/July. [Read more about insurance.](#) Please note that if you are insured with Insurance House and have not renewed your membership by 31 July, you will not have insurance cover and should not be practising. If your membership has expired and you are insured with another company, check with your insurance company whether you are still covered.

FYI: If you hold the PACFA Master Insurance Policy through Insurance House your certificate of currency will be emailed directly to you from their office. To follow up, please email them directly at membersupport@ihgroup.com.au.

Top tip: Insurance House offers all customers who have bought their insurance a 1-hour, free, legal advice session. For more information, please email them at membersupport@ihgroup.com.au.



Membership benefits and support

Practice resources

PACFA maintains the highest membership standards for counsellors and psychotherapists in Australia.

As a self-regulating body for the profession, PACFA has developed policies and guidelines to support members in providing best-practice therapy.

As a PACFA member you have access to these resources, and we recommend all members to use these documents as tools to refer to in their work.

These key resources guide your practice as PACFA members: [Code of Ethics](#), [Scope of Practice](#) and [Guidelines for Client Records](#).

[View all our resources guidelines, and policies.](#)

PACFA publications

We send members a monthly newsletter on the first Wednesday of the month, in which we announce new opportunities, share key advocacy wins, provide links to media articles relating to counselling and psychotherapy, and profile your fellow members. We also send members monthly updates on professional development and job opportunities.

We send you our annual printed magazine *Psychotherapy and Counselling Today* and you can read articles published in our peer-reviewed international journal [Psychotherapy & Counselling Journal of Australia](#) (PACJA) online.

Discounted and free professional development events

PACFA will email you at the end of each month to notify you of upcoming professional development events. We also add new events to the [calendar](#) on our website throughout the month.

[Our webinar recordings](#) are free for members to view.

Low-cost supervision directory

PACFA has created a [directory of accredited supervisors](#) who offer low-cost (\$60) group supervision online for our members only.

Ethics hotline

The Ethics hotline is a free service for members to discuss and process ethical practice issues, or ethical dilemmas. PACFA has a dedicated staff member who can offer verbal and written information and advice regarding ethics and practice issues as outlined in the [Code of Ethics](#) and current ethical practice theories.

To contact the ethics consultation service, please [complete the ethics query form](#) as a first step.



Changes to your registration

To upgrade to Clinical registration

To upgrade your Certified Practising Counsellor membership to Registered Clinical Counsellor, you must provide evidence that you have met the requirements below:

- Completed 750 post-qualifying client hours linked to
- 75 hours of post-qualifying supervision, and
- these hours must be completed over a minimum of 2 years, but can be completed over a longer period of time.

You can [apply to upgrade](#) at any time of year, however it is recommended you do not apply to upgrade your membership in June or July, as this is the renewal period. Certified Practising Counsellors wishing to upgrade to Registered Clinical Psychotherapist must meet the requirements above as well as the [eligibility requirements for the College of Psychotherapy](#).

Taking a leave of absence from your membership

PACFA members can take a leave of absence from their membership for up to two consecutive years.

Leave of absence will be granted where a valid reason is provided, such as parental or study leave, compassionate circumstances, extended travel, or serious illness.

[Apply for a leave of absence.](#)

Contacting us

Check our website at pacfa.org.au for further information about member benefits, renewal FAQs, the latest news and more. If you don't find the information you need from the website regarding your member enquiry, email membership@pacfa.org.au with the nature of your query in the subject line.

