

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concern over the Psychology Board of Australia's decision to retire the 4+2 internship program as early as **30th June, 2019.**

As a current **final year** student, not only do I find this decision to be unfair, it has also caused a significant amount of anxiety and worry about my future career. I have dedicated the past seven years to formal psychology study in order to work in my dream field that brings a great amount of passion and sense of achievement. To learn that this dream could be crushed before I've had the opportunity to enjoy it is devastating. While I knew the 4+2 would be eventually retired, I thought that would have happened while I already had a supervisor lined up. If students were warned about this decision at the beginning of their degree, appropriate action could be taken. However, when you are on the home-stretch of your degree it doesn't offer many options. *Our boat is quickly sinking and we don't even have a paddle.*

In particular to my situation, I am an aspiring school psychologist who is on the home-stretch of the Masters of School Counselling/Psychology degree at the University of Sydney. As part of my performance in my degree, I have been awarded a scholarship with the Department of Education which will provide full-time, permanent employment. I chose to pursue this degree as it would provide me the opportunity to complete the +2 requirement of the 4+2 program. This was the best degree to pursue my passion in making a significant difference in the lives of children as the 'Masters of Educational/Developmental Psychology' was retired throughout Sydney.

As I mentioned above, I will be able to receive supervision through the Department of Education. An organisation who employs the highest number of psychologists in New South Wales. As part of my scholarship agreement, the Department will decide where I will be based. Compared to several other psychology students, I don't have 'free choice' over a supervisor. Additionally, as I don't know where I will be placed until the end of the year, I may enter a team where supervisors aren't able to take me on as they have other students. In the Department, it's very much "first in, first served" which is fair for the other students who also deserve to receive full registration.

If the board chooses to retire the program in the next 13 months, it will force myself and my peers into an additional **\$40,000 debt** as we frantically try and find a supervisor before this cut off. This is both unreasonable and unrealistic for several of us as we move to the next stage of our lives which brings a mortgage, bills, a growing family, etc. Thus, emphasising my opening point of being unfair.

I would like to request that the board takes this into consideration and allows several students the opportunity to achieve a goal that has been set in motion for several years. I would like to request at least a **three-year** extension for students to begin the 2 years supervision once they complete their degree and not be disadvantaged and only awarded with a large HECS debt. I would also like to request that board inform new psychology students of this change at the beginning of their degree so that they are aware of their options early on.

Kind Regards,

Felicity.