

**From:** Shirley Morrissey [mailto:S.Morrissey@griffith.edu.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 September 2010 7:07 PM  
**To:** NationalBoards; Brin Greyner  
**Cc:** Nicholas Voudouris  
**Subject:** Submission re Areas of Endorsement

Professor Brin Greyner  
Chair  
Psychology Board of Australia  
10 September 2010

Dear Professor Greyner

Re: Submission Re: Areas of Practice Endorsement

I would like to make this individual submission regarding the Areas of Practice Endorsement:

1) Health Psychology. I like many Members of the APS College of Health Psychologists am very disappointed to see that Health Psychology is not an endorsed area of practice and I submit a request for the PBA to reconsider this. The arguments for why Health Psychology is a specialised area of practice for psychology have been made by the APS College and I am in total agreement with them. As well as this I would like to reiterate that Health Psychology is recognised as a Specialist area of Psychology in the UK, whereby the BPS acknowledge Health Psychologists in their Division of Health Psychology as in their Register of Chartered Psychologists. Likewise in the USA, Division 38 - Health Psychology has existed from at least 1980. For a Health Regulation entity (AHPRA) not acknowledge health psychology as a speciality area in the context where Australia faces enormous health problems (obesity, chronic disease etc.) and health psychologists have the training and qualification to work in these areas is beyond belief.

2. Requirements for endorsement.

At the 2004 Annual General Meeting of the Australian Psychological Society, a change was made to the criteria required for Full Membership of its Colleges. The changes were such that after successful completion of a then APS accredited (now APAC accredited) and APS approved Doctor of Psychology coursework program, were considered to be fully qualified and eligible to gain direct entry to Full Membership of the College. Graduates of APS accredited (now APAC accredited) and APS approved Masters Programs were considered to be eligible for Associate Membership of the relevant College and were required to complete a further year of supervised practice including additional hours of professional development in order to meet the requirements for full membership of the college. Full membership of the college confers the right to describe oneself as a Member of the College in the relevant specialist field. This criteria is the current requirement for full membership of each of the nine specialist Colleges.

This change to the Membership requirements was debated widely within the membership of the Colleges and the Society as a whole and was successfully voted on and approved at a General Meeting of the Society. This standard is consistent with the UK and European standards for specialist training.

While it is the case that prior to 2004, the 2 years of supervised practice following a masters degree was the standard for full membership of the Colleges, this was in an era when there were fewer postgraduate programs, with fewer numbers of students, and whereby most graduates especially from clinical psychology postgraduate programs gained their supervision whilst employed in government settings. This is not the case nowadays. For the PBA to require additional years of supervised practice for graduates of APAC accredited and APS approved postgraduate programs of study is in my view a backward step and one that is extremely costly for students, and could potentially result in a lowering of standards.

There are still an insufficient number of qualified specialist supervisors in Australia. At the moment many postgraduate programs find it difficult to provide the relevant specialist supervision for their students on placement. By adding an additional year of supervised practice for Masters graduates and an additional year of supervision for DPsych graduates, the amount of supervision required is at least double what it is now. This is

in the context of universities trying to offer more places on their postgraduate programs, and where we already know that there are specific shortages of supervisors especially in rural, regional and remote communities.

Students have expressed that they would likely opt to enrol in Masters programs if they had to do extra supervised practice after a Dpsych . At my own university, students have questioned why would they pay for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study and then have to source a further year of supervision. Students have expressed that they will be forced to opt for shorter training programs so they can gain employment earlier and simply pay for the additional supervision.

Finally, while on-going supervision is indeed a valuable activity in its own right, and I support the practice of on-going peer consultation/peer supervision, for continued professional development, there is no evidence currently that demonstrates that additional supervision following postgraduate training results in better outcomes in terms of psychology graduate capabilities, or patient/client outcomes.

Therefore I respectfully ask that the PBA re-consider their requirements for endorsement and that the PBA use the current APS College Membership requirements as the benchmark for requirements for endorsement of approved areas of practice.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Shirley Morrissey, PhD.

10 September 2010

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