

28 August 2015
Prof Brin Grenyer
Psychology Board of Australia

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

The University of Queensland has a large and diverse School of Psychology, and as such trains psychologists at a postgraduate level in six different areas of endorsement: counselling, health, clinical, clinical neuropsychology, organisational and sports and exercise. Approximately 75 students (roughly 10% of applicants) are accepted into our suite of postgraduate psychology training programs each year.

Unlike provisional psychologists trained via the internship (4+2 or 5+1) route, Higher Degree graduates have already been thoroughly assessed on their knowledge of the psychology discipline, including both the general material included in the Exam and more specialised material related to their area of future endorsement. The accreditation process carried out by APAC ensures the high quality and comparability of the training received by postgraduate students across Australia.

We disagree with the Board's assessment that an increasing focus on competency-based assessment in postgraduate training represents a risk to the public. Indeed, an increase in competency-based assessment *decreases* the risk to the public, by ensuring comprehensive and intensive checks on skills attained by individual students, and facilitates improvement of competencies through targeted feedback and remediation throughout the postgraduate training years.

It is our view that the Exam poses an unnecessary and costly barrier to registration for students who have already demonstrated their suitability through rigorous training and assessment. We disagree with the Board's assessment that the Exam is low cost, particularly given that students are a low-income group who may need to pay for the exam at the same time as applying for general registration (\$453 application fee, plus \$431 registration fee, plus \$450 Exam fee).

We support Option One - an ongoing exemption from the National Psychology Examination for all Australian Higher Degree students. If Option Two is implemented, we favour transitional arrangement c): higher degree students would be required to sit the national Psychology Examination if they enrol in any higher degree program after 1 July 2016.

Yours Sincerely,

The Postgraduate Teaching Committee
School of Psychology
University of Queensland