

10 September 2010

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

Dear Brin,

RE: Consultation Paper 5 on Proposed Revisions to the Guidelines on Area of Practice Endorsements

We wish to respond to the PBA invitation for suggestions for specific core capabilities associated with areas of practice that align to the Board's 8 competency areas for endorsement.

La Trobe University offers Masters and Professional Doctorate degrees in Counselling Psychology accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) and recognized by the APS. It is very important to recognize that these courses provide a rigorous training in the core capabilities as defined by the PBA discussion paper, as do other accredited counselling psychology courses.

We request that the Board update its definition of Counselling Psychology in order to accurately represent the specialist field of counselling psychology as defined in the APAC course accreditation guidelines, the APS College of Counselling Psychologists brochure, and the Psychologists Registration Board of WA List of Competencies for counselling psychology specialist title.

Please find attached the 2008 version of the core competencies defined by the APS for counselling psychologists. These outline the core capabilities in each broad area specified by the PBA. The definition of counselling psychology from the APS Brochure describes these capabilities as:

*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. They pay particular attention to the meanings, beliefs, contexts and processes that affect psychological health. This enables them to create collaborative, therapist-client relationships where the focus is on building psychological strengths and wellbeing as well as resolution of difficulties and disorders.*

In particular, core capabilities in the following areas should be highlighted as core in any definition of the endorsed area:

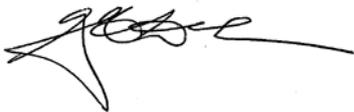
- Provision of psychological therapy for clients with psychological difficulties or affected by adverse life events, such as bereavement, grief and loss, unemployment and career planning, relationship difficulties, domestic violence, sexual abuse and other forms of trauma;
- Assessment, diagnosis, case formulation and treatment of mental health disorders including high prevalence disorders such as anxiety and depression as well as chronic and enduring disorders such as personality disorders, eating disorders, substance disorders and PTSD ;
- Couple, family, and group therapy as specific modes of intervention, as well as individual therapy;
- Expertise in establishing collaborative relationships with clients including a focus on establishing, maintaining and repairing the therapeutic alliance.

We strongly request that the PBA recognize the clear and strong alignment between the counseling psychologists specific core capabilities associated with areas of practice and the Board's 8 competency areas for endorsement.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof Margot Schofield, MClinPsych, PhD, MAPs
Head, Department of Counselling and Psychological Health



Dr Geoff Denham, PhD, MAPs
Course Coordinator of Counselling Psychology



Dr Melissa Monfries, PhD, MAPs
Senior Lecturer, Counselling Psychology

**College of Counselling Psychology
Domains of Knowledge
December 2008**

AREAS	INCLUSION CRITERIA
1. Theories and knowledge relevant to psychological specialities	<p>Demonstrated advanced knowledge in :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirically Supported Treatments (ESTs) in psychotherapies • Group processes and family functioning • Normal and abnormal development across the lifespan <p>Demonstrated advanced knowledge of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories of personality development • Theories of lifespan development and their contextual relevance in psychotherapy & counselling • Diagnostic classification systems including eg. DSM & ICD, and indigenous psychologies
2. Assessment	<p>Demonstrated advanced knowledge in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formulation and diagnosis of client stressors, mental health disorders and psychological distress • collaborating with clients in case formulation of mental health problems, <p>Demonstrated competence in specific areas of psychological assessment including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychopathology • bio-psychosocial status • cognitive functioning and impairment • personality • vocational psychology • health and well-being and tests of specific functioning
3. Interventions and implementation	<p>Demonstrated advanced competence in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empirically supported therapies which facilitate change for individuals, couples, families and groups from a diverse range of backgrounds • Psychotherapeutic interventions • Integration of psychotherapy strategies from a diverse range of counselling theories • Taking account of contextual factors in designing and delivering psychotherapy interventions • Developing and delivering collaborative therapeutic interventions
4. Research and evaluation	<p>Demonstrated competence in measuring and evaluating psychotherapeutic outcomes including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptom reduction • Well being • Case formulations and reformulations • Psycho-educational outcomes • Resource provision and use <p>Demonstrated competence in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducting psychotherapy outcome research in either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed mode forms. • performing programme evaluations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing reflective practice • routine inclusion of research in practice activities
5. Professional practice	<p>Demonstrated ability to practice within an ethical framework in a variety of professional therapeutic and counselling settings.</p> <p>Demonstrated competence in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with clients collaboratively to achieve therapeutic outcomes. • Recognition of the primacy of the Therapeutic Alliance in working with clients. • Demonstrated competence in working with other professionals. <p>Demonstrated capacity to learn from, contribute to, and develop supervision in the context of professional practice.</p>
6. Non-psychological components	<p>Demonstrated competence in collaborating with allied professionals and other stakeholders in the mental health field</p> <p>Well developed competence in developing alliances with consumer groups in the mental health field.</p>