

## Policy framework for the assessment of qualifications for Area of Practice Endorsement (AoPE)

The purpose of this framework is to provide guidance to Ahpra staff and other delegated decision makers of the PsyBA on the application of National Law Section 98, when assessing qualifications for AoPE.

It aims to ensure consistency of outcomes for applicants who are applying for AoPE.

This assessment does not extend to courses, work experience, or other types of training or professional development undertaken outside of a postgraduate qualification offered at a university or a tertiary education institution.

It is intended that this framework compliments rather than duplicates the accreditation process, where programs have already been assessed as allowing graduates to demonstrate the competencies required for a particular AoPE.

### Section 98 of the National Law states:

#### *Endorsement for approved area of practice*

(1) A National Board established for a health profession may, in accordance with an approval given by the Ministerial Council under section 15, endorse the registration of a registered health practitioner registered in a health profession for which the Board is established as being qualified to practise in an approved area of practice for the health profession if the practitioner:

(a) holds either of the following qualifications relevant to the endorsement:

- (i) an approved qualification; or
- (ii) another qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification; and

(b) complies with an approved registration standard relevant to the endorsement.

### Definitions

#### **Approved qualification – 98(1)(a)(i)**

An approved qualification is a qualification that has been accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) and approved by the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) as meeting requirements for registration and/or endorsement. Approved qualifications can be found on the Board's website [here](#).

#### **Substantial equivalence – 98(1)(a)(ii)**

This framework defines substantially equivalent qualifications as follows:

1. A qualification that was accredited by APAC in a specific area of practice before the PsyBA began approving qualifications in 2010 is substantially equivalent to an approved qualification in the same area of practice.
2. A qualification that was accredited by the Australian Psychological Society (APS) in a specific area of practice prior to the establishment of APAC in 2003 is substantially equivalent to an approved qualification in the same area of practice.

#### **Based on similar competencies – 98(1)(a)(ii)**

A qualification is considered to be "based on similar competencies" to an approved qualification if it allowed the graduate to acquire similar competencies to the Level 4 Professional Competencies for the relevant specialised area of practice (as outlined in the [2019 APAC Accreditation Standards for Psychology Programs](#)).

## **Non-standard pathway to endorsement under 98(1)(a)(ii) based on similar competencies:**

The non-standard pathway to endorsement is for applicants who:

1. have completed at least a sixth year of postgraduate study in an approved psychology program (in any area of practice endorsement) that may be based on similar competencies to an approved program in the AoPE applied for, or
2. have completed advanced postgraduate study comparable to a sixth year of study in psychology (relevant to any area of practice endorsement) that maybe based on similar competencies to an approved program in the AoPE applied for.

Advanced postgraduate study is defined as the achievement of professional graduate competencies for specialised areas of practice through a combined program of study and practice placements at an Australian Qualifications Framework Level 9 or above (total of two years – with the second year being advanced).

## **Evidence requirements for assessing qualifications for substantial equivalence or based on similar competencies**

Substantial equivalence: Qualification is on the APS list of accredited courses (until 1 January 2004) or the APAC list of accredited qualifications (before July 2010).

Similar competencies assessment: Academic transcripts, course handbooks / course outlines, placement reports and any other information that would support that the qualification is based on similar competencies to an approved qualification in the AoPE applied for.