

To whom it may concern,

I am in the first year of a Masters in Forensic Psychology at the University of New South Wales and would like to offer some brief feedback on the current consultation around ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Exam. I would appreciate if this submission remains confidential. I am in favour of **Option one** proposed in the consultation paper.

I believe that the main reason this exemption should be maintained for graduates of the higher degree training pathways is because these courses are already accredited by APAC and meet a set of stringent criteria. I think removing the exemption would fundamentally change the manner in which higher degree programs are taught. At the moment I believe my course emphasises teaching students practical, clinical and research skills. With the introduction of a National Exam I believe this would likely shift towards broadly teaching what the exam would cover at the expense of other skills (potentially more relevant to practice).

I understand and appreciate that the examination would be a standardised means by which to evaluate provisional psychologists seeking full registration, as APAC cannot and does not have control over the individuals entering into and graduating from the programs it accredits. However, getting places in these higher degree programs is extremely competitive and, at the least, ensures that students entering into the programs are academically talented. This does not necessarily guarantee talent in other areas, but I believe this concern might be better addressed by standardising the manner in which students enter into higher degree programs.

It cannot really be disputed that the evaluation of all provisional psychologists will provide a greater level of consistency in practitioners and will be beneficial to those who are provided our services. Hence, if Option two is supported, I believe **option c** would be the best approach to transitioning in the proposed changes. As has been acknowledged in the consultation paper, the inclusion of the examination after at least six years of high quality (and expensive) training will pose as yet another hurdle and cost for students who take this path - and for those of us currently enrolled, one that was not *explicitly* specified when we began our training.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission,  
Chetana Saranu