

Mr Adam Becker
PO BOX 346
Northcote, VIC, 3070

Attention: Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair, Psychology Board of Australia
G.P.O. Box 9958
Melbourne VIC 3001

5 September 2010

RE: GUIDELINES ON AREA OF PRACTICE ENDORSEMENTS

Dear Professor Grenyer:

I am writing to respond to two aspects of the PBA's recent consultation paper on guidelines on area of practice endorsements. Firstly, the board asked for suggestions for improved descriptions of areas of practice endorsement. I would like to draw your attention to the difference between the APS definition and the current PBA definition of counselling psychology. The first three sentences of the APS definition of counselling psychology (as found at <http://www.psychology.org.au/community/specialist/counselling/>) are:

*Counselling psychologists are specialists in the provision of psychological therapy. They provide psychological assessment and psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families and groups, and treat a wide range of psychological problems **and mental health disorders. Counselling psychologists use a variety of evidence-based therapeutic strategies and have particular expertise in tailoring these to meet the specific and varying needs of clients.***

The PBA definition is:

Counselling psychologists are specialists in the provision of psychological therapy. They provide psychological assessment and psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families and groups, and treat a wide range of psychological problems

My concerns are twofold; firstly, the PBA has omitted '**mental health disorders**' from the definition of counselling psychology and secondly, the PBA definition would be greatly improved by including the third sentence of the APS definition that draws attention to the fact that counselling psychologists utilise a variety of evidence-based interventions. It is crucial that counselling psychologists are recognised as specialists in the treatment of mental health disorders. Secondly, it is imperative that counselling psychologists are recognised for their extensive graduate training in evidence based psychological therapies. I would like to ask that the PBA please amend their definition of counselling psychology to acknowledge specialist proficiency in; the treatment of '**mental health disorders**' and, the application of '**evidence-based psychological therapies**'.

The second aspect of the consultation paper to which I would like to respond is the proposed provisions for doctoral students to commence their registrar program after completion of practicum and coursework components of their degree. I am greatly

encouraged that the PBA are considering options in this respect. I would like to propose that the PBA consider allowing doctoral students to gain general registration as well as commence their registrar program after completion of practicum and coursework components. This would allow doctoral students to seek employment as registered psychologists, and also as registrar specialists, once they have completed their internships and coursework. This approach would acknowledge the extensive and comprehensive training that doctoral students complete via practicum and coursework components of their degrees.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adam Becker', is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Adam Becker
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Registered Psychologist
DPsych (Counselling Psychology) Candidate La Trobe