

29th April 2019

Psychology Board of Australia
GPO Box 9958
Melbourne Vic 3001

Via email: psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

To the Psychology Board of Australia (the Board),

Re: Public Consultation - National psychology exam: Guidelines and candidate manual

The student body of the Master of Clinical Psychology and the Master of Clinical Neuropsychology at La Trobe University, in their capacity as Provisional Psychologists registered with AHPRA, welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Public Consultation - National psychology exam: Guidelines and candidate manual*. As outlined in the consultation document, we wish to provide our views on the component of the consultation determining whether students completing proposed higher degrees (as defined in the consultation document) will be exempt from the national psychology exam (the exam).

Our student body is in strong agreement with the current proposal that graduates of APAC accredited higher degrees which have received Board approval as a qualification for registration, are permanently exempt from the exam. It is our experience that the programs to which we have entrusted our clinical psychology education, provide training and assessment in a manner which is rigorous, contemporary, evidence-based and strongly aligned with the attainment of professional competencies. We trust the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) that as our programs have received APAC accreditation, upon course completion our level of competence meets all benchmarks required of the Board, evidencing our readiness and capacity to provide safe and effective psychological care to the public.

Given the exemplary academic level required for entry in to a higher degree in psychology, and the exhaustive clinical and research training that follows, we deem additional external assessment as unnecessary and burdensome. The requirement for a national exam would also pose an additional financial drain for students who are already typically living at the

minimum, struggling with course fees (HECs or full-fee paying), undertaking unpaid placement hours to become qualified and are commonly restricted to working 8 hours a week to allow completion of a full-time study load (as per university stipulations).

We note from the consultation paper that no issues have been identified by the Board over the temporary five-year exam exemption period, which provides tangible evidence in support of this proposal and significantly offsets concerns to the contrary. We therefore would welcome a permanent decision of exemption from the national exam for eligible higher degree psychology graduates and strongly support this outcome as a determination of this consultation.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the La Trobe University Postgraduate Student Representatives, Lina Schonfeld at email [REDACTED] (Clinical Psychology Master) or Emma Cox at email [REDACTED] (Clinical Neuropsychology Master).

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lina Schonfeld

Emma Cox

Master of Clinical Psychology

Master of Clinical Neuropsychology

Student Representatives

Postgraduate Master Psychology Programs La Trobe University