

Public consultation – Consultation 25 – ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Examination

1. From your perspective, are you in support of the Board ending the exemption for provisional psychologists undertaking the higher degree pathway (i.e. Masters/DPsych) from sitting the National Psychology Examination?

No, I am not in support of ending the exemption. I support option one – status quo to continue with the existing higher degree exemption from sitting the national psychology exam for another three years.

2. Please provide a rationale for your support of option one or option two as described above.

Whilst I agree that there is a need for consistent professional practice and regulatory focus to ensure the integrity of the profession of psychology, I do not believe requiring provisional psychologists undertaking the higher degree pathway to sit an exam to gain general registration would improve the quality of psychological practice. Higher degree pathways by design are significantly more intensive in their learning and development of the psychological profession and are under considerably more intensive supervision of psychological practice than 4+2 or 5+1 programs. I consider the significant additional time spent on training and development as part of higher degrees is sufficient to provide satisfactory skills and knowledge to become generally registered psychologists.

If the concern relates to lack of skills and knowledge of particular areas within psychology for higher degree students, sitting one exam will unlikely provide the level of competence sought by implementing such a process. Sitting such an exam will likely provide knowledge only that is transitory in nature – incorporating such knowledge and *skills practice* into higher degree programs would be much more beneficial to both the profession and clients.

If the issue is the regulation of the content of higher degrees, then the regulation of such programs should be more stringent – this will have a far more positive and significant impact on the knowledge and skills obtained by higher degree students than having them sit a general exam.

Additionally, implementing a requirement for higher degree students to sit them exam does not recognise nor promote the acquisition of specialised areas, such as organisational and forensic psychology.

3. If option two is supported, do you have a preference regarding transition requirements (option a, b or c) for registrants via the higher degree pathway? Please provide a rationale for your support of your preferred option.

Whilst I do not support option two, if ending the exemption were to be implemented, I would prefer option c) higher degree students would be required to sit the National Psychology Examination if they enrol in any higher degree program after 1 July 2016. This would provide a longer transition time and allow students who wish to enrol in higher degree programs to be fully aware of the requirement to sit the exam.

4. Is there any content that needs to be changed or deleted in the revised draft guidelines (see Appendix A) in relation to the proposal to end the higher degree exemption? (Please note that to show the text changes to the revised draft guidelines, the **new text is highlighted in yellow** and a ~~red line~~ has been put through the deleted text).

Nil feedback in regard to the content of the revised draft guidelines.

5. Do you have any other comments on the proposal?

I believe that ending the existing higher degree exemption from sitting the national psychology exam will have significant and detrimental effects for anyone considering undertaking higher degrees to obtain registration as a psychologist. Future practitioners would question the rationale of putting in two years of significant time, training and effort to gain knowledge and understanding provided by higher degrees, only to be considered 'not good enough'. If the concern is in regard to the regulation and curriculum of current higher degrees, this is the issue that should be addressed.