

22 September 2015

Professor Brin Grenyer, Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
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Dear Professor Grenyer

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Psychology Board of Australia's Consultation Paper 25: Consultation on ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Examination. I submit this response on behalf of my academic and clinical colleagues on the Master of Psychology (Forensic) program at The University of New South Wales.

We firmly believe that the current exemption for higher degree students from sitting the National Psychology Examination should continue. Having read the consultation paper, it is unclear why students who have completed postgraduate training through an APAC accredited 5th and 6th year of study, in a rigorous, competency-based course would be required to complete such an examination.

Postgraduate degrees involve ongoing and thorough assessment of clinical trainees' clinical skills and knowledge competencies (as specified by strict APAC guidelines) over a two year period (minimum). These assessments are conducted by program staff utilizing various methods (e.g., observing a trainee's clinical skills and reflective capacity in the context of one-on-one supervision, assessing written case reports and oral case presentations, marking formal examinations). This substantially overlaps with the aims of the NPE as stated in the Consultation Paper: *The National Psychology Examination is a competency based assessment of the integration of knowledge and skills in psychology and passing the exam assists the Board in being confident of a person's ability to practise safely*; such that it is difficult to imagine how a formal exam could truly capture and appropriately assess a trainee's clinical repertoire in the same way.

Postgraduate programs are strictly regulated via national bodies (e.g., via the APAC accreditation process) and local processes (e.g., university quality assurance and course review processes). The professional value of sitting the NPE following the successful completion of a rigorously assessed, competency-based postgraduate program with extensive oversight is unclear at best and redundant at worst. Such a process would be time and

resource intensive for all, and afford no clear professional advantage for individual psychologists in training, nor for our field.

Accordingly, we are strongly of the view that students who graduate from an accredited postgraduate professional program should continue to be exempt from the National Psychology Examination.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you require anything additional.

Kind regards

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