



PSYCHOLOGY PRIVATE AUSTRALIA Inc.

**THE FEDERATION OF ORGANISATIONS OF PRIVATELY
PRACTISING PSYCHOLOGISTS OF AUSTRALIA**

<http://www.psychologyprivate.org>

SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS

ON

**THE AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGY BOARD'S
CONSULTATION PAPER 25,
*ENDING THE HIGHER DEGREE EXEMPTION FROM SITTING
THE NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY EXAMINATION***

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**COMMENTS ON
THE AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGY BOARD'S CONSULTATION PAPER 25
HIGHER DEGREE EXEMPTION FROM SITTING THE NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY EXAMINATION
BY
PSYCHOLOGY PRIVATE AUSTRALIA INC (PPAI)**

The Psychological Ethos of PPAI Members

To be in private practice as a registered psychologist in any field in the broad spectrum of applied psychology, is the essential requirement of membership of our organisation. "Endorsement" is of no note. However, a private practitioner carries a unique set of responsibilities:

1. Personally, to be professionally effective in the member's field of psychological practice and to be recognised as such.
2. To operate a business undertaking so as to ensure that "best practice" is always followed, AND to remain solvent.
3. To be recognised as offering a service to the public.
4. To ensure complete confidentiality and privacy to each and every client.

The Board's "Feed-back" Questions

1. Yes, but conditionally. The condition: The Board begin in 2015 to review the coverage content of the National Psychology Examination in order to eliminate what appear to us to create inequities for some applicants (expanded later).
2. Option 2 is supported. Inequities imposed by any authority on any group of professionals is anathema to those discriminated against. It is a deeply divisive element in what should be a harmoniously operating group. Psychologists as a professional group are no exception. The sooner the inequity is removed the earlier is there opportunity for some healing of a division to begin. However, for reasons similar to those that the Board proposes, to set the earlier date of Option 1 would impose a further inequity on institutions teaching and students pursuing currently a higher degree.
3. Yes, there is much. The whole of Section 2 of the Guidelines of the National Psychology Examination needs to be completely rethought. As it now stands, the Examination along with its recommended Reading and Additional Resources Lists is essentially indeed almost

wholly ,clinical. Item 3 of the Summary of the Board's *Overview of Consultation* is a misstatement. If this were to be an accurate statement, there would need to be a change to the Accreditation body's requirement of curricula for first degrees in psychology. It is "applied clinical psychology" that is being examined. Our understanding is that it is not given in any Higher Degree than in those in the Clinical and perhaps Counselling fields.

Other Comments

- The Reading List for the Examination is almost entirely clinical (ethics is common to all areas of applied psychology, of course).
- Neuroscience and neuropsychology are entirely absent from the reading lists.
- Two of twenty in one list are vocational counselling tests, the remainder of the list are clinical.
- There are no aptitude tests at all listed, if we exclude the major intelligence tests, and in one list, the 16pf.
- From the sample questions supplied by the Board in connection with the National Examination, we have made the assumption that its content may well be essentially clinicoethical. Should this be the case, an inequity at present lies in the direction of discriminating against Higher Degree possessors in any field other than the Clinical and possibly the Counselling. (The "4 + 2s" and "5 + 1s" are not as greatly disadvantaged as the other Higher Degrees people because the Board requires some clinical work to be carried out in the course of their supervision.)
- There is a device by which The National Examination as it currently stands (i.e. as we understand it) would need no change to avoid being inequitable in any way. This would be if the Accreditation Committee made it compulsory for Universities to reintroduce into all first degree courses one at least, but preferably two compulsory units of basic diagnostic/assessment/ethical applied techniques
- Additional applied techniques should also be made available to undergraduate students as options as was the case in the past. At present, Social Work and Occupational Therapy

students graduate with a reasonable competence in interpersonal contact skills, but Psychology students graduate with none.

- Using an example from Pharmacy appears irrelevant as a support of the Board's decision to remove the "exemption" clause from its National Examination pre-requisite to registration. To obtain a pass at the Psychologist National Examination already is a prerequisite to registration for applicants from two training pathways; to our knowledge there is one only pathway to Pharmacist registration and the issue of "exemption" does not exist.