



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

Ms Rachel Phillips

Chair, Psychology Board of Australia

Sydney, 25 April 2019

Re: Consultation – National psychology exam: Guidelines Review

Dear Ms Phillips,

The School of Psychology at the University of Sydney appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Psychology Board's consultation paper regarding the National Psychology Exam.

The School prefers **Option 2 – Proposed changes (revised guidelines)**. In particular, we support the second substantive change proposed, that is, to determine to make the higher degree exemption from sitting the exam permanent.

We are pleased to present our rationale for this preference, which is consistent with our previous correspondence to the Psychology Board on this matter.

The School of Psychology believes that the one appropriate mechanism for ensuring professional standards are met and the protection of the public is upheld is the completion of accredited postgraduate training. Postgraduate students in professional psychology already typically carry a financial burden from completing their training, and the requirement to complete the national examination will add substantially to their burden.

All 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year training programs leading to registration as a psychologist undergo extensive accreditation processes, and are required to provide specific content and assessment of that content in order to pass accreditation. Competency based assessments are more thorough than a national examination, as they occur over a two year period and assess a range of competencies over that time.

Except for North America, where state-based examinations are required for the practice of clinical psychology in that state due largely to different laws between states that pertain to the practice of clinical psychology, we are unaware of other jurisdictions that conduct examinations for clinical psychologists who train at a post-graduate level. Furthermore, the majority of Australian Health Professions Regulation Boards do not impose national examinations on registrants other than those trained overseas, those who are required to demonstrate competency due to failures leading to notifications, and those returning to practice after a substantial period of absence.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Frans Verstraten**  
Head of School  
School of Psychology

School of Psychology  
Faculty of Science  
Griffith Taylor Building A19  
University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 Australia

[sydney.edu.au](http://sydney.edu.au)

ABN 15 211 513 464  
CRICOS 00026A