

## Public consultation: Draft guidelines for the national psychology exam

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) is seeking your feedback about our proposal to adopt the *Draft guidelines for the national psychology exam* (the draft exam guidelines). There are ten specific questions we would like you to address below. All questions are optional and you are welcome to respond to any that you find relevant, or that you have a view on.

### Providing feedback

Please email your submission to: [psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au). The submission deadline is close of business on **Monday 24 March 2025**.

**Initial questions: To help us better understand your situation and the context of your feedback, please provide us with some details about you.**

**Question A: Are you completing this submission on behalf of an organisation or as an individual?**

☒ Organisation

Name of organisation: Provisional Psychologist Hub

Contact email: [REDACTED]

☐ Individual

Name: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Name of organisation: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Contact email: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Question B: If you are completing this submission as an individual, are you:**

☐ A registered health practitioner?

Profession: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ A consumer / client?

☐ Other – please describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Prefer not to say.

| Questions for consideration – Updating the Guidelines for the national psychology exam                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| Preferred option                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Question 1:</b> Do you support updating the exam guidelines (Option 2)? Please provide a rationale for your view.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Yes, the exam guidelines should be reflective of the Professional Competencies for Psychologists so that they maintain relevance to the items being assessed as part of all programs and pathways.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Question 2:</b> Do you support including the updated general registration competencies as outlined in the <a href="#">Professional competencies for psychologists</a> into the draft exam guidelines? Please provide a rationale for your view.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Yes, referencing the professional Competencies for Psychologists ensures that the exam is assessing knowledge relevant to the competence of a generally registered psychologist. It ensures that the exam is matched to the outcome of the program or pathway.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Question 3:</b> Do you support an exemption from sitting the exam for international applicants for general registration who hold a qualification that is substantially equivalent, or based on similar competencies, to a Board-approved fifth and sixth year qualification? Please provide a rationale for your view.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– We do not support an exemption from the National Psychology Exam for international applicants for general registration.</li> <li>– While we acknowledge that the qualifications of internationally trained psychologists may be assessed as equivalent to the fifth- and sixth-year domestic higher education pathway, there often remain differences across the four exam domains that warrant assessment.</li> <li>– If an individual's education and training are truly equivalent, passing the exam should not present a significant challenge for a qualified and experienced psychologist transitioning to practice in Australia. However, we recognise the financial and logistical burden associated with completing board-approved supervision that could present as a barrier to commencing and the workforce shortages.</li> <li>– As a potential alternative, we suggest allowing internationally trained practitioners to sit the National Psychology Exam before commencing the transition pathway. This approach would enable them to demonstrate their competency without initially undertaking the costs associated with supervised practice.</li> </ul> |

- To ensure the protection of clients and the integrity of the professional standards of competence for psychologists in Australia, the exam is a strong unbiased safeguard that there is sufficiency of knowledge and competence before practicing under the nationally protected title of Psychologist.

#### **Content of the draft exam guidelines**

**Question 4:** Is there any content that needs to be changed, deleted, or added into the draft exam guidelines?

**Your answer:**

“All eight competencies are assessed by the exam.” Remove, this is not necessary and may date the document, by not including this you can update the professional competencies document without changing the exam guidelines. “Eight Competencies” is referenced on pages 4 and 5.

“During the sixth year (after 1,500 hours of supervised practice internship)” amend to “After 1,500 hours of supervised practice within the internship.”

“Three-month transitional program” remove “Three month” this is the minimum term and many transitional programs may exceed this duration. There is no duration applied next to the 5+1 or 4+2 in the same paragraph.

Definition of exam pass and failure

It would be our recommendation that candidates pass all 4 domains of the exam rather than an overall score. Given the exam is assessing all 8 core competencies we feel it is equally important that the scoring reflects this same assessment purpose.

**Question 5:** Is the language and structure of the proposed draft exam guidelines helpful, clear, relevant and workable? Are there any potential unintended consequences of the current wording?

**Your answer:**

No changes or recommendations.

#### **Proposed implementation of the draft exam guidelines**

**Question 6:** The Board proposes to publish the draft exam guidelines when they are approved, but to have a future date for when it comes into effect (1 December 2025), to allow enough time for exam candidates to prepare. The first exam including the updated professional competencies will not be until the February 2026 sitting of the exam. Do you support this transition and implementation plan?

**Your answer:**

Yes.

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| <p><b>Question 7:</b> Are there specific impacts for higher education providers, accreditation agencies, international regulators, governments, employers, psychologists, supervisors, exam candidates, clients/consumers or other stakeholders that the Board should be aware of, if the draft exam guidelines were to be approved? Please consider positive impacts and any potential negative or unintended effects in your answer.</p> |
| <p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>No.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Question 8:</b> Would the proposed changes to the draft exam guidelines result in any potential negative or unintended effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples or other priority groups in the community? If so, please describe them.</p>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>No.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Question 9:</b> Would the proposed changes to the draft exam guidelines result in any adverse cost implications for practitioners, clients/consumers or other stakeholders? If yes, please describe.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>There are costs involved for national psychology exam training providers, we provide training and are prepared for this cost of updating materials in line with the new curriculum once released.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>Other</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>Question 10:</b> Do you have any other feedback or comments about the draft exam guidelines?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>No.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |