

31 May 2018

Re: Consultation – Proposal to retire the 4+2 internship pathway

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in relation to the consultation paper regarding the proposal to retire the 4+2 internship pathway. I am against the retirement of the 4+2 pathway.

I am currently an enrolled psychology university student at Murdoch University. Firstly, I am a mature aged student, have a family (wife and children), and hold a senior position where I work. I only chose to come back to university to undertake my fourth-year psychology study as this would allow me to become a provisionally registered psychologist at my work. I commenced part-time study in 2018 with the view of competing at the end of 2020 (one unit per semester, this would be two years, followed by the 1-year psychology project = 3 years in total part-time). A very paced out part-time mode of study is the only means possible to complete the fourth year with family, work and community commitments. I decided to proceed with the fourth-year study as I was informed by every single university I contacted prior to enrollment, that I was only required to complete the 1-year full time (or up to 4 years part-time) Graduate Diploma in Psychology, to then be eligible for the 4+2 pathway.

Secondly, I chose to study the Graduate Diploma in Psychology (fourth year) with a view of becoming a provisionally registered Psychologist after just one year full time (or up to 4 years part-time) study then two years internship. The important point here being my current employer has endorsed my study with the understanding I need to complete one full-time year (or up to 4 years part-time) of university study and then undertake the supervision work/internship with them. Another important point here is that my employer already has the requisite psychology work required for the +2 supervision – so this is already secured and I will be paid as an employee to do this!

As a senior person in the industry I work in, I have seen many provisional psychologists attain their full registration through working and being paid, and at the same time undertaking the required supervision for the 4+2 pathway. I have seen many new fourth year graduates, both young and mature, be employed into paid roles and undertaking their 2-year supervision for the +2 component. My employer proceeded with supporting my study as we were informed I can complete the Graduate Diploma in Psychology in one-year full time to up to four years and the +2 internship pathway would be available to me right after that with my current employer. The information about having the 4+2 pathway (especially undertaking the fourth year within four years part-time) played a critical role in my decision to proceed given my responsibilities with work and family.

I also think having different enrolment pathways to suit different individuals needs is worth celebrating and think retiring the 4+2 pathway would further limit ways of becoming a registered Psychologist for some people. There are students who find it easy to source an internship; there are those who have contacts and sourcing an internship is not an issue at all; there are jobs posted on job sites and interest sites regularly; and there are those who need to work for financial purposes (as part of their internships) and may not be able to afford another year of study. Many employers, such as the one I am working with, provide the supervision component at no cost also. So it is worth noting that the 4+2 pathway would be the only means to progress towards registration for many individuals.

Lastly, I would also like to draw attention to students in their first year or those looking to choose psychology as a career pathway that will be enrolling in university in 2018 or 2019 who have been advised the 4+2 pathway is an option towards registration. As such, I believe any future student should be forewarned about the years of study and pathway to supervision before choosing that career or study.

Should the motion to retire the 4+2 pathway be carried by Board, I would like to put forward the Board considers at least 7 years until they may consider retiring the 4+2 pathway to account for any first-year psychology student already proceeding with psychology as a career with the understanding that 4+2 pathway is an option. I strongly believe it is very important for any future student to be aware of the requirements and pathways to become a registered psychologist before progressing with it. The 7 years will not account for a first-year psychology student who is undertaking their undergraduate part-time; so believe the suggested 7 years including +2 internship/supervision is only fair.

In summary, for these reasons, I am against the retirement of the 4+2 pathway. Please do take these into consideration. However, should the decision to retire it be carried; with integrity and future students making educational decisions, I believe it should be retired in 7 years at the end of 2025 (or start of 2026). This is to allow for completion of the 4-year study for those enrolled and 2-year internship/supervision.