



Communiqué

25 May 2012

This communiqué highlights key issues from the 30th meeting of the Psychology Board of Australia (the National Board) on 25 May 2012. At each meeting, the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

Revised Professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements registration standard

The Psychology Board of Australia has published its new *Professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard* (the PII standard) which was recently approved by all Australian Health Ministers and came in to effect on 1 June 2012. The *PII standard* can be found at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Standards-and-Guidelines/Registration-Standards.

To support the implementation of the new *PII standard*, the National Board has also published a *Guideline on professional indemnity insurance for psychologists*, which clarifies the requirements of the new standard. This information provides guidance on PII to psychologists, employers of psychologists, higher education providers and insurance providers. The *Guideline on professional indemnity insurance for psychologists* can be found at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Standards-and-Guidelines/Codes-Guidelines-Policies.

The *PII standard* and the *Guideline on professional indemnity insurance for psychologists* were developed after extensive consultation in 2010 and 2011 and apply to all registered psychologists, including provisional psychologists. Meeting the standard is a requirement of registration.

The onus is on individual psychologists to ensure they have appropriate PII cover for each practice and job they hold, including voluntary work.

The National Board strongly encourages psychologists to familiarise themselves with the new standard and its requirements, as failure to comply may result in health, conduct or performance action being taken against them by the Board. The National Board will in future be conducting random audits of psychologists' PII arrangements, to ensure the requirements are being met.

5+ 1 Program

The Psychology Board of Australia has published its revised *Provisional registration standard*, which was recently approved by all Australian Health Ministers and came in to effect on 1 June 2012. The new *Provisional registration standard* can be found at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Standards-and-Guidelines/Registration-Standards.

The National Board consulted widely on revisions to the *Provisional registration standard*, which has been updated to include more detail on the 5+1 pathway.

The Board published the original *Provisional registration standard* on its website prior to 1 July 2010. This standard was approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 under the National Law and took effect from 1 July 2010. The *Provisional registration standard* includes provision for both a 4+2 and 5+1 internship program leading to General registration. Details of the requirements of the 4+2 internship program were included in the original standard but details of the requirements of the 5+1 internship program were not included.

The Board advises that when the original *Provisional registration standard* was being developed for approval in 2009, the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) was developing accreditation standards for the fifth year of a possible 5+1 program. Subsequently, APAC proposed, and the Board later approved, that the requirements of the 5+1 program will comprise an accredited fifth year of study leading to a Graduate Diploma of Professional Psychology (or equivalent) followed by a one-year (or part-time equivalent) Board-approved supervised practice program (internship) at sixth-year level of study.

Several universities and private training institutions have subsequently developed a Graduate Diploma of Professional Psychology, which has been accredited by APAC and approved by the Board for an initial intake in 2012.

Now that the revised *Provisional Registration standard* has been approved by Ministerial Council, the Board will shortly be developing and consulting on guidelines for the 5+1 program, focusing on the 6th year internship. The specifications for the 5th year of this pathway are published in the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) standard. The requirements for the sixth year workplace internship are described in the new *Provisional registration standard* and include a minimum of 1540 hours of internship and achievement of the eight core capabilities of the internship program..

The Board proposes to develop a *Guideline for the 5+1 Internship Program* to provide additional information for registrants undertaking the 5+1 internship program, and this consultation is planned for 2012.

Psychology Board of Australia website

The Board continues to publish important information on its website. Psychologists are encouraged to access the website regularly to keep up to date with guidelines, policies, frequently asked questions (FAQs), fact sheets and registration standards at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

Psychologists are encouraged to review the following changes:

- Updates to the *Fact Sheet for Transition and Grand-parenting Arrangements for Area of Practice Endorsement*. This fact sheet has been updated to reiterate and clarify transition provisions for higher degree students and graduates. The majority of the transition and grand-parenting arrangements will end in 2013.

In particular, any psychologist who has fulfilled all the requirements for conferral of an APAC accredited Master of Psychology degree (or combined MPsych/PhD) associated with an area of practice endorsement between 30 June 2005 and 30 June 2010 and has subsequently graduated from the degree will be eligible to apply for an area of practice endorsement after completing one year of the Psychology Board of Australia registrar program. The registrar program must be completed and the application for area of practice endorsement lodged prior to 30 June 2013. Under this provision, applicants must submit the application for approval of a registrar program **before 30 June 2012**.

Registrar programs begun after this date could not be completed by 30 June 2013 even if they were undertaken full time. From 1 July 2012, applicants whose qualifications fall into this category and who have not begun a Board-approved registrar program will not be eligible for a reduction in the registrar program requirements.

- The *Policy on applications for an extension to complete Western Australian specialist title supervision programs*

This policy pertains to psychologists who are submitting applications for area of practice endorsement following completion of a specialist title supervision program in Western Australia. The deadline for these applications is 30 June 2013. This policy allows for applications for extension to apply to the Board for area of practice endorsement due to special circumstances. The maximum period of extension that can be applied is 31 December 2013. Applications must be received between 1 January 2013 and 30 June 2013. The new policy can be found at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Standards-and-Guidelines/Codes-Guidelines-Policies

Board issues guidance on when to be registered

The Psychology Board of Australia has issued guidance to practitioners about when it is necessary to be registered and when it would be acceptable to the Board for a practitioner to not be registered. The guidance will remain in place pending a wider, scheduled review of all the registration standards in 2013.

The statement on “When is it necessary to be registered as a psychologist?” can be found at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Standards-and-Guidelines/FAQ.

First national statistics on psychology supervisors

The Psychology Board of Australia has published the first national data on approved psychology supervisors in Australia at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.aspx

Approved supervisors are registered psychologists who have been approved by the National Board in one or more supervision categories, such as principal or secondary supervision for the Registrar Program or 4+2 Internship program.

These data show that there are over 5,600 individual Board-approved supervisors in Australia, and that the majority of psychology supervisors are approved in more than one supervision category. Almost one in four psychologists with general registration are Board-approved supervisors.

These data are able to be collated for the first time as a result of the National Scheme and after extensive technology improvements. Publication follows the launch in January this year of a searchable online supervisor list.

In addition to the data on supervision categories published by the National Board, the Board also approves supervisors for the 5+1 Internship (which is under development), for higher degree placements (Board approval required from 30 June 2013), and for working in addition to placements which has only recently been defined as a unique supervisor category. Statistics for these categories will be available in the future.

The National Board will continue to publish updates on supervisor statistics on its website at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.

National Registration Data

The Psychology Board of Australia has released a sixth set of national registration data that profiles in detail Australia’s psychology workforce. The new national registration data is for March 2012, and highlights the dynamic changes in the profession reflecting renewals, the movements of practitioners in and out of the workforce and the progression of provisional psychologists towards general registration. In particular, the March 2012 statistics show registrants moving to non-practicing registration, and the steady increase in psychologists with area of practice endorsement.

The tables and national data for March 2012 are available on the Board’s website at:

www.psychologyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics

Accreditation matters

Under section 49 of the National Law, the National Board requires accreditation reports from the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) before it can approve the accredited programs of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration. The Board approved the accreditation of courses at the University of New England. The Board approved the accreditation (*with conditions*) of courses at James Cook University, the University of Southern Queensland, and the University of Sydney.

These courses will be added to the list of Board-approved courses that is published on the Board’s website.

English Language Skills Registration Standards

The National Boards have committed to reviewing their registration standards at least every three years. By mid 2013, the National Scheme will be three years old, which will trigger a review of the standards that have been in place since the start of the scheme. In preparation, National Boards and AHPRA have commissioned research on English language skills testing, including the scope of exemptions from testing requirements. This research will inform the review of English language skills registration standards in 2013. The research evidence and other information from the review will be shared with the four professions joining the Scheme on 1 July 2012 so that they can consider any implications for their registration standards. The existing standard was based on the approach of state and territory registration boards before July 2010, and informed by the consultation process that supported its development. The National Boards will consult on any changes to the English language skills registration standard in 2013.

Stakeholder meetings

Members of the National Board continue to be very active in meeting with local registrants and stakeholders and presenting at public meetings and universities. Representatives of the Board have had ongoing conversations with various universities and students across the country, health and education departments, and at psychology professional society meetings.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
1 June 2012