

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair of the Psychology Board of Australia
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13th May, 2011

Dear Professor Grenyer,

Re: Consultation paper on Guidelines for the National Psychology Examination

We write on behalf of students at Macquarie University, Sydney NSW, currently enrolled in a postgraduate degree in Clinical Neuropsychology. We would like to thank the Psychology Board of Australia (PBA) for inviting us to comment on this consultation paper regarding a National Examination for general registration as a Psychologist.

We are in support of the Board's proposal to grant an exemption from sitting the National Examination to candidates who have completed professional Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) accredited postgraduate degrees. Provided in the following are reasons in support of the exemption.

APAC is an independent organisation engaged by the Australian Government and Universities to evaluate whether course requirements meet the standards necessary for general registration as a Psychologist. Compared to the 4+2 pathway, an APAC accredited postgraduate degree involves a more rigorous and standardised process of evaluation of its candidates. Clinical Neuropsychology candidates enrolled in an APAC accredited course complete a number of examinable subjects (unlike the 4+2 pathway) which specifically address skills and issues in Clinical Psychology in order to satisfy the requirements of general registration. The proposed examination would be redundant for such students who have met the requirements of an APAC accredited postgraduate degree.

Compared to other pathways to general registration in Australia, postgraduate degrees require a far longer time to complete and entail significantly more financial costs and financial sacrifice from candidates. As such, having to sit the proposed exam, which appears to be a redundant assessment of postgraduates, reduces the benefits of completing an APAC accredited degree and risks deterring future student enrolments.

Further to the proposed examination's redundancies for APAC accredited postgraduates discussed above, we feel that a requirement to sit this examination would disadvantage Clinical Neuropsychology candidates in several respects:

- *Prolong our application for general registration:* extra time will occur between graduating and completing the examination process, and consequently increase latency between training and practice. This will be in addition to waiting for research theses to be marked, as already there are some students who wait as long as 6-12 months between completing course requirements and being able to practice, and waiting for the process of PsyBA registration approval. In summary, the prolonging of general registration will significantly delay our entry into the workforce, which will result in de-skilling as well as workforce shortages.
- *Lead to unnecessary financial costs,* as would be expected from a National Examination process. These costs are in addition to the increased administration costs of registration with the PsyBA (compared to registration costs with pre-existing registration bodies), together with the tuition fees and sacrificed salary-earning-time associated with completing postgraduate degrees.

In summary, the proposed examination is redundant for graduates who have satisfied the requirements of an APAC accredited postgraduate degree. The examination will cause significant and unnecessary time and financial disadvantages for these graduates. Therefore, we support the Board's proposal to grant exemptions from sitting the National Examination for general registration to candidates who have completed an APAC accredited postgraduate degree.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our concerns. If you have any questions, please contact Vanessa Leung (details below).

Yours Sincerely,

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