

## 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: Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)

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: Accreditation Council

☐ Prefer not to say.

<b>Questions for consideration – Updating the Guidelines for the national psychology exam</b>
<b>Preferred option</b>
<b>Question 1:</b> Do you support updating the exam guidelines (Option 2)? Please provide a rationale for your view.
<p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Yes. The guidelines clearly outline the exam rationale, parameters, and thresholds. They provide relevant information to candidates on key topics, including professional competencies, eligibility, outcomes, and related policies and procedures. The content is described in plain English and is, therefore, appropriate to international audiences. They show the inter-relationship between the exam and other forms of assessment.</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><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Yes. This is important information for candidates. Including the competencies in the exam guidelines would make it easier for candidates to cross-refer information. This in turn increases the document's useability. It would also reduce the need for candidates to follow multiple links and/or access multiple web pages. The candidates would find this approach highly convenient and suited to their purposes.</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><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Yes. The proposed exemption for individuals who hold an international qualification that is assessed as being (substantially) equivalent to an Australian APAC-accredited 5th and 6th year qualification introduces equity between Australian and overseas qualified applicants. With qualifications being assessed via a rigorous process, this will reduce administrative and financial burden to applicants and allow more timely registration without risk to the public.</p>
<b>Content of the draft exam guidelines</b>
<b>Question 4:</b> Is there any content that needs to be changed, deleted, or added into the draft exam guidelines?
<p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Please see our recommendations in response to Question 5 below.</p>
<b>Question 5:</b> 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?
<p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Yes. The language and structure are helpful, clear and relevant. The document is very text-heavy, and this can be challenging for individuals with English as a second language, CALD groups and neurodiverse individuals. APAC recommends including infographics, animation, diagrams and/or checklists to provide high-level overviews of key information.</p>

Proposed implementation of the draft exam guidelines
<p><b>Question 6:</b> 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?</p>
<p><b>Your answer:</b></p> <p>Yes. This approach is fair and reasonable.</p>
<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>APAC would refer to the Guidelines, which will be published on the Board's website to support its communication and engagement.</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>We encourage the Board to consult with the Australian Indigenous Psychology Education Project (AIPEP) and the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association via the Ahpra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group for Psychology: [REDACTED]</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>None can be identified.</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>Congratulations on the work and thought that has gone into producing these guidelines, and thank you for the opportunity to feed into their development.</p> <p>The development of an approach to examinations should be explored that further expands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An appropriate balance between knowledge and demonstration of practice</li> <li>- addresses cultural safety issues unique to Australia</li> </ul> <p>Assessment of the quality of equivalent pathways needs to be ongoing to identify potential risks with this approach. Accreditation Councils, with a pool of Assessors, Standards and processes, are well placed to undertake this in support of the National Scheme. Accreditation Councils are well placed to administer the Exam through collaborative approaches with other Accreditation Councils within the National Scheme.</p>