PAA CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS

PEDORTHIC ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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PEDORTHIC ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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Introduction

The Code of Ethics and Standards for Pedorthists in Australia describe the professional accountability of members of the Pedorthic Association of Australia (PAA).

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Criteria for Certification in Pedorthics.

What are the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice?

The Code of Ethics and Standards are a practical guide for everyday professional practice for certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA.

They apply to all practice areas regardless of specialisation. The standards do not prescribe technical or clinical management standards. The standards are, first and foremost, a tool designed to help professionals assess their practice relative to the expectations of peers, colleagues, and the profession as a whole. The standards are performance baselines against which professionals may be measured if their practice is called into question.

Development of the Code of Ethics and Standards

The Code of Ethics and Standards were developed by a panel made up from representatives of the PAA Board of Directors and representatives from the Australian Pedorthists Registration Board.

Assumptions underlying development of the Code of Ethics and Standards

Clients are often unable to assess quality of services provided by pedorthists, therefore pedorthists must take personal responsibility for ensuring quality of care.

Assumptions:

- Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA are committed to maintaining standards of practice through self-governance.
- Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA are committed to continuous development of knowledge, skills, and abilities throughout their careers. This enables them to meet constantly evolving standards of professional practice.
- Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA are committed to the principle of accountability and acknowledge that public interest takes precedence over self-interest.

PEDORTHIC ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Pedorthic Code of Ethics

Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics. The goal of the Code of Ethics is to achieve and maintain high standards of professional integrity toward clients, colleagues, partners, stakeholders, the public and the PAA. The Code describes expected conduct of all certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA in pedorthic practice, including those involved in direct service to clients, management, administration, education, research and/or business.

Expectations

The PAA expects its members to:

- possess the qualities of honesty, integrity, loyalty, and reliability
- use professional communication with clients, colleagues, partners, and stakeholders
- value and respect clients' rights to be self-directed in their decision-making in accordance with their own needs, values, and available resources
- value and respect clients' rights to be treated with respect and dignity within a safe and nonjudgmental environment
- ensure confidentiality and privacy of personal information
- recognise and manage issues related to conflict of interest
- maintain a standard of professional competency to provide high quality service
- abide by legislative requirements and codes of ethics established by other organisations to which the member has obligations (e.g., employer, facility)
- contribute to interdisciplinary collaboration and development of partnerships to advance the pedorthic outcomes of the population served
- understand and manage ethical implications involved in all practice domains, including research
- participate in continuing professional development throughout their career and apply new knowledge and skills to their professional work which is based on best available evidence
- promote the profession in an ethical manner to the public, other professional organisations, and government at local, state, and federal levels
- contribute to the development and/or dissemination of professional knowledge
- remain knowledgeable and familiar with all position papers and professional standards of the profession as published by the Pedorthic Association of Australia.

For questions or comments, please contact the PAA Office via email at info@pedorthics.org.au or by calling 1300 734 644.

Standards

Purpose

The Standards are a tool designed to help certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA assess their practice.

The objectives for the Standards include the provision of:

- performance benchmarks for daily practice and conduct
- additional means for the public to know what they can expect from practitioners
- indicators of quality pedorthic practice
- recognition of the obligations that come with professional practice privileges
- principles by which one evaluates one's practice through self-assessment, peer review and individual learning plans.

In further defining expectations of conduct and practice of certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA, the Standards augment the pedorthic Code of Ethics. They serve to strengthen the ability of certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA to exercise independent judgment. They provide a reference for the public, which increases public confidence and respect for the profession. They illuminate areas of practice that may need improvement through further education and training. The Standards also assess the quality of care provided to the public by certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA.

The Standards of Professional Practice include:

1. Knowledge
2. Accountability
3. Client Safety
4. Continuing Competence
5. Collaboration
6. Leadership
7. Business Practice
8. Professionalism
9. Consent

Standard 1: Knowledge

Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA with exclusive rights to use one of the PAA's designated titles should be knowledgeable in the practice of Pedorthics according to the scope[i] of their credentials which have been acquired through education and continuous learning.

Indicators:

1. Demonstrates an understanding of the knowledge, critical thinking and clinical judgment required for the provision of safe, competent, and ethical pedorthic care.
2. Keeps informed of advancements in their field(s) of practice and is aware of current research and developments in pedorthic care.
3. Practices only in those fields where training and ability make them professionally competent.
4. Offers a professional opinion based on substantial knowledge and experience.

5. Continuously evaluates whether they are practicing within the limits of their training and experience.
6. Maintains appropriate documentation of increased knowledge or skills through additional learning.
7. Accesses resources when needed to support the provision of safe and appropriate client care.
8. Uses health promotion and health teaching appropriate to the client's need.
9. Demonstrates awareness of evidence-based practice and applies this understanding to provision of client care.
10. Participates in quality improvement practices to enhance pedorthic practice and health outcomes such as journal reviews, attendance at conferences or educational events, engaging in evaluation of one's own professional practice incorporating self-evaluation, peer feedback or other appropriate methods.
11. Takes actions to address any deficiencies to enhance practice.

Standard 2: Accountability

Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA are committed to accountability in their professional practice, including the practice of those under their supervision, and in the profession as a whole. Public interest takes precedence over self-interest, which protects the public from unethical or incompetent practice and is a core value for the profession.

Indicators:

1. Demonstrates accountability and responsibility for own pedorthic actions and professional conduct.
2. Maintains professional integrity and honesty when conducting professional services.
3. Practices within Federal and State laws and regulations, safety codes, legal requirements, societal conventions, By-laws, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and own level of competence.
4. Provides client with medically necessary services in a conscientious manner and with the client's best interests in mind and does not exploit clients for personal advantage or provide services where there is a conflict of interest.
5. In instances where pedorthic treatment has been ineffective, the certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA is instructed to redirect the patient to a health professional. The certified pedorthist or other member of PAA must acknowledge when referral to a health provider is indicated.
6. Delivers pedorthic care in a manner that preserves and protects client autonomy, dignity, and rights.
7. Maintains appropriate boundaries between professional therapeutic relationships and non-professional personal relationships.
8. Identifies and questions situations where directions, policies or procedures may be unclear or potentially unsafe and reports such situations to an appropriate person, agency, or professional body.
9. Monitors and maintains their own fitness to practice.
10. Is responsible for all treatment and services rendered by the certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA or personnel they supervise and is responsible for ensuring they are up to date on established PAA guidelines and/or position statements.
11. Recognises a responsibility to give generally held opinions of the profession when interpreting scientific knowledge to the public and to indicate when presenting an opinion that is contrary to the generally held opinion of the profession. When

speaking with the media regarding contentious issues, the PAA must be contacted to have its opinion clarified.

Standard 3: Client Safety

The certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA takes responsibility for safe pedorthic practice and client safety.

Indicators:

1. Identifies potential risks in practice and in the practice environment and takes action to minimise such risks.
2. Reports unsafe practice, abusive behaviour or unprofessional conduct by others to the appropriate authority and to the PAA by using the PAA Complaints Policy process when indicated.
3. Communicates to the client the likely timeline for provision of services to ensure that client safety is maintained.
4. Refrains from any activity that constitutes sexual abuse, neglect, or any other types of abuse such as emotional, financial, or physical.
5. Ensures that appropriate infection control treatment measures are available within their facilities/workplaces. Certified pedorthic practitioners must use appropriate infection control techniques; use of gloves when appropriate, handwashing, cleaning and disinfecting equipment, treatment chairs/beds and examination rooms.
6. Has knowledge of WHS (Workplace Health and Safety legislation and rules) which is appropriate to their specific workplaces.
7. Identifies client services required outside their current scope of registration[ii] and redirects the patient to a suitable certified pedorthist.

Standard 4: Continuing Competence

The certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA engages in self-assessment of practice, identifying strengths, and learning needs requiring ongoing professional development.

Indicators:

1. Assumes primary responsibility and accountability for maintaining competence
2. Participates in the Continuing Professional Development Program of the PAA
3. Endeavours to maintain and improve professional knowledge and skill on an ongoing basis
4. Maintains awareness of trends, issues, and changes in pedorthic care
5. Is willing to participate in peer review of other certified pedorthist or member of the PAA and to undergo review by peers

Standard 5: Collaboration

The certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA collaborates with clients, healthcare providers, and stakeholders in the delivery of healthcare services.

Indicators:

1 Utilises effective interpersonal and therapeutic communication skills and maintains adequate written communication.

2 Uses constructive feedback and mediation strategies to resolve conflicts and facilitate collaboration.

3 Mentors students, colleagues and others, and shares experience and knowledge to advance the profession and care of the client.
4 Acknowledges and respects the role and competencies of other health providers in the delivery of health services.
5 Provides clients with the information and advice needed to make informed decisions about their pedorthic care and answer their questions to the best of their ability.
6 Take every reasonable effort to communicate with patients in such a way that the information exchanged is understood.

Standard 6: Leadership

The certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA demonstrates effective leadership knowledge and skill in own practice, as well as in the management and supervision of others.

Indicators:

1. Models professional values, beliefs and attributes that promote the profession to clients, students, peers, and other healthcare professionals.
2. Evaluates safety, effectiveness and efficiencies when delivering pedorthic care and/or assigning duties to unregulated providers, in accordance with established PAA guidelines, Code of Ethics and/or position statements.
3. Promotes innovation and openness to new ideas which may enhance or support pedorthic practice.
4. Contributes to the development of policies and procedures for the delivery of safe competent, honest, and ethical pedorthic care.
5. Recognises when they are unable to provide an acceptable level of mentorship to others and does not act as a direct supervisor in these instances (or in instances where there is a perceived or real conflict of interest).

Standard 7: Business Practice

The certified pedorthist or member of the PAA shall engage in ethical business practices.

Indicators:

Client Records

1. Certified pedorthists and members of the PAA will maintain clinical records and other records that document the management of their practices in order to:
    i. facilitate the care of their clients
    ii. provide accurate records that do not mislead or misrepresent treatment provided
    iii. enhance outcomes and safety for their clients
    iv. provide information to enable continuity of care for their clients
    v. ensure their accountability to patients, payers, the PAA, the profession, and other health care providers
    vi. demonstrate their adherence to established PAA guidelines, Code of Ethics and/or position statements
    vii. meet any other requirements mandated by the organisations they are associated with, or where required by law
    viii. comply with Federal and State laws and regulations.

2. Comply with Federal and State laws and regulations when maintaining confidentiality of all information.
3. Ensure that clients are informed of their right to view their personal records and the process to do so.
4. Take reasonable steps to ensure the electronic record keeping system is designed and operated such that the patient health records are:
    i. secure from loss, tampering, interfaced or unauthorised use or access
    ii. available as hard copies.
5. As part of the resignation process or cease in practice, the certified pedorthist or member of the PAA shall take reasonable steps to ensure that each patient health record for which the certified pedorthist or member of the PAA has the primary responsibility includes:
    i. reasonable efforts to obtain the patient's consent and transfer the record to another member
    ii. patient notification that the member intends to resign, and the patient can obtain copies of their health record
    iii. if the record transferred is not the original patient health record, the original record is stored in a secure location for seven years following the patient's last visit, or, if the patient was less than 18 years old at the time of their last visit, the day the patient became or would have become 18 years old.

Conflict of Interest

1. A conflict of interest arises when a certified pedorthist or member of the PAA is in a position where reasonable people, including patients, could conclude that their professional judgment is influenced by financial or personal benefit. Instances where a member has a multidisciplinary clinic may be considered a conflict if the certified pedorthist or member of the PAA refers the pedorthic client for other non-pedorthic clinic services and there are no clear clinical indicators for making such referrals.
2. Certified pedorthists and members of the PAA will avoid all circumstances that may result in perceived conflicts of interest by refraining from participating in any activity or arrangement where their participation provides the potential for their professional judgment to be compromised. The conflict-of-interest situation is not avoided by structuring the arrangement to move any potential benefit to a related person or non-certified business associate.
3. A certified pedorthist or member of the PAA shall be responsible for the prompt identification and proposed resolution of conflicts of interest. If a real or potential conflict of interest arises, the member will take all reasonable steps to resolve the conflict of interest by informing all parties of the need to resolve the situation. This includes situations where a certified pedorthist or member of the PAA may be asked to provide benefits to a regular referring party. Solicitation of referral agents where benefits are offered would also be considered a conflict.
4. Offering free or deeply discounted items or substituting items as an incentive for using pedorthic services is unethical and constitutes a conflict of interest.
5. A certified pedorthist or member of the PAA is perceived to have a conflict of interest when employed by a non-certified or non-member of PAA employer that engages in unethical business practices.

Conduct

1. Certified pedorthists or other PAA members may not offer free or deeply discounted products in exchange for the purchase of multiple pedorthic products or services or otherwise engage in any practice which has the effect of stimulating a demand for unnecessary or excessive use of pedorthic services.
2. Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA shall not be employed by or associated with a clinic or business providing pedorthic services that engages in conduct deemed to be contrary to the PAA Code of Ethics and Standards.
3. Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA employed or associated with a clinic or business acting in a manner that is contrary to the Code of Ethics and Standards, shall be considered in violation of the Code of Ethics and Standards.

Standard 8: Professionalism

Certified pedorthists and other members of the PAA always conduct themselves honourably in ways that sustain and enhance their professional integrity and the integrity of the profession.

Indicators:

1. Recognises that self-regulation of the profession is a privilege, and that each member has a continuing responsibility to merit this privilege.
2. Replies promptly and completely to any communication from the PAA, its officials, committees or delegates.
3. Avoids impugning the reputation of colleagues for personal motives.
4. Reports unethical conduct by colleagues to the PAA.
5. Enters into professional affiliations with others only if it is possible to maintain their professional integrity.
6. Each certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA has committed to act with honesty and integrity, which is fundamental to the delivery of high quality, safe and professional services.
7. The certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA may only use those professional designations that they have duly earned and maintained in accordance with the regulations of the appropriate certifying and governing bodies.
8. The certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA may not solicit clients or referring professionals with gratuitous or deeply discounted offers.
9. The certified pedorthist or other member of the PAA must respect all patients' cultural, lifestyle, religious, ethnicity, sexuality, and ethical differences.

Standard 9: Consent

The certified pedorthist or member of the PAA will obtain informed consent prior to the delivery of pedorthic care.

Indicators:

1. Respects the right of a competent client to accept or reject any pedorthic care recommended.
2. Certified pedorthists or other members of the PAA are required to indicate patient consent on their patient records.
3. Ensures informed consent prior to and throughout service provision.
4. Knows and adheres to regulatory, legislative, and service requirements.

5. Ensures that clients understand and agree to the involvement of other providers of pedorthic services such as non-certified personnel, students, etc. when such persons are involved.

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.

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[i] The Criteria for Certification in Pedorthics – 3.5 Key Competencies
[ii] The Criteria for Certification in Pedorthics – 3.4 Scope of Registration