

PSYCHOLOGY BOARD OF AUSTRALIA CONSULTATION – REDUCING REGULATORY BURDEN: RETIRING THE 4+2 INTERNSHIP PATHWAY TO GENERAL REGISTRATION

1. *Do you agree with the Board's proposal to consider education and training reform, including focusing on reducing regulatory burden, as an important next step in the development of the regulatory environment for psychology?*

Yes.

2. *Which do you consider is the best option for reducing regulatory burden? Please provide reasons for your stated preference:*
 - *option one - status quo*
 - *option two - retirement of the 4+2 pathway to general registration*
 - *none of these options, or another option.*

Option Two – retirement of the 4+2 pathway to general registration, is the Department's preferred option.

For over 25 years, school psychologists employed by the Department have undertaken the 4+2 pathway to general registration, following a four-year accredited sequence of study in psychology and a Diploma of Education. This pathway has served the Department well and 89 are currently in various stages of this internship pathway. The Department provides significant support for 4+2 interns:

- Board approved supervision by an experienced school psychologist/s at no cost to the intern;
- One-to-one supervision conducted during work time, with no impact on service delivery to schools;
- Professional leadership, peer consultation and group supervision with experienced school psychologists in the region;
- A comprehensive program of professional learning in the first two years of employment (Graduate Induction Program) that provides more than the required number of hours; and
- Financial assistance for country interns to travel to the National Psychology Examination.

This support does come at a cost for the Department, but it has been an investment in the profession. By the time school psychologists achieve general registration they are not only prepared to work broadly in the profession, but have skills specifically suited for our workforce. Retirement of the 4+2 internship pathway in favour of the 5+1 pathway will reduce costs for the Department, and increase the available school psychologist FTE to provide direct service delivery to schools.

3. *Are there any specific impacts (positive or negative) or advantages/disadvantages for each of the two options that have not been outlined in the paper?*

No.

4. *Are there any specific risks (for each of the two options) that have not been outlined in the paper?*

No, providing there are sufficient places in 5+1 programs to ensure continued supply.

5. *If you prefer option two, do you support the Board making the changes (update/delete) to the standards, guidelines, fact sheets and forms as outlined in Attachment G-J to retire the 4+2 internship pathway?*

Yes.

6. *If you prefer option two, which transition option do you prefer and why?*
- *option a): last enrolment in the 4+2 internship is 30 June 2019*
 - *option b): last enrolment in the 4+2 internship is 30 June 2020*
 - *option c): last enrolment in the 4+2 internship is 30 June 2021*
 - *none of these options or another option (please specify)*

Option b): last enrolment is 30 June 2020. This provides the Department sufficient lead up time to strengthen the relationship with local providers of fifth-year programs.

In 2016, the School Psychology Service became aware of several factors that had the potential to impact on the supply of quality school psychologists into the future:

- increasing availability of a five-year accredited sequence of study in psychology in Western Australia;
- discontinuation of the one-year Diploma of Education, replaced by the two-year Master of Teaching, effective 2018; and
- an early statement by the Board of its intent to retire the 4+2 internship pathway.

To ensure ongoing quality and supply, a multiple pathway approach to qualifications to work as a school psychologist in public schools was implemented for appointments commencing in 2018.

A relationship with Curtin and Murdoch University was established in 2017 and is ongoing, with a healthy supply of fifth-year psychology students for practicum placement and future employment. To date, the Department has employed six graduates of five-year programs and they are completing the 5+1 internship pathway. Seventeen fifth-year psychology students will complete country and metropolitan practicum placements in 2018 with a view to employment as school psychologists in 2019. These placements complement those undertaking the Graduate Diploma in School Psychology (formerly a Graduate Diploma in Education (School Psychology Major)) but are expected to become the preferred pathway in the next two years.

The Department is well-prepared to meet the Board's proposed timeline.

7. *From your perspective, can you identify any practical issues in retiring the 4+2 internship pathway?*

No.

8. *Is the content and structure of the consultation paper helpful, clear, relevant and understandable? If not, what needs to change?*

The consultation paper is clear.

9. *Is there anything else the National Board should take into account in its proposal, such as impacts on workforce or access to health services that have not been outlined in the paper?*

Career opportunities for four-year trained graduates in psychology

Despite an increase in 5+1 courses, there will be graduates of four-year programs of study that, for a range of reasons, will not be in a position to continue study. A challenge for the workforce is to consider how best to utilise psychology graduates who will not become psychologists but may have a range of skills and abilities that will contribute to the profession.

Compulsory student practicum for fifth-year courses

Student practicum provides an ideal opportunity to introduce industry-specific skills and ensure graduates are 'work-ready' on completion of their course. It is understood that while 300 hours of skills training and supervised practice is an Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) requirement for fifth year courses, student practicum is not. The Department would propose that any fifth-year APAC accredited course contains a compulsory unit of student practicum. This would provide an additional opportunity to assess suitability for work in the profession and expose graduates to early 'on the job' training.