

SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR CERTIFIED PEDORTHISTS IN AUSTRALIA



**PEDORTHIC ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA**

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Introduction

The Pedorthic Association of Australia (PAA) is the peak body for pedorthists in Australia. The PAA self-regulates the pedorthic profession through established policies, standards, codes, and criteria voluntarily upheld by PAA certified practitioners. A PAA subcommittee, the Australian Pedorthists Registration Board (APRB) Committee, manages the certification of pedorthists. Certified practitioners are qualified pedorthists registered by the PAA who have demonstrated sufficient knowledge, skills, and experience to provide competent, safe, and high-quality pedorthic services.

The PAA Scope of Practice describes the core roles, activities, practice settings and guiding frameworks for pedorthists practising in Australia. It does not represent the level of experience, skill or competency required to carry out these roles and activities. The Scope of Practice is influenced by the context in which a pedorthist practises, personal factors, environmental circumstances, technology, legislation, education, community expectations and population health needs.¹

The PAA Scope of Practice aims to protect the health and interests of people receiving pedorthic care and inform the broader community about this small yet vital allied health profession. The health care system in Australia undergoes continuous change, and pedorthic practice needs to be innovative, agile, and adaptive in response. The Scope of Practice is not intended to limit the pedorthic profession but rather provide a basic structure that provides appropriate boundaries while remaining receptive to changes that will benefit pedorthic clients and patients.

The PAA Scope of Practice is governed by the Pedorthic Association of Australia (PAA). Underpinning the Scope of Practice are requirements for certified pedorthists to practice within their area of professional competence and continuously improve their professional knowledge and skills. The Scope of Practice has been developed in alignment with the [PAA Code of Ethics and Standards](#), the [PAA Competency Standards for Australian Professional Pedorthists](#), the [PAA Criteria for Certification in Pedorthics](#) and the [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) for Certified Pedorthists](#).

Definition

Pedorthics is the professional field concerned with providing pedorthic footwear, orthotic appliances, and appropriate advice to a patient after assessment and analysis of the patient's condition(s). Pedorthic services include the provision of prefabricated footwear and orthotic appliances, modification of prefabricated footwear, custom-designed and fabricated pedorthic footwear and/or custom-made orthotic appliances, and advice on the need and application of pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances.

Practice settings

Pedorthists operate in retail settings, as well as working in the private and public health sectors. Pedorthists may work in independent or group private practice. They are members of multidisciplinary healthcare teams in community health centres and public hospitals, such as a high-risk foot service. Additional pedorthic practice settings may include aged care facilities, community health services, community rehabilitation services, disability services, and universities and research facilities.

Populations

Pedorthists work with people across the lifespan, from infants through to the elderly. They treat individuals who have foot, ankle and lower limb issues arising from systemic or localised conditions, trauma, disability, and other causes. Common presentations include people with musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, and metabolic disorders.

Pedorthists collaborate with the partners, families, support people and carers of people receiving pedorthic care, as well as the public, other health professionals, health, community, government, and educational organisations, pedorthic students and pedorthic colleagues.

Roles

Pedorthists apply a person-centred and evidence-based approach to pedorthic care provision. Pedorthists employ clinical and technical expertise, and pedorthic services aim to minimise impairment, maximise function, improve mobility and promote the health and wellbeing of clients and patients. Although pedorthic practice primarily focuses on the foot and lower limb, foot problems commonly also affect the knee, hip, and spine; therefore, Pedorthists understand the structure and function of the entire human body.

There are three levels of Certified Pedorthists in Australia:

Certified Pedorthic Retailers (CRetPed Au) specialise in advice, fitting, and provision of prefabricated pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances.

Services may include:

- Client assessment to determine the need for pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances
- Providing advice and education regarding foot health, footwear, and orthotic appliances
- Identifying and selecting appropriate prefabricated pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances to meet client needs.
- Performing minor modifications and/or repair of prefabricated footwear and orthotic appliances that do not alter the device's principal function or construction
- Fitting footwear and orthotic appliances
- Selling pedorthic footwear and prefabricated orthotic appliances
- Conducting reviews of footwear and orthotic appliances
- Conducting service management activities in areas such as human resources, finance, inventory, marketing and sales, and quality improvement.

Certified Pedorthists (CPed Au) assess clients, provide prefabricated or custom-made foot orthotics, and modify footwear to meet client needs.

(**Note:** The pathway to CPed Au registration was closed in 2020, but this registration level is recognised for re-certification purposes.)

Services may include:

- Client assessment to determine the need for pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances
- Providing advice and education regarding foot health, footwear and orthotic appliances
- Identifying and selecting appropriate prefabricated pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances to meet client needs
- Examining prefabricated footwear to determine suitability and practicability for modification
- Performing major alteration, modification and/or repair of prefabricated footwear that may change its original structure and function to meet client needs
- Providing prefabricated and custom-made orthotic appliances
- Fabricating custom-made orthotic appliances
- Fitting footwear and orthotic appliances
- Conducting service management activities in areas such as human resources, finance, inventory, marketing and sales, and quality improvement.

Certified Pedorthist Custom Makers (CPedCM Au) are tertiary qualified or equivalent and involved in all clinical, technical, and service delivery aspects of pedorthics. Certified Pedorthist Custom Makers are autonomous professionals; however, they regularly collaborate with other health professionals. Graduate pedorthists are educated in areas such as anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, lower limb assessment, lower limb medicine, orthoses and bracing, management of the high-risk foot, footwear design and production, and principles and practice of pedorthics.

Services may include:

- Providing advice and education regarding foot health, footwear, and orthotic appliances
- Conducting patient assessments and reviews
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating patient-centred management plans
- Identifying and selecting appropriate prefabricated pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances to meet patient needs.
- Examining prefabricated footwear to determine suitability and practicability for modification.
- Provision, alteration, modification, repair, and dispensation of prefabricated pedorthic footwear and/or orthotic appliances
- Designing and fabricating custom-made pedorthic footwear and custom-made orthotic appliances
- Research and development activities
- Advocacy on behalf of a patient and/or the pedorthic profession
- Conducting service management activities in areas such as human resources, finance, inventory, marketing and sales, and quality improvement.

Frameworks

PAA Criteria for Certification in Pedorthics

The PAA Criteria for Certification in Pedorthics outlines the requirements for certification and registration of pedorthists in Australia. The criteria form the framework for credentialling Pedorthists and are used by the PAA's APRB Committee to evaluate and validate pedorthists' competence, performance, and suitability to provide safe and high-quality pedorthic services.²

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Certified Pedorthists

To maintain certification and their scope of practice, all certified pedorthists must engage in ongoing professional development. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Certified Pedorthists is a guideline for professional development activities to preserve existing competency and develop additional knowledge and skills to improve individual practice and pedorthic service provision.

Competency Standards for Australian Professional Pedorthists

The Competency Standards for Australian Professional Pedorthists describe the attributes a certified pedorthist at the level of Certified Pedorthist Custom Maker (CPedCM Au) must demonstrate to be eligible to enter the Australian pedorthic workforce and apply at any point during their career, as relevant to their role and work context.

The PAA Code of Ethics and Standards

The PAA Code of Ethics and Standards outlines the professional conduct expected of a certified Pedorthist in Australia, which includes practising only in those fields where the pedorthist is professionally competent, continuously evaluating whether they are practising within the limits of their training and experience and identifying services outside their current scope of practice and referring the patient accordingly.

Extended Scope of Practice

Pedorthists may extend their scope of practice via additional qualifications, experience, or training. This Scope of Practice does not address extended practice activities; however, such actions may be included in the pedorthist's capability, providing the area of practice is within the professional competence of the pedorthist.

Review of Document

This document will be reviewed from time to time as required. This will generally be at least every five years.

Last approved: February 2024

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Glossary

The following glossary of terms applies across all PAA governance documents:

Advice: Provision of information, education, guidance and/or recommendations regarding foot health, foot care, footwear, pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances.

AGM: Annual General Meeting.

ANTA: Australian National Training Authority or succeeding organisations. a statutory authority operating between 1992-2005 that focussed on vocational education and training (VET).

Appeal: A written request to review a PAA or APRB Committee decision.

Appeal Committee: A committee nominated by the PAA Board to manage the appeals process.

Applicant: An individual who has applied for membership with the PAA or certification/re-certification.

APRB Committee Chair/Committee Chair: A member of the APRB Committee responsible for administering the certification process and maintaining the pedorthic register.

APRB Committee Members: A managing committee of five (5) individuals nominated and endorsed by the PAA Board. Each Committee member is elected for three (3) years.

Australian Pedorthists Registration Board (APRB) Committee or APRB Committee: A PAA sub-committee that manages certification of pedorthists in Australia and investigates all complaints received by the PAA.

Bachelor program: A higher education program accredited by the PAA Course Accreditation Committee to deliver pedorthic education.

Board of Directors: The body responsible for governance of the PAA.

Certification: The formal recognition and registration process of pedorthists in Australia.

Certification Panel: A panel of examiners that reviews certification applications and makes a decision regarding an applicant's competency and suitability for certification.

Certified Person: An individual formally recognised and registered by the APRB Committee including Certified Pedorthic Retailer, Certified Pedorthist and/or Certified Pedorthist Custom Maker.

Complaint: Any expression of concern, dissatisfaction or disagreement with a decision or action made by the PAA, APRB, certified pedorthists or other members, the quality or delivery of service or the conduct of another person.

Criteria for Certification in Pedorthics or Criteria: The program prepared by the PAA which sets out the requirements and processes for pedorthic certification and re-certification in Australia.

Custom-made: Unique and made specifically for an individual.

Evidence-based or evidence: Valid and reliable information that is supported by rigorous research.

Fabricated or fabricates: All aspects involved in producing an orthotic appliance or pedorthic footwear. Similar terms include "manufactures", "makes" or "custom-makes."

Informed consent or consent: A voluntary decision by an individual agreeing to a treatment or intervention following provision of comprehensive, accurate, relevant, and clear information.

Investigating Officer: The person delegated by the APRB Committee to investigate a complaint and provide a report to the APRB Committee Chair.

IVO: Internationaler Verband der Orthopädie-Schuhtechniker (IVO), also known as the International Pedorthic Association, of which the PAA is a member.

Orthotic Appliances: An appliance worn on the body to reduce or prevent deformity or to provide support, relieve pain and facilitate movement such as foot and lower limb orthoses, foot orthotics, orthomechanical devices, ankle foot orthoses (AFOs), knee ankle foot orthoses (KAFOs), compression garments, splints, below knee walkers, controlled ankle movement (CAM) walkers, moonboots, Charcot Restraint Orthotic Walkers (CROW), ankle braces, and drop foot braces.

Patient: a recipient of pedorthic care, products and services. Includes terms such as client, user, recipient of service, insured person, consumer, beneficiary or participant. The term may include stakeholders who represent the patient such as carers, support people, family members, partners, workers and/or guardians.

Patient- or person-centred care: involves identifying and understanding what is important to the patient, establishing trust and mutual respect and working together to share decisions and plan care.

Pedorthic Association of Australia (PAA) or Association or PAA: A voluntary fee-based membership organisation and peak representative body for pedorthists in Australia.

Pedorthic Footwear: Footwear specially designed, fabricated and/ or modified to improve health and mobility, reduce discomfort and/or minimise the propensity for lower limb

impairment in the future. Similar terms include medical grade, orthopaedic, therapeutic, extra-depth or surgical footwear.

Pedorthic Register: A list of certified persons maintained by the APRB Committee.

Pedorthics: The professional field concerned with the provision of pedorthic footwear, orthotic appliances and appropriate advice to a patient after assessment and analysis of the patient's condition(s). Includes the provision of prefabricated footwear, alteration and modification of prefabricated footwear, custom-designed and fabricated pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances, and advice on the need and application of pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances.

Pedorthic Services: Strategies to improve, maintain or promote patient health and mobility that includes advice regarding foot health care, footwear, and orthotic appliances and/or provision of prefabricated or custom-made pedorthic footwear, prefabricated or custom-made orthotic appliances and/or footwear modifications. Includes the terms “pedorthic care” and “pedorthic intervention.”

Pedorthist: A person trained in Pedorthics who provides pedorthic footwear and orthotic appliances, pedorthic advice and pedorthic services.

Practice: Work performed in any role, whether remunerated or not, in which an individual uses their skills or knowledge to contribute to the safe and effective delivery of pedorthic services.

Prefabricated: Industrially manufactured and not custom-made to individual specifications. Similar terms include “ready-made”, “off-the-shelf” and “over-the-counter”.

Recent: An individual who has utilised their professional knowledge and skills in activities that meet the definition of practice since qualifying as a pedorthic retailer or pedorthist.

Re-certification: The process of renewing pedorthic certification in Australia.

Registrar of Pedorthists or Registrar: The agency that credentials individuals as certified pedorthists. The Registrar is the PAA.

Relevant Regulatory Body: Includes any department or nominated individual, or body empowered by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, States and Territories and local councils.

Review Board: A panel of representatives from which the Certification Panel is drawn.

TCF Training Package: Textiles, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Training Package Medical Grade Footwear LMT07 as endorsed by the National Training Quality Council 2008 or later versions endorsed by the relevant government authority and PAA.

VET: Vocational education and training.

¹Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). (2nd Ed.). *Allied health: credentialling, competency and capability framework (revised edition) Section 1: Credentialling and scope of practice. [Resource kit]*. Retrieved from <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/health-workforce/allied-health-workforce/allied-health-ccc-framework>

²Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *Allied Health: Credentialling, Competency and Capability Framework (Revised Ed.)*. Retrieved from <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/health-workforce/allied-health-workforce/allied-health-ccc-framework>