

Psychology Board of Australia  
E: [psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au)

15 May 2019

Re: Consultation – National Psychology Exam: Guidelines Review

To the Psychology Board of Australia,

We write on behalf of the School of Psychological Sciences and the Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health at Monash University to support the recent proposal to revise the *Guidelines for the national psychology examination* as outlined under Option 2. We specifically support Option 2, part b: to “make the higher degree exemption from sitting the national psychology exam permanent”.

We support the higher degree exemption from the national examination for the following reasons:

1. We concur with the Board’s assessment that the new APAC accreditation standards focus on Public Safety, which aligns with the National Law’s objective of protecting the public, promotes graduates of higher degree training programs ability to practice safely on the public. The comprehensive assessment of compliance with these standards by APAC further ensures that competencies of clinical trainees are assessed using the best methods available.
2. We also agree that by APAC and the Board benchmarking to the International Declaration on Core Competencies in Professional Psychology, that our graduates are required to demonstrate the core competencies for the safe practice of psychology. Within our Clinical Psychology and Clinical Neuropsychology PhD programs these competencies are assessed via multiple clinical placement reviews, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), therapy videos, role plays, presentations, essays, weekly short answer assignments, take home examinations and written examinations as well as their research thesis marked by two examiners. Further, we believe that this is a more comprehensive assessment of competencies than any single 3 ½ hour examination could provide.
3. We fully support the Board’s stance to reduce unnecessary regulation. Given that no issues have been identified by the Board since the temporary exemption period was imposed in 2013 we believe the NPE to be an unnecessary extra assessment costing time, stress and money on already pressured postgraduate students.
4. Finally, the Board’s adoption of a permanent exemption would indeed provide higher degree students, education providers and supervisors with much needed certainty around the requirements for registration.

We acknowledge the vital role of the Board in the setting of professional standards to ensure psychologists from all training pathways have the necessary competencies and qualifications to provide effective and safe practice to the public. We certainly believe that through the process of compliance with APAC standards we are ensuring high-quality postgraduate training standards in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

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Director of Clinical Programs

Professor Kim Cornish  
Director, Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health  
Head, School of Psychological Sciences

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