



**The British  
Psychological Society**  
Promoting excellence in psychology

## **British Psychological Society response to the Psychology Board of Australia**

### **Proposed guideline for transitional programs consultation (Australia)**

#### **About the Society**

The British Psychological Society, incorporated by Royal Charter, is the learned and professional body for psychologists in the United Kingdom. We are a registered charity with a total membership of just over 50,000.

Under its Royal Charter, the objective of the British Psychological Society is "to promote the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of members by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge". We are committed to providing and disseminating evidence-based expertise and advice, engaging with policy and decision makers, and promoting the highest standards in learning and teaching, professional practice and research.

The British Psychological Society is an examining body granting certificates and diplomas in specialist areas of professional applied psychology.

#### **Publication and Queries**

We are content for our response, as well as our name and address, to be made public. We are also content for you to contact us in the future in relation to this inquiry.

Please direct all queries to:-

Joe Liardet, Policy Advice Administrator (Consultations)  
The British Psychological Society, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR  
Email: [consult@bps.org.uk](mailto:consult@bps.org.uk) Tel: 0116 252 9936

#### **About this Response**

**The response was jointly led on behalf of the Society by:**

Dr Helen Nicholas

We hope you find our comments useful.

**Dr Ian J Gargan CPsychol AFBPsS**  
*Chair, Professional Practice Board*

## British Psychological Society response to the Psychology Board of Australia

### Proposed guideline for transitional programs consultation (Australia)

	<b>Introduction</b>
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Over the years, UK-trained counselling psychologists have sought employment in Australia and our reply is based on these applications you may receive. We strongly believe that counselling psychologists who have graduated from a BPS and HCPC accredited doctoral programme are highly competent to carry out psychological therapy in Australia and would suggest that given the doctoral level of their training are able to exceed your required level. In the UK, doctoral training courses adhere to the minimum standards of proficiency set out by the Health and Care Professions Council, (HCPC) (<a href="http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002963sop_practitioner_psychologists.pdf">http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002963sop_practitioner_psychologists.pdf</a>) and the 'gold standard' for chartership and core competencies set out in the standards for the accreditation of doctoral programmes in counselling psychology (<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/PaCT/counselling_accreditation_2015_web.pdf">http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/PaCT/counselling_accreditation_2015_web.pdf</a>)</p> <p>For example, trainees are required to undertake a minimum of 450 supervised clinical practice during their doctorate, carrying out their work in an ethical and professional manner and engaging in additional placement activities set out by their supervisor. We seek clarification about the additional requirement of passing the national psychology examination, given the wide range of experience, core competencies, and clinical practice UK trainees and qualified counselling psychologists would have gained.</p>
	<b>Which option do you prefer for providing guidance on the transitional program?</b>
1.	<p>Comments:</p> <p>The Society would be in favour of option 2 (new guidelines), which would include more detailed information for UK trained counselling psychologists, detailed outline of core competencies that would be easier to match between countries and acknowledgement of the additional skills that these psychologists would bring to the workforce in Australia. This is especially important for counselling psychologists trained in the UK given their level of training and often additional training they choose to engage in. It is vital that for our members who choose to practice in Australia have their skills, qualifications, competencies, and experience acknowledged. We suggest that these contribute to the exemption from the program once the new guidelines are set out.</p>
	<b>Do you have any suggestions for making the content and structure of the proposed guideline more helpful, clear, relevant and workable?</b>
2.	<p>Comments:</p> <p>A clearer outline for those who have further qualifications need to be included in the guidance, especially for the UK trained counselling psychologists. When assessing the overseas qualification, the Society would like to draw your attention to the high standards set out in the standards for the accreditation of doctoral programmes in counselling psychology as well as the HCPC standards of proficiency. It would therefore be important for UK applicants to be able to match their competencies to the guidance on the transitional program. And to ensure that UK trained counselling psychologists are assessed with these in mind. We would therefore recommend that a clearer pathway for these counselling psychologists be included in the new guidance you propose.</p>

	<b>Do you have any feedback on the proposal to include detailed competency information in the guideline?</b>
3.	<p>Comments:</p> <p>We welcome the inclusion of a more competency based application process as this would acknowledge the high standards on the BPS and HCPC accredited UK courses and the competencies that UK trained counselling psychologists hold.</p>
	<b>Do you have any feedback on the proposal to include guidance on requesting an exemption in the guideline?</b>
4.	<p>Comments:</p> <p>We understand that in Australia, counselling psychologists enter into practice having received a master's degree and would therefore argue that the doctoral level qualification gained in the UK is more than sufficient to meet 'equivalent to recognised Australian qualifications'. We would therefore welcome clearer guidance on requesting an exemption in the guidelines.</p>
	<b>Is there anything missing that should be added to the proposed guideline?</b>
5.	The Society has comment to make.
	<b>Is there any other content that should be changed or deleted in the proposed guideline?</b>
6.	Additions as mentioned in previous questions.
	<b>Are there any specific issues with the transitional program that are not addressed in this review but that should be? This may include impacts on workforce or access to health services.</b>
7.	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Counselling psychologists trained in the UK have a variety of skills and experience gained before, during and after doctoral qualification. For example, trainees are able to choose their placements during the doctoral training and many go on to attain additional skills after qualification through continuing professional development activities. We believe that there needs to be an avenue where these applicants can demonstrate their additional skills and competencies.</p>
	<b>Do you have any other comments on the proposal?</b>
8.	The Society has comment to make.

*End.*