



THE PSYCHOLOGY FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA

(Incorporated in New South Wales)

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22 January 2011

Professor Brin Grenyer
Psychology Board of Australia

Response to Consultation paper 13, Exposure Draft: National Psychology Examination Curriculum

The Psychology Foundation of Australia is a grouping of research oriented Schools of Psychology that has as its primary focus the aim of ensuring high standards of teaching and research in the discipline of Psychology and its professional training outcomes. In that context we offer several comments on the Consultation paper.

The first is to thank the Board for its positive response to earlier feedback in deciding to apply an exemption from sitting the examination for graduates of accredited Masters, Doctorate or combined Masters/PhD programmes who apply for general registration until 30 June 2016. We strongly encourage the Board to ensure an ongoing system of accreditation that will allow the permanent extension of this exemption. The assessment that is possible within a structured higher degree will always be superior to a one-off exam as the former involves assessment of performance using multiple formats over an extended period of time by many qualified psychologists. It includes direct observation within the contexts students will work and it is less susceptible to cheating or narrow exam-focused preparation. We urge the continuation of this system as the preferred path to registration for students in Masters, Doctorates and combined Master/PhD programmes.

Second, the current examination is strongly focused on those students registering for clinical practice. However, many students applying for general registration will be in other areas that the Board lists for endorsed practice. We believe 1) that variations of the examination should be created to assess knowledge of practice in those other areas and 2) students registering in other areas should not be required to have a full knowledge of clinical practice, unless this is relevant to their intended area of practice, since that content would not be included in course structures that currently receive accreditation from APAC.

Third, we agree that it is important that the PBA encourages evidence-based practice and regard it as critical that the Board only targets such techniques in the examination. To do otherwise is an implicit endorsement of those other practices. The APA policy statement on evidence-based practice (<http://www.apa.org/practice/resources/evidence/>) provides a useful guide but the proposed curriculum includes techniques with a poor evidence base, such as narrative therapy and psychodynamic therapy. The progress and reputation of the profession depends on using evidence-based procedures. The examination for registration should reflect this requirement.

Yours sincerely

David Badcock

OFFICE ENQUIRIES

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