

2nd October 2015

Psychology Board of Australia
AHPRA
GPO Box 9958
MelbourneVIC 3001

To whom it may concern

Re: Consultation on ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Examination

With regard to the abovementioned exemption, I would like to provide my comments and advise that, as a minimum preference, I support:-

Option two b) higher degree students would be required to sit the National Psychology Examination if they apply for general registration on or after 1 July 2017

In line with following point stated by the Psychology Board of Australia

56. The exemption to sit the exam would be extended for one year. This would allow for a longer transition time to consult with the public and the profession adequately on the end of the exemption. It would allow people who were enrolled in a higher degree prior to the publication of the guidelines one extra year to complete their degree and apply for general registration or early general registration (for doctoral student or students undertaking a combined degree)

I commenced my PhD Clinical Psychology in February, 2013. As such, I will have completed all course work and placements associated with the course before the current registration deadline (July 2016), with only my thesis needing to be completed. Extending the deadline to the proposed date of July 2017, would allow me and my colleagues in the same situation to submit their thesis, and obtain registration, just as Masters students who commenced their studies in 2013 and 2014 (i.e., after us) have been given the opportunity to do.

Moreover, when entering the program, there was no exam required for registration to be obtained. I feel changing the requirements to obtain registration, for students who had already commenced the course, is unfair.

I believe, that, as a minimum, guidelines should be changed to option two b, however, option one – status quo, would be preferable.

It has been argued by the Psychology Board of Australia that the exam will fulfil the following purposes

- a) *to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered*
- b) *to facilitate the provision of high quality education and training of health practitioners*

- c) *to enable the continuous development of a flexible, responsive and sustainable Australian health force*
- d) *Using the minimum regulatory force to manage the risk posed by their practice, to protect the public*

Briefly, exemption from the exam does not pose a risk to the regulation of psychologists, nor the ability to provide adequate education and training, due to the accreditation process. Multiple people assess students at many time points, in many formats, across a variety of topics. All of these forms of assessment, as well as course work, need to be to a certain standard in order for the university to gain and maintain accreditation.

Furthermore, after registration, there are standards in place to ensure that psychologists (including those newly registered) are performing to a certain standard. As an example, a minimum number of professional development hours need to be completed, which provides opportunity to further skills and ensure competence.

In summary, for the above mentioned reasons, although Option 2b would be the minimum option which I believe to be fair, Option One would be preferable.

Kind regards

Kate Bartel B.Psych(Hons)
PhD Candidate (Clinical Psychology)
School of Psychology
Flinders University