



Medical Council Guidance on the Supervision of Physician Associates

A core requirement of the Physician Associate (PA) Provisional and PA General scopes of practice is that a PA must only practise in a setting where onsite supervision is available ([gazette notice](#)).

The below table provides guidance on how this requirement can be met.

i. Levels of Supervision

Level of Supervision	Requirement	Physician Associate Provisional scope of practice	Physician Associate General scope of practice
Level 1 – Orientation and Induction – Direct supervision	The supervisor is physically present in the room and immediately available to observe/manage directly.	Week 1	-
Level 2 – Direct supervision	The supervisor is onsite and available to provide direct, onsite supervision to the PA. The supervisor will review a sample of treatment plans/cases.	Months 1-3 (UK, US and Canada qualifications-based registration pathways)	Mixture of direct (Level 2) and indirect (Level 3) supervision once granted a PA General scope of practice
		Month 1 (New Zealand Experiential)	
Level 3 – Indirect supervision	The supervisor must always be available via phone if temporarily offsite. The supervisor must be available to return to/attend the work facility immediately* in the case of clinical urgency or emergency.	Mixture of direct (Level 2) and indirect (Level 3) supervision once the primary supervisor is satisfied of the PA's competence while working under direct supervision (Level 2)	

*The supervisor must be able to return to/attend the work facility without unreasonable delay, in the case of clinical urgency or emergency. If the supervisor is unsure whether they can return to/attend the facility without unreasonable delay, then they should delegate supervision on that day, to another doctor.

Delegation of supervision

- PA Provisional scope of practice – to another vocationally registered doctor.
- PA General scope of practice – to another vocationally registered doctor or a general registrant who has at least 5 years of experience in a similar area of practice as the PA and is not undertaking vocational training/appointed to a RMO non-training position.

ii. Physician Associate Provisional scope of practice

➤ UK, US and Canada qualifications-based registration pathways only

• **Week 1 – Level 1 – Orientation and Induction – Direct supervision**

The Provisional scope PA is required to complete a period of induction and orientation that includes:

- Structured orientation to the wider New Zealand health system as well as induction to the practice environment of the specific workplace.
- The PA observing the supervisor in practice.
- The supervisor observing the PA in practice.
- Direct supervision (as defined above for **Level 1**).

• **First 3 months – Level 2 – Direct supervision**

After week 1, for the first 3 months, the Provisional scope PA will work under direct supervision (**Level 2**).

After the first 3 months, once the primary supervisor is satisfied of the PA's competence to practise, the employer/primary supervisor can approve the PA to transition to a mixture of direct (**Level 2**) and indirect supervision (**Level 3**).

➤ New Zealand Experiential registration pathway

• **First month – Level 2 – Direct supervision**

For the first month, the Provisional scope PA will work under direct supervision (**Level 2**).

After the first month, the employer/primary supervisor can approve the PA to transition to a mixture of direct (**Level 2**) and indirect supervision (**Level 3**), provided they are satisfied of the PA's competence to practise under less stringent supervision.

iii. Physician Associate General scope of practice

• **Mixture of Direct (Level 2) and Indirect (Level 3) supervision**

Once a PA has been granted registration in the PA General scope of practice, the employer/primary supervisor can determine the split between direct (**Level 2**) and indirect supervision (**Level 3**) that the General scope PA must work under.

➤ Change of employment only

• **Weeks 1 and 2 – Level 2 – Direct supervision**

The General scope PA is required to complete 2 weeks of direct supervision (**Level 2**) if they are changing place of employment.

- After week 2, the employer/primary supervisor can determine the split between direct (**Level 2**) and indirect supervision (**Level 3**) that the General scope PA must work under.

- Change in area of practice **only**
- **First month – Level 2 – Direct supervision**
The General scope PA is required to complete the first month working under direct supervision (**Level 2**) if they are changing area of practice.
- After the first month, the employer/primary supervisor can determine the split between direct (**Level 2**) and indirect supervision (**Level 3**) that the General scope PA must work under.