

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



School of Psychology

14 September 2015

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

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. We submit this response as a team of academic and clinical colleagues who are involved in the Master of Psychology (Clinical) program at The University of New South Wales.

In short, we are strongly of the view that the current exemption of higher degree students sitting the National Psychology Examination should be maintained. Having read the consultation paper, it still remains unclear to us as to why such an examination would be required for psychologists who have received postgraduate training via an accredited, competency-based, rigorously assessed higher degree. In the Consultation Paper it is noted that *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*. 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, conducted by program staff who assess trainees through a range of means (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). 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 have significant oversight at numerous levels, from national (e.g., via the APAC accreditation process) to local (e.g., university quality assurance and course review

processes). The professional value of sitting a national examination following the successful completion of a rigorously assessed, competency-based postgraduate program with extensive oversight is not clear to us. 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 strongly argue 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 us should you require anything additional.

Kind regards

Professor Michelle Moulds (UNSW Master of Psychology (Clinical) program director)

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