

To whom it may concern,

We are some students completing the Masters of Psychology (Clinical) program. We are writing to state our opinion regarding the introduction of the national examination for masters' students. We are against the introduction of the national examination for masters' students for several reasons listed below.

1. The cost. We know the board believes the \$450 fee is acceptable and used pharmacy as a comparison; however they have failed to consider that pharmacist pay a lower amount for registration (\$107 for provisional registration), and from what we understand do not have to pay for student registration (<http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/Registration/Fees.aspx>). As students on practicum, we have to register as a provisional psychologist. This requires us to pay \$436, as a student, in combination with university fees and text books, which is a significant amount of money considering the limited amount we can earn due to placement, course work and thesis. Consequently, we are obligated to stringently budget our finances with the hope of being able to accommodate the cost of registration renewal. It is a constant concern if we can afford to renew our registration. This fee, coupled with a \$450 examination fee, then with a \$458 fee for the general registration application and the \$436 registration fee for when we are approved is a heavy burden for someone on a very limited income. For students who do not work in a relevant occupation alongside their study, these fees are not tax deductible and occur before employment is gained. It would be a shame for students, who have dedicated six years to psychology, to miss out on an opportunity to contribute to the profession, due to being unable to afford the last few hurdles.
2. We understand the concern regarding the level of competency in new graduates; however, masters' courses are heavily monitored by Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC). Not only is the process of getting into masters' courses rigorous, they are continuously monitored by several professional bodies to ensure the quality of the education. We are regularly supervised by qualified clinical psychologists, who are periodically reviewed for their own professional conduct. We believe by introducing the examination, it reflects negatively on the current system. It implies that APAC are not maintaining a high standard of student education and that two years of rigorous study under the guidance of supervision is not sufficient in providing clinical competencies (not to mention the two years of further supervision as a clinical registrar).
3. Masters' students face immense pressure to perform to a high standard across all domains of their training (e.g., therapy, cognitive assessment), while having minimal time for other important aspects of life (e.g., family, work, self-care). Essentially, the national exam is an additional burden, placing clinical psychology students in a situation that can potentially cause unnecessary stress and harm.

We hope you consider these points when making your decision.

Sincerely,

The students eating two minute noodles for the next two years.

Karina Johnson

Andrew Allen

Anne-Louise Bint

Madeleine Marie Stoddart

Bradley Heath

Micheal Coleborn

Daryl Myers