

RE: Consultation – Review of the Guidelines for the National Psychology Exam

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to provide feedback on the review of the guidelines for the National Psychology Exam.

I feel that it is highly appropriate for graduates with a board-approved postgraduate qualification accredited at the fifth and sixth year of study to not be required to pass an exam before applying for general registration. Having done a masters of forensic psychology and masters of clinical psychology after my undergraduate degree in psychology and criminology and honours, I believe that at the time of completing the masters successfully, there have been more than enough examinations and assessment tasks completed by each student to assess their competencies in the subjects they have completed.

From my perspective, to require another examination after completion of an APAC approved masters would somewhat imply that AHPRA does not have confidence in the ability of the universities providing the APAC accredited courses to adequately assess competencies of student psychologists.

I agree with AHPRA that the requirement to pass an additional examination after finishing your qualifications would add a large amount of uncertainty to people entering the field. Plus, I feel it would be really difficult to boil down the 6 years at university into one exam, and terrifying to have to face that in order to start to work in the profession.

It seems to me that there are already not enough psychologists to meet the needs of the community. Uncertainty that despite all of the money, time, and effort that one has to put into completing 6 years of psychology studies at university, that you could fall at the last hurdle and not be able to gain employment in the field, could well put people off from choosing psychology as their career path.

I have personal experience that it can be really very difficult to obtain interim employment while waiting to get a job in the field of psychology, as most employers considered me to be over qualified for other jobs, and did not wish to invest the time in training me, knowing that I was likely to leave their employment as soon as an opportunity arose within the field I had trained in.

Overall, I am really glad and happy that AHPRA is proposing to make the higher degree exemption from sitting the exam permanent. I think this would be an excellent decision.

Yours sincerely
Rae Starkey