

Registration as a provisional psychologist in Western Australia

25 August 2010

What is the new scheme?

A national registration and accreditation scheme came into effect in Australia on 1 July for all states except Western Australia. As a result, there are new obligations and requirements for registered psychologists and for individuals training to become a psychologist.

Information about the new scheme and the implications for practitioners is published on the Board's website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

The *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Bill 2010* was this month passed by the Parliament of Western Australia and the Western Australian Government has advised that state will join the scheme by 18 October 2010.

The following information will be useful for psychologists in Western Australia in preparation for joining the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

What types of registration apply to psychology?

For the psychology profession, there are now three registration types:

- general registration
- provisional registration
- non-practising registration

What does national registration mean for psychologists in Western Australia?

From 1 July 2010, individuals undertaking:

- a) a 4 +2 pathway to registration; or
- b) an APAC accredited higher degree leading to general registration,

must be registered as a provisional psychologist.

Post-graduate students must be registered from the start of their higher degree as a provisional psychologist.

Australian states and territories except South Australia and Western Australia previously offered provisional or probationary registration to post-graduate psychology students. These students have automatically transitioned to provisional registration under the National Law.

However, Western Australia (and South Australia) have not previously registered higher degree psychology students. Post-graduate students from Western Australia will need to apply to the Psychology Board of Australia for provisional registration by 24 December 2010.

What do WA post-graduate psychology students have to do once WA joins the scheme?

You **must** submit an application to the Board for provisional registration by 24 December 2010.

If you lodge your application by 24 December 2010 you will be able to continue in or start your placement, pending a Board decision on your application.

All applicants will be required to meet the requirements of the National Board and the National Law. These are detailed on the Board's website under Registration Standards.

What happens if a WA post-graduate psychology student does not apply for provisional registration?

All WA post-graduate psychology students must apply for provisional registration with the Psychology Board by 24 December 2010. If you lodge your application by this deadline you will be able to continue in or start your placement, pending a Board decision on your application. If you are not granted provisional registration you will not be able to undertake placements and you will therefore not be able to complete your degree.

How do I apply for provisional registration in WA?

The application form to apply for provisional registration is on the Psychology Board of Australia website at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au. This form can be submitted in person or by mail.

What does it cost to apply for provisional registration?

The usual application fee to apply for provisional registration is \$410 and the annual registration fee for provisional registration is \$390.

The Psychology Board of Australia has been consulting with stakeholders about the transition arrangements for provisional registration in Western Australia. Since all Australian states and territories (except SA and WA) previously offered provisional or probationary registration to post-graduate psychology students, and these students have automatically transitioned to provisional registration under the National Law, the Board has been considering additional transitional arrangements for South Australia and Western Australia.

The Psychology Board of Australia at its meeting on 30 July 2010 determined to waive the application fee (\$410) for all psychologists applying for provisional registration in South and Western Australia prior to the deadline. All individuals undertaking a 4+2 pathway to registration or an APAC accredited higher degree leading to general registration who apply for provisional registration by 24 December 2010 will be only required to pay the registration fee (\$390).

What will the Psychologists Board of Australia do to help you meet the new requirements?

Information about obligations under the National Law and the National Board's registration standards are published at www.psychologyboard.org.au and www.ahpra.gov.au.

Application forms and information are available on the Psychology Board of Australia website at: <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au>.

The Board sent a letter to all universities in Western Australia in May 2010 to ensure that academic and support staff were aware of the requirements under the National Law.

Why is there no student registration for psychologists?

The Psychology Board of Australia decided in December 2009 that there would be no category of student registration for psychologists.

Registration of post-graduate students as probationary or provisional psychologists has been a standard practice in psychology in most of Australia (except SA and WA).

The Board believes the category of provisional registration better represents the training pathways of psychologists. Student registration is typically applied to registrants in undergraduate programs, or in programs where students are closely supervised and do not work independently in a practical environment. The Board believes this does not apply to students in post graduate psychology programs (or individuals undergoing the 4+2 internship program) who have completed their undergraduate training, and are required to operate autonomously (under supervision).

Under the national scheme, all individuals working towards general registration as a psychologist will have a consistent title in every state and territory of Australia. This is important in helping the public understand more about the registration status of psychologists.

What is my fee used for?

Under the model of registration in place in Australia, fees from registrants fund the regulation of the profession. The core role of the Board is to protect the public, by registering only practitioners who have the qualifications, skills and experience to provide safe care and by setting clear and appropriate registration and professional standards.

Can I work outside my university placements as a provisional psychologist?

The *National Law* s 62 states that ‘...an individual is eligible for provisional registration in a health profession, to enable the individual to complete a period of supervised practice that the individual requires to be eligible for general registration in the health profession’.

The Psychology Board of Australia has decided that allowing work outside of placements during higher degree training will allow students to contribute to the workforce while extending their psychological skills under supervision.

A provisional psychologist undertaking an accredited higher coursework degree pathway may only practise outside university placements and use the title ‘provisional psychologist’ with Board approval. Forms to apply for approval can be found at:

<http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au>.

Further information about the Board’s policy for working outside of placements and the application form can be found on the Board’s website.