



IFPA Return to Practice Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements for qualified aromatherapists returning to professional practice following a period during which they have not been actively practising.

The policy aims to ensure that all returning practitioners have maintained and updated their professional knowledge and practical skills, enabling them to practise safely, competently and in accordance with current IFPA professional standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all qualified aromatherapists seeking to return to professional practice following a period of non-practice, including those who have never practised since qualifying or who are returning after an extended career break.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Return to Practice

The process by which a qualified aromatherapist resumes professional aromatherapy practice following a period during which they have not been actively practising.

Not Practising

A member is considered not to be practising if they have not been providing professional aromatherapy consultations and/or treatments, whether on a full-time, part-time, employed, self-employed or voluntary basis.

Professional Practice

The provision of aromatherapy consultations and/or treatments to clients in any professional capacity.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Structured learning activities undertaken to maintain, update and enhance professional knowledge, practical skills and competence.

Aromatherapy-Specific CPD

CPD that is directly relevant to professional aromatherapy practice. This may include subjects such as:

- Essential oils
- Carrier oils and bases
- Blending techniques
- Safety and contraindications
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Pathology
- Consultation skills
- Clinical aromatherapy
- Research and evidence-based practice
- Professional standards and ethics
- Relevant legislation
- Aromatherapy massage techniques (where applicable)

Massage Refresher Training

Practical CPD designed to maintain or restore competence in aromatherapy massage techniques.

Members intending to provide aromatherapy massage treatments as part of their professional practice must ensure that their Return to Practice CPD includes appropriate practical massage training.

4. Return to Practice Requirements

Applicants returning to professional practice must complete the following requirements:

A minimum of 12 CPD points for each completed year they have not been engaged in professional aromatherapy practice.

The requirement is calculated on completed years out of practice. Periods of less than 12 months will not normally attract an additional CPD requirement.

For example:

Period not practising	Minimum CPD Required
Less than 12 months	No additional Return to Practice CPD required
1 year	12 CPD points
2 years	24 CPD points
3 years	36 CPD points
4 years	48 CPD points
5 years or more	60 CPD points**

The required CPD must be completed before returning to professional practice.

Evidence of completion must be submitted with the Return to Practice application.

** A maximum of 60 Return to Practice CPD points will normally be required. Where a member has been absent from professional practice for more than five years, the Education Committee may request additional training, practical assessment or other evidence of competence where considered necessary.

5. Acceptable CPD

The required CPD must:

- be directly relevant to professional aromatherapy practice;
- support the member's intended scope of practice;
- be obtained through reputable education providers or recognised professional learning activities; and
- be supported by appropriate evidence, such as certificates of attendance or completion.

CPD that is unrelated to aromatherapy will not normally be accepted towards the Return to Practice requirement.

6. Massage Requirements

Where a member intends to provide aromatherapy massage treatments, their Return to Practice CPD must include appropriate practical massage refresher training.

This may include:

- Practical massage workshops
- Supervised practical training
- Refresher courses
- Practical skills training

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure members maintain safe and competent practical skills before returning to client practice.

7. Additional Membership Requirements

Completion of the Return to Practice requirements does not replace any other IFPA membership, upgrade or registration requirements.

Applicants must satisfy all other criteria applicable to their membership category.

8. Discretion of the Education Committee

The IFPA Education Committee reserves the right to request additional evidence, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), practical training or an assessment where it considers this necessary to ensure safe and competent practice.

This discretion may be exercised where, for example:

- a member has been out of practice for an extended period;
- there have been significant changes to IFPA educational standards or professional practice since the member originally qualified;
- the evidence submitted does not adequately demonstrate current competence;
- practical massage skills require further assessment or refresher training; or
- there are any other circumstances that the Education Committee considers warrant further review.

Each application will be considered on its own merits, with the Education Committee acting fairly, proportionately and in the interests of public safety and professional standards.

9. Queries

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to:

IFPA Administration

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