

**Response to consultation paper on Guidelines for the National Psychology Examination
School of Psychological Sciences, Australian College of Applied Psychology**

The School is generally in support of the Board's proposal to develop a National Psychology Examination to regulate the standards of psychological service provision given the variety of paths available to general registration. We make the following qualifying comments.

- It is important to develop a detailed plan for the evaluation of any National Psychology Examination including consideration of its psychometric properties. This is especially so, given that an evaluation of a similar assessment, the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) used by the United States and Canada province licensing boards concluded that the psychometric properties of the instrument, particularly the criterion and predictive validity, had not been substantiated (Sharpless & Barber, 2009).
- The areas to be assessed by the proposed examination are very extensive and the depth of assessment possible is questionable should it be restricted to 150 multiple choice questions. The School recognises that the time per question is broadly equivalent to that allowed for the EPPP, and that the EPPP aims to assess a broader content area. However, many US and Canadian jurisdictions require additional assessments, such as California, which requires the California Psychology Supplemental Examination (100 multiple choice items) and British Columbia that has an oral exam.
- The School strongly recommends that the question of a viva voce and a practical demonstration of applied skills also be revisited reflecting concerns about the extent to which these can be assessed adequately by multiple choice questions, or consistently by intern supervisors. Graduates of Masters and Doctoral professional training degrees are expected to undertake such assessments in accordance with APAC requirements for assessing competencies. We recognise the Board's work in developing national standards and reporting for supervisor's of interns. However, we encourage the Board to consider either developing a national practical assessment to ensure that standards are met for those outside regulated programs of study, or to develop a plan for demonstrating the reliability of individual supervisor assessments of practical skills.
- The School fully supports the recommendation to exempt graduates of accredited Masters and Doctorate degrees from a multiple choice National Psychology Examination, as these graduates will have had extensive, APAC-regulated assessment of the same content areas during their studies. This reasoning would also suggest a modification of the examination for graduates of 5th year Graduate Diploma of Professional Psychology programs when these become available, as these graduates will have been directly assessed in some of the same areas as the Master and Doctorate graduates, although the core attributes would be expected to be covered in less detail than in Master and Doctorate programs (APAC (2010) Rules for Accreditation & Accreditation Standards for Psychology Courses (p. 48).

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Reference.

Sharpless, B.A. & Barber, J. P. (2009). The Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) in the era of evidence-based practice. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 40, 333-340. doi: 10.1037/a0013983.