

Frequently Asked Questions – PACFA membership renewal

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1. When does my membership expire?

The PACFA membership year is the same as the financial year, so every PACFA membership expires on **30 June each year**. In late May, members will receive their renewal notice, and can begin the renewal process. You cannot renew until you have received your renewal notice.

You have until 31 July to complete your renewal, however we **strongly recommend** renewing before 30 June. If you complete your renewal after 1 July, you will still pay the full annual membership fee and your membership will be backdated to this date.

If you complete your renewal after 31 July, a late fee of \$50 will apply.

If you choose our insurance cover with your membership, it is especially important to make sure you have renewed before 31 July. Our partner Insurance House offers a month's grace period but after 31 July, you will no longer be insured and cannot practise.

2. What are the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements?

All clinical, provisional and academic PACFA members must complete at least 20 hours of CPD each membership year.

Student and affiliate members do not need to complete CPD.

CPD activities must be directly relevant to practice in counselling and psychotherapy and/or the research evidence base for counselling and psychotherapy.

There are 2 categories of CPD:

Category A (mandatory): minimum 10 hours per membership year

Category B (optional): maximum 10 hours per membership year

All 20 CPD hours can come from Category A, but only a maximum 10 can come from Category B. You must do at least 10 hours of Category A CPD each membership year.

If you joined PACFA part-way through the year and have been a member for less than 12 months at your first renewal, you have different CPD requirements. See [‘How do I renew if I joined PACFA part-way through the membership year?’](#) for more information.

3. What is the difference between Category A and B CPD?

Category A CPD requires you to be an active participant, whereas Category B is more passive learning.

Category A CPD will actively engage you with the facilitator or presenter. You will be expected to participate and share, either during the event or after. You might be required to do an assessment at the end of the course to demonstrate your knowledge.

Some examples of Category A CPD are:

- An in-person course, workshop, seminar, conference, or similar
- An online webinar, course, workshop, conference, seminar, or similar that you attend live, where you can ask questions and interact with the presenter or facilitator
- An online webinar, course, workshop, conference, or seminar that is recorded, but after watching the recording you interact with the presenter or facilitator via an online forum or email
- Online learning that is recorded or that you complete in your own time that has an assessment component that must be completed before you can finish the course

Category B CPD is a more passive style of learning, such as reading or listening, where you do not actively engage with a facilitator.

Some examples of Category B CPD are:

- Watching a recorded lecture, such as a TED Talk, about an area that relates to your practice as a counsellor and/or psychotherapist
- Reading a book or peer-reviewed journal article that relates to your practice in counselling and/or psychotherapy
- Conducting a presentation or teaching on an area you specialise in
- Any supervision hours you have done above and beyond your PACFA annual supervision requirements
- Participating in a peer learning group, such as meeting, discussing and exploring counselling and psychotherapy topics or resources with colleagues, but without a formal facilitator who is teaching

A reflective journal should be used to record any notes on journal articles, books, or recordings that you do, to reflect on the learning activity and how it relates to and enhances your professional practice.

All CPD must be relevant to practice in counselling and psychotherapy and/or the research evidence base for counselling and psychotherapy.

4. What are the supervision requirements?

All clinical and provisional members must complete a **minimum of 10 hours** of supervision per membership year. This supervision cannot be routine managerial supervision; it must apply to your current client cases.

Student, affiliate, and academic members do not need to complete supervision.

If you have had more than 400 client contact hours over the past membership year, you will be required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of supervision.

If you are an accredited supervisor or mental health practitioner, you are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours supervision, with at least 5 hours of supervision directly related to your practice as a supervisor and/or mental health practitioner.

Supervision can be conducted in one-on-one sessions, or in a group with no more than 6 participants.

Clinical members who have been PACFA members for 5 continuous years are able to accrue up to 50% of their supervision hours through peer supervision. Peer supervision is a formal process where therapists contract to provide supervision for each other's clinical client work. Peer supervision can be undertaken one-to-one or within a small group of no more than 6 members.

If you joined PACFA part-way through the year and have been a member for less than 12 months at your first renewal, you have different supervision requirements. See [‘How do I renew if I joined PACFA part-way through the membership year?’](#) for more information.

5. How do I complete my CPD and supervision logs?

We've prepared [a handy video guide](#) to take you through updating your logs.

To complete your logs, go to www.pacfa.org.au, and follow these steps:

1. Go to 'For members' and select 'Member portal'
2. You will be prompted to log in if you have not already done so
3. Go to 'Logs', and 'CPD Hours Log', 'Client Hours Log', or 'Supervision Log', depending on which activity you are entering
4. Scroll down to your log, and click on the grey plus button to create a new log entry
5. Fill in the required details, and press 'Save & Close'

Once you have saved your log entry, refresh the page and your total hours count will update.

Please note that for your supervision total hours count to calculate correctly, you need to have at least one hour of client contact recorded in your client hours log.

6. How do I prove I have completed my CPD and supervision?

Every year you need to update your logs to tally your CPD and supervision hours.

You **do not** need to submit evidence that you have completed the CPD and supervision to renew. However, you will need to keep proof of your CPD and supervision **for the past 3 membership years** for audit purposes.

You will need to keep copies of the following documents:

- Proof of attendance at CPD, such as certificates or payment receipts
- Proof of supervision and client contact hours - we strongly recommend filling out the [supervision and client contact verification form](#) with your supervisor at the end of each membership year
- Professional indemnity and public liability insurance certificates
- Information on ethical conduct records (if applicable)
- Copies of your Member Association membership certificates (if applicable)

Each year after all members have renewed, PACFA undertakes an audit of a random selection of members. A member can be audited no more than once every three years. Read our [Register Audit Guidelines](#) for further information.

7. I had a grace period applied to my logs last year. How do I renew this year?

Log into the Member Portal and access your logs page. Scroll down to view last year's log, and look for an entry that includes 'GRACE PERIOD'. Check how many hours grace you were granted, and add that number to the usual requirements.

For example, if you had a grace period of 6 hours applied to your CPD log, then your total CPD requirement for this year would be 26 hours.

Please note that due to Covid, we are being flexible with the renewal requirements. If you did not complete your grace hours, you will still be able to renew with a minimum 20 hours of CPD and 10 hours of supervision. Make sure to complete the remaining additional grace hours as soon as possible and keep records in case you are audited. See "[How do I prove I have completed my CPD and supervision?](#)" for more information on PACFA's audit system.

8. What happens if I can't meet the renewal requirements?

If you cannot meet the CPD and supervision requirements by 30 June, please contact membership@pacfa.org.au and provide further information. We have a [Hardship Policy](#) in place for members with extenuating circumstances, such as the Covid pandemic and natural disasters, and special consideration arrangements are available on a case-by-case basis.

If you cannot meet the renewal requirements because you were not practising for some or all of the membership year, see "[I wasn't working for part of the membership year and therefore don't have enough CPD and supervision hours to renew](#)" above.

If you were practising for the whole membership year and did not complete CPD and supervision, unfortunately you cannot proceed with your renewal, and your membership will lapse. Lapsed members can [reactivate their membership](#) at any time within five years of it lapsing. Reactivating members need to ensure they complete their CPD/supervision hours from the previous membership year, by 30 June of the year they reactivate.

Please be aware that most private health funds, EAPs and injured worker authorities require counselling providers to be a current member of a professional association and to hold professional insurances.

9. I wasn't working for part of the membership year and therefore don't have enough CPD and supervision hours to renew. What can I do?

We recommend applying for 'retroactive leave' to confirm you were on leave for a period of time in the past.

You will receive a full or part exemption for CPD and supervision hours, depending on how many months you were on leave. To apply for retroactive leave, [fill in this form](#) and send it to membership@pacfa.org.au. You will also need to complete [payment of the leave fee](#).

10. How do I renew if I joined PACFA part-way through the membership year?

You will receive a pro-rata exemption on the CPD and supervision requirements, which will reduce the number of CPD and supervision hours required, based on the month you became a member.

If you are eligible for a pro-rata exemption, PACFA will send you further instructions with your renewal notice.

11. I'm not currently working as a counsellor or psychotherapist, but I want to keep my membership. What can I do?

Members can apply to go on leave for a period of up to two years if they are taking time away from practising or need to stop work for personal reasons. To apply for leave, [fill in this form](#) and send it to membership@pacfa.org.au. You will also need to pay [the leave fee](#).

If you are on leave, you do not need to renew, and do not need to complete the annual CPD and supervision renewal requirements for the period you are on leave.

However, if your membership was active for some of the membership year *before* you went on leave and you have not completed the required CPD and supervision hours for the period your membership was active, you will need to complete those CPD and supervision hours when you return.

12. I was on leave for some of this year, but my membership is now active again. What do I need to do for my renewal?

You are not required to complete CPD and supervision while on leave, so you will have a pro-rata exemption for this period.

Working out how many hours are required of you when you have returned from leave can be confusing at times, so we have prepared an example to provide guidance.

Returning from leave example

Say you went on leave in April 2020 and returned in February 2022.

Your membership would have been active for the nine months between July 2019 and April 2020, and for the five months between February 2022 and June 2022.

In total, you had an active membership for 14 months (calculate the total months from the 1st of the month – in this case, 1 April 2020 and 1 February 2022).

To work out how many CPD hours you need, multiply the total number of months by 1.67 (20 CPD hours/12 months), and **round down** to the nearest whole number.

14 months x 1.67 = 23.38, rounded down to **23 hours of CPD**.

To work out how many supervision hours you need, multiply the total number of months by 0.83 (10 supervision hours/12 months), and **round down** to the nearest whole number.

14 months x 0.83 = 11.62, rounded down to **11 hours of supervision**.

So for this example, you would need to have completed 23 hours of CPD and 11 hours of supervision by 30 June 2022.

If you had completed any CPD and/or supervision between July 2019 and April 2020, you would need to make sure these are added to your logs, if they are not already. See “*How do I complete my logs?*” for instructions.

If you completed any CPD and/or supervision while you were on leave, you can add these hours into your logs and they will count towards the total (note: you cannot complete client hours whilst on leave).

If you completed **no** CPD or supervision between 1 July 2019 and 1 April 2020, this means that before 30 June 2022, you will need to complete all 23 hours of CPD and 11 hours of supervision.

If you do these calculations and find that you are required to complete *less than* 20 hours CPD and/or 10 hours supervision, please contact membership@pacfa.org.au with your calculations, and the Membership Team will adjust your requirements.

If you do these calculations and find you are required to complete *more than* 20 hours CPD and/or 10 hours supervision, but you are falling short of your required hours, you will still be able to renew with a minimum 20 hours of CPD and 10 hours of supervision. Make sure to complete the remaining additional hours **as soon as possible** and keep records for when you are audited. See “*How do I prove I have completed my CPD and supervision?*” for more information on PACFA’s audit system.

If you still will not be able to meet your CPD and supervision requirements, see “[What happens if I can’t meet the renewal requirements?](#)”.

13. Does my supervisor have to be PACFA accredited?

No, however this is **strongly recommended**. PACFA-accredited supervisors are clinical members who have completed extensive training in supervision. As well as being knowledgeable practitioners, they have a deep understanding of PACFA's policies and can help you with your annual requirements.

Your supervisor can come from a related discipline such as psychology, social work, or psychiatry. Whoever your supervisor is, they must be more senior than you and have specialist knowledge of your practice modalities.

14. Is there a minimum number of client hours I need to have completed?

No, there is no minimum number of client hours. However, in order for the renewal portal to calculate your hours correctly and let you submit your renewal, you will need to have logged at least one hour of client contact. See "[How do I complete my logs?](#)" for instructions.

15. I didn't have many client hours this year, can I do less supervision?

No, the minimum requirement is 10 hours of supervision. This is because supervision is central to your growth and practice as a counsellor and/or psychotherapist, and is a way to receive guidance and stay in touch with current best practice in your profession.

If cost is a barrier to receiving supervision, please visit our [low-cost supervisor directory](#) for information on how to join group supervision at a capped price.

If you have not completed 10 hours of supervision because you were not practising, see "[I wasn't working for part of the membership year and therefore don't have enough CPD and supervision hours to renew. What can I do?](#)".

If you have not completed 10 hours of supervision because you have not been a member for a full membership year, see "[How do I renew if I joined PACFA part-way through the membership year?](#)".

16. I purchased insurance with my renewal, when will I receive my insurance certificate?

You will receive an email directly from Insurance House with your insurance certificate – be sure to check your junk and spam folders.

There may be a delay in receiving your insurance certificate from Insurance House at renewal time, as it is a busy period.

You should receive your certificate within 4 weeks of renewing, but your insurance will roll over and your period of cover will be continuous. If you have not received your insurance certificate after 4 weeks, please email membersupport@ihgroup.com.au.

17. If I'm eligible to upgrade my membership, should I do that before renewing?

No, in fact, it is better to upgrade after the renewal period. This is because renewals are a peak period at PACFA, and your upgrade application may be significantly delayed. There is no membership fee difference between provisional and clinical membership and you can upgrade at any time during the membership year, so there is no benefit to upgrading with your renewal. We recommend waiting until August to submit an upgrade application to ensure timely processing.