

## National psychology exam candidate manual

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Advance copy published: July 2025

Effective from: 1 December 2025

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## 1. Background

### Overview of the exam

The national psychology exam (the exam) protects the public by ensuring practitioners are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology in a competent and ethical manner before they are registered.

It is based on actual case studies and professional issues likely to be faced by psychologists working with the public, across a broad range of contexts.

The exam tests the threshold professional competencies for general registration as a psychologist in Australia as outlined in the [Professional competencies for psychologists](#)<sup>1</sup>. It supports the Psychology Board of Australia's (the Board) [General registration standard](#).<sup>2</sup>

To be eligible to apply for general registration, applicants must complete a six-year sequence of education and training, and provide evidence of having passed the exam (unless exempt).<sup>3</sup>

### Purpose of the candidate manual

The national psychology exam candidate manual (the candidate manual) is a 'how to' guide for people preparing for the exam (candidates). It provides essential practical information they need to know before, during and after sitting the exam. It should be read carefully and in conjunction with the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#) (exam guidelines), which provide an overview of the Board's policies and requirements for the exam.

### Understanding the difference between an educational and regulatory exam

There are key differences between exams delivered in a regulatory context (this exam) and exams delivered in an educational context (e.g. a board-approved program of psychology study undertaken at a university).

Exams delivered in an educational context are designed to provide feedback and correct errors, to motivate and direct student learning, and to identify high performers for admission into further study. The purpose of an exam in a regulatory context is very different.

A regulatory exam tests whether a candidate possesses the minimum threshold competencies to practice safely as a psychologist. It is a hurdle requirement, where the onus is on the candidate to demonstrate to the Board that they have developed the knowledge and skills to practice safely at that point in time.

The exam is not designed to be the sole test of a practitioner's competence to practise psychology. It is one of several methods used to assess the various aspects of competence needed to practice safely and effectively. Other methods include supervision (including direct observation of practice), professional placements, completion of an internship, and completion of a Board-approved qualification.

This manual will provide candidates and their supervisors information on how to prepare for the Board's regulatory exam.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information please review the [general registration standard](#).

<sup>2</sup> The General registration standard is published on the website at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au). Registration standards are approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council pursuant to the [National Law](#).

<sup>3</sup> Applicants for general registration who are exempt from passing the exam are outlined in the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#).

## 2. Content of the exam

### Curriculum

The exam questions are developed solely from the exam curriculum, which is published on the [Board's website](#).<sup>4</sup> Study tips are presented throughout the exam curriculum to assist candidates to study for the exam.

The exam curriculum is the Board's official statement of the exam content. It is based on the competencies for general registration as outlined in the [Professional competencies for psychologists](#)

The exam assesses the eight competencies through four exam curriculum domains:

- ethics (including applied ethical and professional reasoning)
- assessment (including methods and approaches)
- intervention (including intervention selection and implementation), and
- communication (including communication and reporting skills).

### Resources that support the curriculum

The Board has published several resources that sit alongside the exam curriculum and are designed to support candidates to study for the exam. These resources are published on the [Board's website](#)<sup>5</sup> and include the following:

- All exam questions can be mapped to a reference on this list. The psychology field has extensive literature covering the curriculum domains, with many more resources that complement those in this list. The recommended reading list is updated from time to time as new editions, other journal articles, and improved texts become available. The reading list is recommended but not mandatory.
- *Sample exam questions*: This document provides examples of the type of questions and answers that will be on the exam. It also includes an explanation of the preferred answer to assist candidates in their exam study.

## 3. Structure of the exam

### Exam questions

The exam questions are multiple-choice questions. Exam questions will be mostly in the format of:

- a vignette or scenario
- a lead-in question, and
- a set of five options (a, b, c, d, or e), of which one is the correct answer and four are incorrect.

The correct answer is the best or most correct option in the view of the Board. The exam questions have been developed by senior practitioners and the best answer is their consensus view. Questions are developed to test the threshold professional competencies of the [exam curriculum](#), as described in the [Professional competencies for psychologists](#), and in professional and scientific literature and the recommended reading.

The exam is designed to test the application of psychological knowledge to safe practice. Although the questions can rely on a factual knowledge base, the exam focuses on the application of that knowledge to actual psychological cases and professional issues. Multiple choice questions are deemed suitable to test applied knowledge, and to allow candidates to demonstrate psychological reasoning and the threshold professional competencies in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.

There are various versions of the exam, so candidates who repeat the exam will get a different exam version. The Board reviews all exam questions for relevance of content, effectiveness, and reliability. The Board regularly undertakes quality assurance processes that provide the basis for further question

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<sup>4</sup> See the '[National Psychology Exam](#)' page of the Board's website.

<sup>5</sup> See the '[National Psychology Exam](#)' page of the Board's website.

development and improvement. For more information on the ongoing quality assurance processes, see Attachment A.

### Number of questions

There are 150 questions in the exam. All questions are of equal value and there is no deduction of marks for incorrect answers. Candidates are encouraged to attempt all questions.

### Proportion of questions testing each domain of the curriculum

As three of the four domains assessed by the exam incorporate a larger amount of content, the exam includes a greater number of questions on these three domains than the fourth (communication) domain. In addition, the communication domain significantly overlaps in content with the first three domains. See Table 1 for details on the number of questions on the exam for each domain.

Table 1: Number of questions testing the domains of the exam

Exam Domain	Number of questions	Percentage
Ethics	45	30
Assessment	45	30
Intervention	45	30
Communication	15	10
Total questions	150	100

### Duration

The duration of the exam is 3.5 hours (210 minutes). Candidates are required to allocate a total of four hours to complete registration procedures before the exam, and post-exam administration activities.

### Pass grade

The exam is a pass or fail exam. The Board has applied a scaled passing score of 70 per cent. The scaled passing score is the Board's view of the minimum level of applied knowledge required for independent and safe psychology practice. Raw scores (the total number of answers that were correct out of 150) will be arithmetically converted to a scale that ranges from 0 to 100.

To take into consideration differences in difficulty among different versions of the exam scaled scores will be used. Scaled scores will be applied to all candidates sitting the exam in a particular exam period (the exam cohort). Adjusting scores will ensure that the standard needed to pass the exam remains the same, even if different versions of the exam vary in difficulty. This ensures that an exam cohort will not be penalised if the exam they sit is harder. Marks can be scaled up for all candidates in a cohort if the exam is difficult, but they are never scaled down. This means that no candidate is adversely affected by scaling.

The exam and pass rates are moderated by the Board.

The pass rate applies to the total score on the exam. Candidates are not required to pass all four curriculum components in addition to achieving a passing score on the overall exam. This is because there is considerable overlap between the four domains assessed by the exam. For example, there are ethical considerations when conducting psychological assessments; and communication competencies required when delivering psychological interventions.

Candidate scores are not carried over between exams. Candidates who fail their exam must re-sit the whole exam and achieve the scaled 70% score in their next sitting of the exam to pass.

#### 4. Studying for the exam

The responsibility to prepare for and pass the exam rests with the candidate.

Candidates preparing for the exam should use their judgment about how to prepare and consult their supervisor in designing a plan of study based on the curriculum, and the associated resources developed by the Board. Exam candidates should check the website regularly for updates to the exam resources.

Candidates with little or no recent study or practice are likely to have difficulty with the exam. The Board strongly recommends targeted study of the curriculum and undertaking supervised practice in preparation for sitting the exam.

Candidates are expected to develop a broad strategy for preparing for the exam. This preparation should include:

- developing a comprehensive study plan that is targeted and includes timed milestones
- using professional networks, workplaces, libraries, and colleagues to source study materials
- setting adequate time aside for private reading and study
- seeking advice and assistance from supervisors
- seeking advice and support from colleagues
- attending workshops, training institutes or professional development events, and
- seeking appropriate structured and unstructured learning opportunities that focus on developing the threshold professional competencies assessed by the exam.

Candidates preparing for the exam should:

- read the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#) to learn about the purpose of the exam, eligibility to sit the exam, exemptions and policies relevant to the exam
- carefully read the [exam candidate manual](#) (this document) to fully understand how to prepare for the exam and what to expect on the exam day
- become familiar with the threshold professional competencies assessed by the exam as outlined in the [Professional competencies for psychologists](#)
- become familiar with the four exam domains by studying the [exam curriculum](#)
- become familiar with the [additional resources](#) developed by the Board to sit alongside the curriculum
- complete the *sample exam questions* available on the Board's website and study the explanation of the preferred answer, and
- after registering to sit the exam, complete the *practice exam*.

All resources are published on the [Board's website](#)<sup>6</sup>.

The Board has developed an exam checklist to help candidates understand what they should know about the exam, where to find relevant information, and the best way to prepare for each stage of the exam process (before, during and after the exam). The exam checklist is at Attachment G.

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<sup>6</sup> See the '[National Psychology Exam](#)' page of the Board's website.

## Practice exam

Once a candidate has registered to sit the exam, they can sit an online practice exam to further assist in their preparation. The practice exam consists of a set of exam questions. It is designed to provide candidates with the 'look and feel' of the exam including how the exam is structured, the types and style of questions and how exam time will need to be managed.

To sit the practice exam, candidates first need to create an account on the [exam portal](#) (see section 6 of this manual). Approval for accounts can take up to five business days. Once the account is approved, candidates can access the exam portal and register for the exam. Once registered for the exam, candidates can sit the practice exam at any time before their scheduled exam date.

The practice exam prepares candidates for the kinds of exam questions they will encounter. It does not replicate the delivery format of the real exam, which is delivered using secure examination browser software.

Candidates who fail the practice exam will be able re-sit it once, after waiting one day. Candidates who successfully complete the practice exam will not be allowed to re-sit.

At the end of the practice exam there is an explanation about which answers were correct.

## 5. Exam delivery

### Four exam sittings each year

The exam is generally offered in four separate exam sittings each year.

During each exam sitting candidates can elect to sit the exam through **online proctoring (OLP)**, or in a designated **test centre**, located in various capital cities across Australia.

Details for the schedule of exams, including dates for registration periods, is available on the [Board's exam webpage](#).

### Delivery process

The exam is designed to be delivered in one sitting. This means the exam is not split or paused nor delivered over multiple sittings. There is no option to sit a shorter exam by sitting the exam one domain at a time. This is because there is considerable overlap between the four domains assessed by the exam.

Candidates have the option to skip questions and come back to them later in the exam should they have time available. A 'flagging' system and review screen is available to help candidates navigate back to a skipped question.

### Test administrator

The Board has contracted with a test administrator called Kryterion to administer the exam.

Kryterion administers both the OLP exams and exams delivered in test centres and is responsible for ensuring the integrity of testing processes. They verify student identification, provide certified proctors (invigilators or supervisors), and ensure the exam is delivered securely to each registered candidate.

### Sitting the exam via online proctoring

Online proctoring allows for secure delivery of the exam directly to your computer via the internet in your home or workplace. OLP is an option if you prefer to sit the exam at home, live in a rural or remote area and prefer not to travel to a test centre, are sitting the exam overseas, or for health or other personal reasons, including not feeling safe to attend a testing centre.

For OLP, candidates are responsible for organising a suitable exam environment, including:

- access to a suitable room or office – where you can sit on your own, and that is free from any clutter, noise, interruptions, or distractions, and

- access to suitable technology – having access to reliable internet and a computer that has a webcam (in-built or external).

Exams delivered via OLP are proctored (supervised) by a virtual proctor (or online proctor). Kryterion uses certified proctors to monitor and assist candidates in real-time by using video and audio monitoring of the exam as you complete it. Candidates register to sit the OLP exam at a specific date and time during one of the four exam sittings held each year.

More information about sitting the exam via OLP, including the rules and requirements, is provided in Attachment B.

### **Sitting the exam in a test centre**

Candidates can sit the exam in any one of the designated test centres located in Australia (see the [test centre finder](#)). Test centres for the exam are only available in Australia.

Exams undertaken in a test centre are sat at a computer terminal provided by the test centre. Pencil and paper exams are not used. Unlike OLP exams, it is the test centre, not the candidate who is responsible for providing access to suitable space, computer security and technology for the exam. Sitting the exam in a test centre is an option if you don't have a suitable space to sit the exam at home, are not confident with computer technology, or do not have reliable internet capacity.

Exams delivered in a test centre have exam proctors that are onsite in person, rather than virtual proctors for OLP exams. The onsite proctors are sometimes called invigilators or supervisors.

More information about sitting the exam in a test centre, including the rules and requirements, is provided in Attachment C.

### **How to decide to sit the exam at a test centre or via OLP?**

This is a very personal choice. We understand that some candidates have never sat an OLP exam before and are hesitant, while others prefer OLP exams. We encourage you to consider your own circumstances and seek advice from your supervisor before making your decision.

You may wish to consider the following in making your decision:

- Do you have access to the required equipment to undertake the OLP exam – e.g. a computer, webcam, adequate internet bandwidth? Candidates are responsible for making sure their technology meets the minimum requirements to sit the exam.
- Do you have access to a suitable OLP exam testing environment (clean, quiet, no interruptions)?
- What is your level of comfort and skill with the technology required to run the OLP exam? Have you reviewed the exam provider's [technical requirements](#) and [exam pre-check](#) guidance? Do you meet these requirements?
- Do you have any health, personal or travel reasons that would influence your decision to sit the exam at home or in a test centre?
- If there is no test centre availability in your area, are you prepared to pivot to the OLP exam, are you willing to travel to a different test centre, or would you prefer to wait to sit the exam in your preferred test centre?
- What is your preferred timing to apply for general registration - do you want to apply for general registration sooner? How might this affect your decision to sit your exam in a test centre or via OLP?
- How much flexibility do you have in scheduling the time to sit your exam? Test centres offer a limited number of exam sittings on set days and times. Online exams offer more sittings and a wider range of times and days.



## 6. Booking your exam

### Eligibility

Candidates must ensure they are eligible to sit the exam before booking an exam time. Information on eligibility and exemptions from sitting the exam is outlined in the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#).

### Registering to sit the exam

To register for the exam candidates will need to create an account on the [exam portal](#), which is sometimes referred to as WebAssessor. The account will be activated within five working days and email confirmation will be sent to the candidate when the account has been activated.

Candidates can use the exam portal to register to sit the exam, either as an OLP exam or in person at a test centre.

When booking an exam at a test centre, candidates will be shown centres that exist in their state or territory. Candidates wishing to sit in a different state or territory can change the displayed option using the drop-down list.

The candidate account also grants access to the practice exam and enables booking and payment. The candidate will receive a confirmation email with the details of the exam date, testing centre and requirements for the exam day.

Candidates may only lodge one application to sit the exam per quarter period (every three months). The exam dates and registration period are on the [National Psychology Exam](#) page of the Board's website.

### Changing your exam date

Candidates can change the date and time of their scheduled exam for any reason up to 72 hours before the scheduled exam at a testing centre, and up to 24 hours before a scheduled OLP exam, without incurring additional fees. Exams can be rescheduled, subject to availability, using the [exam portal](#).

Candidates are only permitted to change the date and time within 72 hours of the exam if special circumstances apply – see the section on *Special consideration* (Attachment E of this manual). Candidates who need to reschedule an exam within 72 hours of the booked exam date must contact the [Ahpra exams team](#) immediately for assistance.

If there are issues beyond the candidate's control before the start of a scheduled exam which severely delays its start, the candidate can be rescheduled for a later time or day within the exam session. Candidates should request this prior to starting their exam, either with the exam provider or with the [Ahpra exams team](#). Candidates experiencing issues (e.g. feeling unwell on the day of the exam) who don't ask to be rescheduled will be seen as declaring they can continue with the exam's assessment of their competencies.

### Changing your booking from OLP to test centre (and vice versa)

Candidates wishing to change from OLP exam to a testing centre, or from a testing centre to online, should contact the [Ahpra exams team](#), providing a contact number and details of when they will be able to receive a phone call to arrange the new sitting.

### Cancelling your exam booking

Candidates can cancel their scheduled exam for a full refund for any reason up to 72 hours before the scheduled exam at a testing centre, and up to 24 hours before a scheduled OLP exam, using the [exam portal](#).

### What to do if you can't access the exam portal?

When candidates cannot access the exam portal, it is usually due to one of the following reasons:

1. Access to the portal has not yet been approved.

Accounts on the exam portal need to be approved when first created. Please allow up to five working days after creating an account for Ahpra to review and approve it.

2. A candidate has failed the exam three times.

Candidates who fail the exam three times may have their accounts made inactive until they seek approval to sit the exam again. See the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#) for details about the exam failure policy.

3. There is a password issue.

Candidates can reset their password on the [exam portal](#) by clicking the 'forgot password' button and following the prompts. Alternatively, candidates can contact the exam test administrator (i.e. Kryterion) using their [web based support services](#).

Candidates may also contact the Ahpra exams team for assistance at [nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au).

## 7. Paying for the exam

### Exam fee

The fee for sitting the exam is published on the Board's website in the [Schedule of fees](#). The Board does not currently provide an exam fee reduction for candidates experiencing financial hardship. However, the Board can consider financial hardship when candidates are applying for or renewing their provisional or general registration. See the Ahpra website for more information.

### How to pay for the exam

Ahpra can only accept credit card payment (including Visa or Mastercard debit cards) for the exam. Payment must be made through the [exam portal](#). For candidates who do not have a credit card, Ahpra will accept payment from someone else (a manager, relative, etc) on your behalf.

### Additional charges

Some banks may apply an international transaction fee to MasterCard or Visa purchases where the transaction is made in Australian dollars but the party accepting the card is overseas. Kryterion's head office is based in Arizona, USA. Candidates are advised to check with their bank regarding their fees.

### Payment confirmation

Payment confirmations are sent automatically to the email address listed on the [exam candidate account](#).

If a confirmation email has not been received within five days into an inbox (or spam or junk folder), contact the [Ahpra exams team](#) for assistance.

### Refunds

#### Test centre refunds

Candidates that cancel an exam booking more than 72 hours before the scheduled exam date at a test centre will have the exam fee refunded to the credit card originally used for payment. It may take up to ten days before the credit is shown in the account.

Candidates that cancel an exam booking within 72 hours of the scheduled exam date at a test centre are not refunded the exam fee, unless special consideration has been approved (see Attachment E of this manual for more information).

#### OLP refunds

Candidates that cancel an exam booking more than 24 hours before the scheduled OLP exam date will have the exam fee refunded to the credit card originally used for payment. It may take up to ten days before the credit is shown in the account.

Candidates that cancel an exam booking within 24 hours of the scheduled OLP exam date are not refunded the exam fee unless special consideration has been approved (see Attachment E of this manual for more information).

## 8. Supporting candidates to sit the exam

### Special accommodation

Candidates with a documented health condition and/or disability can request support to accommodate their needs to allow them to fairly sit the exam. Special accommodation applies to exams delivered by OLP and those delivered in a test centre.

Special accommodation requests need to be made in writing to the Ahpra exams team ([nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au)) a **minimum of thirty days in advance** of the intended exam date.

More information about how to apply for special accommodation is provided in Attachment D.

### Special consideration

Special consideration is available to candidates who are unable to sit or complete an exam due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control. Candidates may be given an opportunity to re-sit the exam at the next available date without incurring additional exam fees.

Special consideration applies to exams delivered by OLP and those delivered in a test centre.

Adverse circumstances beyond the candidate's control may occur just before the exam sitting (e.g. loss or bereavement, acute illness requiring hospital admission), or during the exam (e.g. natural disaster, evacuation of the exam centre).

Difficulty launching the OLP exam or completing the exam due to a candidate's own technology specifications/issues does not meet the criteria for adverse circumstances. Setting up your computer is the candidate's responsibility and considered to be in your control.

Applications for special consideration must be submitted in writing to the [Ahpra exams team](#) **before the exam or within 14 working days after the date of the exam** (depending on the nature of the request).

More information about how to apply for special consideration is provided in Attachment E.

## 9. Expectation of professional conduct

Candidates sitting the exam are subject to the usual rules of ethical and professional conduct before, during and after the exam as outlined in the Board's [Code of conduct](#).

All formal exams have rules relating to conduct. However, there are some rules that, if breached, would have a significant impact on the candidate's future capacity to sit an exam or to be or remain registered.

Specific rules for exams held in a test centre and via online proctoring are outlined in Attachment B and C of this exam manual. Failure to comply with any rule or instruction by an exam supervisor or proctor will be regarded as a breach of discipline and may lead to exclusion from the exam and the candidate deemed to have failed. More serious breaches of exam rules or security may result in disciplinary or criminal action.

Candidates are not permitted to photograph, record, copy or write down any of the test items or questions, or to talk about the content of the exam (e.g. exam questions) with anybody (including the exam supervisor or proctor) during or after the exam. You will be asked to sign a declaration agreeing to keep the exam content (questions and answers) confidential when you sit the exam.

The Board regards misconduct during an exam as a serious matter. Falsifying results, fraudulent or dishonest conduct in connection with an exam could lead to practitioners who are not qualified or not otherwise competent and safe to practise being improperly registered. In such cases the Board will consider any complaint and may refer the matter to a responsible tribunal. If a tribunal finds a complaint sustained it may make a range of orders, including cancellation of registration and disqualifying a person from applying for registration for a specified period.

## 10. After the exam

### If you miss the exam date

Candidates that could not sit or complete the exam due to exceptional circumstance beyond their control can apply for special consideration. See Attachment E of this manual for more information.

### If your exam was suspended or terminated

Please write to the [nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au) inbox immediately if your exam was suspended or terminated. A member of the Ahpra exams team will contact you and review the circumstances that prompted the suspension or termination of your exam. The Ahpra exams team respond to emails during office hours (Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm, AEST/ADST Melbourne).

If your exam was suspended or terminated due to technical difficulties (refer to Appendix E applying for special consideration) or ended because you were feeling unwell during the exam, you will be able to re-sit the exam at the end of the exam period.

If your exam was suspended or terminated because you did not observe the rules and requirements of the testing environment, and the proctor reports that you engaged in non-standard and/or unauthorised behaviour during the exam, you will need approval from the Board before being able to re-sit the exam.

### Receiving results

Candidates will receive their exam results by email within four to six weeks of the close of the exam period. Candidates do not receive their scaled scores as part of the reporting process, only whether they have passed or failed. Because the exam is a regulatory exam, not an exam given in an educational context, candidates will not receive specific information on which exam questions they passed/failed, nor will the exam answers be provided. Results will not be given by telephone.

After the exam has finished, any communication about the exam must be addressed to Ahpra through the [Ahpra exams team](#). Candidates must not communicate with members of the Psychology Board of Australia or the Board's committees about the exam.

### Providing feedback to the Board about your exam experience

There will be a candidate survey emailed to every candidate who sits the exam at the end of the exam period. This is the best way for you to provide us feedback.

### Exam failure

Candidates who fail the exam are provided with a performance report by email to provide additional information about their performance. As noted above, the Board cannot provide scaled scores as part of this reporting process. If a candidate does not meet the standard, feedback is provided about which standard is not met (e.g. underperformed in the ethics domain). This feedback should be used to guide the candidate and their supervisor on areas for further provisional development, and to guide exam study in preparation for exam re-sit.

Candidates who fail the exam are permitted to re-sit the exam in the next exam period.

If a candidate fails **three times**, they will not be able to sit another exam until their registration renewal or a new application for registration is approved by the Board. Details on the procedures to follow if a candidate fails the exam three times, including available options, steps to take, and evidence required by the Board, can be found in the:

- [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#)
- [Policy and procedure for candidates who fail the exam three times](#) (attached in the Guidelines for the national psychology exam), and
- [Statement and plan for professional development](#) (the [SPPD-76 form](#)).

Candidates who fail the exam are strongly encouraged to review their study plan and consider making changes and improvements to the way they are preparing for the exam. See Section 4 of this manual for more information on strategies to prepare for sitting the exam.

### Requesting an exam review

A candidate can request an exam review if the candidate believes:

- that their exam performance was impaired because of a deficiency or error in the exam process
- that there was unfairness in the conduct of the exam, and/or
- there was an administrative breach during the exam.

A request for an exam review cannot be accepted if it is based on the:

- content of the exam (e.g. the exam questions were not focussed on what the candidate had studied). The content of the exam is sufficiently outlined in the Board's resources including the exam curriculum and Reading list.
- exam result (e.g. a failure result). The exam is a regulatory exam, and it is the candidate's responsibility to demonstrate that they are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology in a competent and ethical manner.

Any request for review must be made in writing to the [Ahpra exams team](#) after results are released and within **four weeks** of receiving exam results, and must include the following:

- the grounds and reasons for seeking review
- any relevant supporting documentation or other material, and
- confirmation of what outcome is being sought from the review (see the section below).

### Possible outcome of a review

The written request for review will be considered by the Board and assessed against the review criteria (as outlined above). The review will take place within 21 days of receiving the request.

The Board will let the candidate know the decision and the reasons for the decision in writing as soon as practicable after the review. The Board's decision is final.

The usual outcome for a successful review would be to allow the candidate to re-sit the exam as soon as possible at no additional cost to the candidate. A successful review outcome may consist of:

- re-sitting the exam at the next available date (no additional fee or reduced fee), or
- other special arrangements for undertaking the exam (no additional fee or reduced fee), or
- not counting the exam results (if failed) in the number of failed exams (see the exam failure policy).

The Board recognises the rights of candidates to have their personal information protected. Candidates can be assured that [Ahpra's Privacy Policy](#) will be complied with when managing reviews.

### Other options available to candidates

If the exam review process does not adequately apply to a candidate's situation, there are other options available for candidates, as follows:

- **Applying for special consideration.** Candidates can apply for special consideration if they are unable to sit or complete the exam due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control.

See Attachment E of this manual for more information on special consideration. See Attachment F for more information about the difference between applying for special accommodations, special consideration and applying for an exam review.

- **Providing feedback about the exam experience.** Candidates who do not meet the criteria for submitting an exam review, can provide feedback about their experience by either emailing the [Ahpra exams team](#) or by completing the exam survey. A candidate survey is emailed to every candidate who sits the exam at the end of the exam period.

This option is particularly suited to candidates who pass the exam and have feedback about their exam experience. This is because the usual outcomes for a successful review are not as helpful to candidates who pass the exam as they are for candidates who have failed the exam.

## **11. Further information**

### **Contact**

All correspondence about the exam should be directed to the Ahpra exams team at [nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au).

Emails will only be responded to during office hours, which are 9am to 5pm AEST/ADST Melbourne.

## **12. Review**

This manual replaces the version published in July 2019. This manual will be reviewed as required, generally every five years.

## **13. Attachments**

Attachment A: Exam ongoing quality assurance

Attachment B: Sitting an OLP exam

Attachment C: Sitting the exam in a test centre

Attachment D: Applying for special accommodation

Attachment E: Applying for special consideration

Attachment F: Difference between special accommodation, special consideration, and an exam review

Attachment G: Exam Checklist – What you should know and by when

## Attachment A: Exam ongoing quality assurance

The Board regularly evaluates the quality and functioning of the exam to ensure that it is fair, reliable, effective and fit-for-purpose, and to identify any areas of the exam that should be improved.

Quality assurance mechanisms include:

- regular review and updates to the threshold professional competencies assessed by the exam and required for general registration (such as benchmarking the competencies assessed by the exam with national and international psychology regulators and accreditation agencies)
- regularly holding wide-ranging public consultation on updating the exam documentation
- regular review of the exam content, effectiveness, processes and policies
- quality assurance controls for the approval of new exam content
- regular review and updates to the exam curriculum and recommended reading list
- ongoing development and review of the bank of exam questions by the National Psychology Exam Committee. The Committee membership includes senior psychologists who have expertise in exams, supervision, and teaching/training psychologists
- conducting post-exam analytics of exam version performance after each exam period. This includes:
  - identifying pass grade scaling requirements
  - item difficulty analysis
  - exclusion of an exam question from the exam if it was deemed that the performance of the exam cohort may have been impacted by the question's inclusion
- regular review of the internal guidelines for developing and structuring multiple choice questions, with a focus on the use of plain English, appropriate punctuation, grammar, and preferred terms
- external review of the exam questions by a professional editor
- ongoing review of the performance of the exam test administrator, with selection of a test administrator in line with Aphra's and the National Board's procurement processes.

The first project on investigating the exam functioning was published on the [Board's website](#). Quality assurance processes are now undertaken as part of business as usual and in line with best-practice exam design and delivery.



## Attachment B: Sitting an OLP exam

This attachment has specific instructions on how to prepare for and sit the online proctored (OLP) exam. It is expected you refer to other documents available on the [Boards website](#) for information about the content of the exam, and to this manual for general information about sitting the exam.

### What is online proctoring?

Online proctoring allows for secure delivery of the exam directly to your computer via the internet in your home or workplace. OLP is an option if you prefer to sit the exam at home, live in a rural or remote area and would prefer not to have to travel to a test centre, or for health or other personal reasons

Exams delivered via OLP are proctored (supervised) by a virtual proctor (or online proctor). Kryterion uses certified proctors to monitor and assist candidates *in real-time* by using video and audio monitoring of the exam as you complete it.

Candidates register to sit the OLP exam at a specific date and time during one of the [four exam sittings](#) held each year.

### Before the exam

#### Why is it important to book an exam early in the exam period?

It is recommended that candidates sit the OLP exam early in the exam period. There are fewer candidates sitting the exam earlier in the exam period and this can improve the proctor's responsiveness to resolving technical issues and avoid delays.

In rare cases when an exam needs to be re-scheduled, an early exam sitting will allow candidates to re-schedule the exam within the same exam period rather than being required to re-sit after the exam period or in the next exam sitting.

#### How should I set up my exam environment?

Candidates are responsible for organising a suitable exam environment in their home or work to sit the OLP exam. This includes:

- access to a suitable room or office where you can sit on your own, and
- access to a room and desk that is free from any clutter, noise, interruptions, or distractions (this includes interruptions from colleagues, children, or pets).

#### How should I prepare my equipment to sit the online proctored exam?

Candidates are responsible for making sure their technology meets the [minimum requirements](#) to sit the online exam. If you cannot properly meet the requirements, you will not be able to access the exam. For example, candidates will need to ensure they have access to an internet connection that can reliably manage video streaming for 4 hours. Mobile phone hotspot connections are typically not reliable enough for the exam to proceed.

Candidates should be aware that requests for special consideration based on technology difficulties will only be granted when the difficulty is the fault of the test provider. Special consideration will not be granted if the candidate does not have adequate IT systems in place, or if they start the exam late due to delays in properly setting up their own systems.

For specific information about the technical and equipment requirements please refer to:

- the *Before OLP exam checklist* (Table 1 below)
- Kryterion's [guidance on online testing requirements](#)

You will also receive an email from Kryterion with instructions on how to set up your testing environment after you have registered for the exam prior to sitting the exam.



Table one: Before OLP exam checklist

Have I...	Yes	Hints
Made sure I have the basic technology to sit the exam through OLP (desktop computer or laptop, a reliable internet connection, a USB webcam OR inbuilt webcam and speakers, a compatible internet browser)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	All exams must be delivered through Safari, Google Chrome, or Firefox web browsers. Google Chrome is the recommended browser for the exam.
Made sure my computer meets the specific software and hardware system requirements, as per Kryterion's information on <a href="#">online testing</a> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you are not confident with technology, it is recommended that you find someone to help you with the setup and confirm you are able to sit the OLP (technical issues occur when these instructions are not followed adequately). This is especially important if you intend to use a computer at your workplace as most workplaces don't give permission to disable these features.
Disabled all software that could interfere with my online proctored exam session (this includes, but is not limited to, pop-up blockers, antivirus software, firewalls, VMWare/Bootcamp, Skype, Photobooth and TeamViewer)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	You will not be able to access the exam if you do not complete these requirements.
<a href="#">Contacted Kryterion</a> if I have any specific questions about the technological requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check the technological requirements early to make sure you can meet them or make alternative arrangements.
If applying for special accommodation, contacted the Ahpra exams team ( <a href="mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au">nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au</a> ) in writing at least 30 days before the exam to seek adequate arrangements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Candidates with a documented health condition and/or disability can request appropriate assistance to allow them to sit the exam. More information on special accommodation is in Attachment D.
Allowed for 4 hours to sit the exam (3 hours and 30 minutes for the exam itself, approximately half an hour for set up and ID checks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you experience technical difficulties, you will not lose time from your exam, however it may extend the period that you are at your computer while Kryterion support assists you to remedy the issue.
Made sure that I will be in a quiet environment where I will not be interrupted by anyone or anything (including children and pets) during the exam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Made sure my desk and the testing area are completely clear of paper, pens/pencils, and any other clutter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	This includes notepads and post-it notes.
Turned off or removed from the room other electronic devices in addition to my computer (e.g. phone, iPad)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Made sure I can pan the camera/computer around the room?	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proctor may ask you to show them your surroundings before/during the exam.
Made sure the lighting where I plan to take the exam is adequate so I can be seen during the exam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Read the emails from Kryterion about how to set up and launch the exam and read the FAQs on dual delivery and OLP requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## During the examination

### What should I expect from the testing environment?

The exam is a high-stakes exam delivered in a regulatory context. It is a formal exam within a highly controlled test environment that includes clear rules, rigorous security protocols and virtual real-time supervision. Exam proctors are trained and certified to deliver high-stakes exams and follow standard operating procedures. The test environment will be different to what many candidates will have experienced in sitting exams at school or university in less formal or less controlled settings.

### What is the role of a proctor during online proctored exams?

The role of the proctor is to ensure the testing environment is secure, to ensure there is a standard testing environment for all candidates, to make sure exam rules are followed, and to ensure that you are not engaging in any non-standard or unauthorised behaviour throughout the exam.

Kryterion uses certified proctors to:

- monitor you and your movements as you sit the exam through live video and audio using video and microphone feeds from the candidate's own equipment
- conduct necessary ID checks to confirm your identity
- communicate with you using onscreen messaging, and
- issue warnings, suspend, or in cases where they believe intentional unauthorised exam behaviour is taking place, terminate your exam.

### Check-in and security processes

Candidates will launch their exam from their WebAssessor account. They must complete an identity check before the exam starts, where they will have to:

- present a photo ID to the camera
- type a phrase or press a series of keyboard keys – known as typing biometrics
- look at the camera (like taking a photo)
- use their camera to show the room and desk area being used to take the exam.
- remove their eyeglasses (if they wear them) and show them to the camera before commencing the exam.

You will receive specific instructions at the time of sitting the exam to complete these processes.

Security processes may occur again during the exam if the proctor has any security concerns. If conducted during the exam, the proctor will pause your exam whilst checking your ID so you will not be penalised time wise. Some candidates may find this interruption distracting; however, it is necessary for the delivery of online exams.

Candidates will be asked to review and agree to a set of terms and conditions for the exam to keep the exam and questions confidential. By accepting this agreement candidates will confirm eligibility to undertake the exam and acceptance of the exam rules. Candidates will be asked to sign a statement like the following:

*This exam is confidential and proprietary. It is made available to you, the examinee, solely for the purpose of assessing your proficiency level in the skill areas referenced in the title of this exam. To protect the integrity of the exams, the examinee must adhere to strict guidelines. The examinee shall not disclose to any third party the contents of this exam, including but not limited to questions, form of questions, or answers, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose.*

## How do I contact Kryterion if I have a technical issue during the online proctored exam?

Occasionally technical issues have occurred during OLP exams, which have been due to one of the following causes:

- Difficulty launching the exam because the technical specifications to run the exam have not been met by the candidate.
- Connection disruptions because of the candidate's equipment.
- Connection disruptions because the candidate's internet connection is unstable.
- Connection disruptions from Kryterion's servers.

If a technical issue occurs while you are sitting an OLP exam, support staff from Kryterion will be available to you on the day to assist in resolving your issue. You will be able to contact Kryterion using the [“Need help?” web-chat function](#) on Kryterion's website, or by typing a message to the proctor during an exam. They will be able to trouble-shoot various technical problems and rescheduled exams delayed by such issues.

Kryterion's support team is available at any time that you have registered to sit your exam.

Sometimes a phone number will appear on the screen during your exam. **DO NOT** phone Kryterion on this number as it is a generic number, and it is not specific to your exam nor your proctor. Kryterion's head office is based in the USA, and you could incur hefty international phone charges while waiting to be directed to an exam proctor.

## Can I contact the Ahpra exams team for assistance during my online proctored exam?

Yes. Candidates who have been unsuccessful contacting Kryterion's support services may contact the Ahpra exams team on [nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au). Emails will only be responded to during office hours, which are 9am to 5pm AEST/ADST Melbourne. If you think you might need Ahpra support during your exam, be sure to schedule it during these hours.

The Ahpra exams team can assist you with:

- reconnecting you with your Kryterion proctor if you are having difficulty contacting them
- re-joining the exam if you have been locked out due to a technical issue or a terminated exam.

## What are the rules and requirements of the Online Proctored Exam?

The rules and requirements for the OLP follow standard expectations for online exams. The rules outlined below are the agreed exam conditions between Ahpra and Kryterion.

### During the exam you are permitted to:

- have one toilet break (maximum of 5 minutes). The exam time is not paused during this break. Candidates concerned about needing more breaks than this should contact the [Ahpra exams team](#) with a special accommodation request before the exam takes place.
- communicate with your proctor during the exam if you wish to go to the toilet, if you are having technical difficulties with the exam delivery, or if you need to terminate the exam due to ill health or an emergency (e.g. fire alarm). The proctor will explain to candidates how to communicate with them at the start of the exam
- have a clear bottle of water with you during the exam. Candidates will need to show their water bottle to the proctor before the exam starts.

### The Proctor can pause the exam/ask you before the exam to:

- fix any visual problems. This includes asking you to reposition yourself or the camera, to fix the lighting or refocus the camera (you are required to be always in view of the camera)
- fix an audio problem (the proctor will advise you accordingly depending on the issue)

- fix any other technical problems
- conduct checks if they have a security concern at any time
- warn you if you do something that is not permitted during the exam.

**Please note you will not lose time on your exam if the proctor pauses the exam, or you cannot access the exam due to technical issues. All candidates will have the full 3 hours and 30 minutes made available to them to sit the exam.**

**Your exam will not be paused for a toilet break, and this will count as part of your exam time.**

#### Items not permitted during the exam

Candidates will not be permitted to have any of the following items with them during the exam:

- Any reference material (electronic or hard copy).
- Mobile phones.
- Any devices (other than the computer being used for the exam) that connect to the internet (e.g. smart watches).
- Other equipment (including pens and paper).
- Snacks or food.
- Medication or medical equipment (unless special accommodation is approved, see below).

#### Special accommodation

Exceptions can be made for candidates to take personal items needed for medical conditions into the exam room. A request for special accommodation will need to be submitted to the [Ahpra exams team](#) at least 30 days in advance of the exam date, and be formally approved to do this (see Attachment D of this manual for more information).

**You are not permitted to do the following during the exam and the proctor may issue you a warning or suspend or terminate your exam if you:**

- leave the designated area without permission from your proctor
- leave your exam for longer than five minutes during a permitted toilet break
- lean out of view of the camera
- display unexpected eye movement (e.g. looking away from the computer monitor)
- talk during the exam (unless it is to the proctor)
- read out loud
- are interrupted by or have anyone else be in the same room as you during the exam (this includes colleagues, children, or pets)
- have a desk/testing area that *is not* completely clear of paper, pens/pencils, and any other clutter (including post it notes, a notepad, other devices, etc.). You are not permitted to have any learning aids in the exam
- wear noise cancelling headphones during the testing. This is because the proctor is unable to monitor if someone is communicating with you via the headset.

#### Conduct and behaviour requirements

- You are required to always exhibit professional behaviour, according to the usual rules of ethical and professional conduct. Expectations for professional conduct are outlined in section 9 of this document, and the [Code of conduct](#).
- Candidates are expected to comply with any rules or instructions by an exam proctor or supervisor, adhere to the rules of OLP exams and interact with staff in a professional manner. Candidates are expected to discuss any problems they are having with the exam or the rules that apply with their proctor.

## Attachment C: Sitting an exam in a test centre

This attachment has specific instructions on how to prepare for and sit the exam in a test centre. It is expected you refer to other documents available on [the Board's website](#) for information about the content of the exam, and to this manual for general information about sitting the exam.

### Sitting the exam in a test centre

Candidates can sit the exam in any one of the designated test centres located within Australia. Test centres for the exam are only available in Australia. Exams undertaken in a test centre are securely delivered by computers provided by the test centre.

Exams undertaken in a test centre are sat at a computer terminal provided by the test centre. Pencil and paper exams are not used. Unlike OLP exams, it is the test centre, not the candidate who is responsible for providing access to suitable space, computer security and technology for the exam. Sitting the exam in a test centre is an option if you don't have a suitable space to sit the exam at home, are not confident with computer technology, or do not have reliable internet capacity.

Exams delivered in a test centre have exam proctors that are onsite in person. The onsite proctors are sometimes called invigilators or supervisors.

Candidate's register to sit the exam delivered in a test centre at a specific date and time during one of the [four exam sittings](#) held each year.

### Before the exam

#### Why is it important to book an exam early in the exam period?

It is recommended that candidate's book early in the registration period to secure a booking as test centres have limited capacity. In addition, there are fewer candidates sitting an earlier exam giving candidates more options for available exam days and times.

In rare cases when an exam needs to be re-scheduled, candidates with an early exam sitting will be able to re-schedule the exam within the same exam period rather than being required to re-sit after the exam period or in the next exam sitting.

#### What do I need to know about test centres?

The Board's test administrator – Kryterion - has many testing centres across Australia (see the [test centre finder](#)). Candidates can choose their preferred testing centre to sit the exam when paying for and booking the exam date. It is not mandatory to sit the exam in the state that you completed your training, however the exam can only be sat in a test centre in Australia.

When booking an exam at a test centre, candidates will only be shown centres that exist in the state or territory where you live. Candidates wishing to sit in a different state or territory can change the displayed option using the drop-down list.

If a chosen venue is not available on the scheduled exam date, it means all the available times have been booked for that day. Some of the larger centres like Sydney and Melbourne have multiple testing centres so another venue might have availability. Otherwise, a different exam date will need to be selected.

Test centre places can become available later in a registration period, as other candidates change or cancel their bookings, or as test centres make more places available. There is no waiting list system for these opportunities, so candidates should make their own plans to monitor availability if hoping to gain a preferred date or time at a test centre in this way.

## Sitting the exam

The following section provides important information for candidates when sitting the exam. It should be read carefully and followed closely.

### What do I need to bring to the test centre?

Candidates will need to present the exam supervisor (sometimes also called exam invigilator, proctor, or exam adjudicator) with the following documents:

- The printed email confirmation containing the candidate's exam authorisation code.
- Two types of formal identification (ID) in a name matching the one used to register for the exam.
  - One form of identification must be a photo ID. The second form of identification can be either photo ID or non-photo ID.
  - Examples of photo identification include a passport, driver's license, or current Student photo ID card. Non-photo ID can include a Medicare card, birth certificate, Australian government concession or health care card.

Failure to bring sufficient identification and the exam authorisation code may result in the candidate being excluded from sitting the exam.

Where an exam supervisor has a reasonable concern about a candidate's ability to properly establish their identity or there is a concern that identity documents are being misused, the candidate will be refused access to the exam. Fraudulent use of identity documents is a serious matter and may be referred to police. Candidates who are refused access to the exam will forfeit the fees paid to sit the exam.

### Arriving at the test centre

Candidates should arrive at the test centre at least **15-20 minutes before** the scheduled exam time to undertake the check-in and security processes.

Candidates who arrive late should talk to the test centre staff who will do all they can to ensure you can sit your exam.

Candidates who are not able to sit the exam should contact the [Ahpra exams team](#) as soon as possible for assistance.

### Check-in and security processes

There are a variety of security processes in place at all testing venues.

In addition to verifying registration to sit the exam, and providing formal identification, candidates will be required to:

- **turn out exterior pockets** (on jackets, jeans etc) to verify they are either empty or do not contain any prohibited items
- **roll up clothing sleeves** if wearing a long-sleeved top
- **hand over external eyewear** to the exam supervisor for (brief) inspection to verify that the eyewear is not technology-enabled, and
- **review and agree to a set of terms and conditions for the exam to keep the exam and questions confidential.** By accepting this agreement candidates will confirm eligibility to undertake the exam and acceptance of the exam rules. Candidates will be asked to sign a statement like the following:

*This exam is confidential and proprietary. It is made available to you, the examinee, solely for the purpose of assessing your proficiency level in the skill areas referenced in the title of this exam. To protect the integrity of the exams, the examinee must adhere to strict guidelines. The examinee shall not disclose to any third party the contents of this exam, including but not limited*



*to questions, form of questions, or answers, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose.*

### **Items permitted/not permitted in the testing room**

Candidates will not be permitted to take any of the following items into the exam:

- any reference material (electronic or hard copy)
- mobile phones
- any devices that connect to the internet (e.g. smart watches)
- other equipment (including pens and paper)
- water or other beverages (to safeguard the computer equipment). Please note that candidates will not be allowed extra time in the exam to have water breaks
- any personal items (these will be stored securely by the exam supervisor)
- Medication or medical equipment (unless special accommodation is approved, see below).

### **Special accommodation**

Exceptions can be made for candidates to take personal items needed for medical conditions into the exam room. A request for special accommodation will need to be submitted to [Ahpra exams team](#) at least 30 days in advance of the exam date, and be formally approved to do this (see Attachment D of this manual for more information).

### **What should I expect from the testing environment?**

The exam is a high-stakes exam delivered in a regulatory context. It is a formal exam within a highly controlled test environment that includes clear rules, rigorous security protocols and supervision. Exam supervisors are trained and certified to deliver high-stakes exams and follow standard operating procedures. The test environment will be different to what many candidates will have experienced in sitting exams at school or university in less formal or less controlled settings.

Candidates may undertake an exam in a room with test-takers who are sitting other exams, or who are from other professions. These candidates may have different requirements, rules, or restrictions than those that apply to candidates sitting the national psychology exam. Familiarising yourself with the rules that apply to the exam (in this manual) before the exam day is highly recommended.

Because test centres work with many providers using staggered exam start times, it is normal for other test-takers to enter or leave the testing room while exams are in progress. To minimise disruption, candidates will have access to disposable earplugs.

Candidates who have issues with the exam environment should speak with the exam supervisor on the day to allow the best opportunity for prompt resolution of the problem. It is important that candidates are provided with a professional and secure environment to complete the exam. Exam proctors or supervisors are required to note any problems arising during the conduct of an exam and report these to Kryterion. Such reports are used to verify and support any applications for special consideration or reviews based on exam process or unfairness in the conduct of the exam.

### **Conduct and behaviour requirements**

- You are required to always exhibit professional behaviour, according to the usual rules of ethical and professional conduct. Expectations for professional conduct are outlined in section 9 of this document, and the [Code of conduct](#).
- Candidates are expected to comply with any rules or instructions by an exam proctor or supervisor, adhere to the rules of exams and interact with staff in a professional manner. Candidates are expected to discuss any problems they are having with the exam or the rules that apply with their supervisor.

## Attachment D: Applying for special accommodation

Candidates with a documented health condition and/or disability can request support to accommodate their needs to allow them to fairly sit the exam.

Special accommodation applies to exams delivered by OLP and those delivered in a test centre.

### Applications for special accommodation

Special accommodation requests need to be made in writing to the Ahpra exams team ([nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au)) in writing a **minimum of thirty days in advance** of the intended exam date.

Your written request must include:

1. the reason for your request for special accommodation
2. information about your condition, such as a diagnosis
3. information about current functional limitations that are likely to affect your ability to take the exam under standard conditions, and
4. the special accommodations that you are requesting (e.g. longer breaks), including a specific rationale for each adjustment.

Relevant documentary evidence such as a medical certificate must be attached to the application and address the above four requirements. Documentation must be signed and dated by the evaluator (e.g. doctor) and must be a recent assessment that is relevant to your current situation.

Documentation from the relevant health professional must include all the following:

- **Who:** Details about the health professional completing the documentation (e.g. I am the candidate's treating psychologist for ADHD).
- **Why:** A stated reason for special accommodation that is relevant to the health professional's expertise (e.g. Type 1 Diabetes, ADHD, visual impairment)
- **What:** Specific details about the accommodation(s) requested to support the candidate manage their condition in the exam (e.g. glucose monitor, fidget toy, larger font, additional time), **and**
- **How:** Details about how the requested accommodation(s) is expected to assist the candidate during the exam (e.g. requires snacks to balance insulin levels due to Type 1 Diabetes; requires fidget toy to mitigate distraction caused by ADHD; requires larger font with higher contrasting colour to assist reading exam questions).

Documentation where a relevant health professional confirms the health condition and/or disability without nominating the accommodations and reason for them cannot be accepted. This means that a candidate cannot nominate their own accommodations without verification from the relevant health professional.

### Possible accommodations that can be provided

Candidates with special accommodation needs will be provided with facilities to support the following:

- **Mobility condition:** many exam centres have wide passages, wheelchair access, accessible toilets, and adjustable desks. The Ahpra exams team can assist candidates to confirm availability in their region.
- **Visual impairment:** the exam can be delivered with larger fonts and higher contrasting colour, and reader assistance.
- **Hearing impairment:** site support can be provided to ensure that exam supervisors can communicate instructions in a satisfactory manner.



- **Other health conditions and/or disability:** other conditions supported by appropriate documentation are addressed case-by-case.

#### Possible outcome of an application for special accommodation

There are four possible outcomes of an application for special accommodation, as outlined below.

1. All requested accommodations are approved for the current exam sitting. Candidate has applied in sufficient time for accommodations to be organised in time for the current exam sitting.
2. All requested accommodations are approved for the next exam sitting. There is insufficient time for accommodations to be organised in time for the current exam sitting.
3. Requested accommodations are partially approved for the current or the next exam sitting. Some requested accommodations are approved, and others are not.
4. Not approved.

The request will be determined by the Ahpra exams team.

Please be aware that candidates who disclose circumstances or health conditions that detrimentally affect or are likely to detrimentally affect their capacity to safely practice the profession (in addition to affecting their exam performance) may have their details passed onto the Board or relevant Ahpra staff for consideration.

This will help us to determine if the health problem meets the definition of [health impairment](#) under the [National Law](#), and if further assessment is needed. We acknowledge that candidates may have health issues that do not impact on their ability to practise their profession safely. The existence of a health issue does not automatically mean you have a health impairment. This depends on how your health condition is managed when you practice, and whether the health condition impacts on your capacity to safely practice the profession.

## Attachment E: Applying for special consideration

Special consideration is available to candidates who are unable to sit or complete an exam due to exceptional circumstance beyond their control. Special consideration applies to exams delivered by OLP and those delivered in a test centre.

Candidates who complete the exam are usually not eligible for special consideration unless there are special circumstances.

When special consideration is granted, candidates may be given an opportunity to re-sit the exam at the next available date without incurring additional exam fees.

### Adverse or exceptional circumstances

Examples of adverse or exceptional circumstances that will be considered are:

- acute illness (such as hospital admission, onset of serious illness)
- loss or bereavement (such as death of a close family member)
- hardship or trauma (such as being victim of crime, severe disruption to domestic life)
- unforeseen call-up for service (such as military service, court appearance, jury service, emergency service)
- work commitments and circumstances beyond their control (a letter on company/organisation letterhead from an employer confirming this must be attached to the application form)
- religious convictions (a letter from a religious leader must accompany the application)
- computer malfunction at the exam centre
- a technology failure that is the responsibility of the test administrator (a technology failure that is the responsibility of the candidate does not meet the criteria for special consideration)
- natural disaster, bomb threat or similar such event necessitating the evacuation of the exam centre.

### Applications for special consideration

Applications for special consideration:

- will only be accepted from eligible candidates,
- will not be approved unless there are exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the candidate
- must be supported by convincing evidence of the exceptional circumstances.

Applications for special consideration must be submitted in writing to the [Ahpra exams team](#) **before the exam or within 14 working days after the date of the exam** (depending on the nature of the request).

Relevant documentary evidence of the exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the candidate must be attached to the application and must include one or more of the following:

- medical certificate
- death certificate
- police report
- statutory declaration
- exam centre report, or
- evidence of requirement to attend court, jury service, military service, emergency service.

Failure to follow this process may result in the application being delayed or not accepted.

### Possible outcome of an application for special consideration

Written requests for special consideration will be reviewed and considered by the Ahpra exams team and assessed against the special consideration criteria outlined above. The review will take place within 21 days of receiving the request. Candidates will be informed of the outcome of their application in writing.

When a request is granted, the usual outcome would be to allow the candidate to re-sit the exam as soon as possible at no additional cost to the candidate. If approved, special consideration may consist of:

- deferral of the exam until the next available date (no additional fee or reduced fee), or
- other special arrangements for undertaking the exam (no additional fee or reduced fee).

### Granting special consideration will not alter the exam score

When special consideration is granted, it will not lower the pass mark, nor will it improve a candidate's overall score.

A separate review process exists for candidates who fail the exam and feel their performance was impaired by deficiency, error, unfairness, or administrative breaches in the exam process. For further information see p13 of this document about requesting an exam review.

## Attachment F: The difference between special accommodation, special consideration, and an exam review

	Special accommodation	Special consideration	Exam review
<b>What is it?</b>	If you have a documented health condition and/or disability you can request assistance to allow you to sit the exam.	If you are unable to sit (or complete) your exam due to exceptional circumstances outside of your control, you can request to re-sit.	You can request a review if you think the exam was not conducted properly. You cannot request a review based on the exam questions or your exam result, only the exam process.
<b>Examples</b>	<p>Additional bathroom breaks when pregnant.</p> <p>Additional exam time if diagnosed with performance anxiety.</p> <p>Access to diabetic monitoring device, insulin, and snacks for diabetes.</p> <p>Access to a fidget toy or non-electric earplugs to mitigate distraction for those with ADHD. (Note: headphones or loop earplugs are not permitted)</p> <p>Larger font and higher contrasting colour to assist readability for a visual impairment.</p> <p>Access to medication for documented condition (e.g. Ventolin)</p>	<p><i>Immediately before the exam:</i> acute illness, hospitalisation, loss or bereavement, hardship, or trauma (e.g. victim of crime), car accident on route to test centre, natural disaster, unforeseen call up for service (e.g. court, military, emergency service).</p> <p><i>During the exam:</i> computer malfunction, natural disaster, bomb threat, evacuation of exam centre, unexpected and debilitating illness.</p>	<p>You can request a review if you believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that your performance was impaired as result of a deficiency or error in the exam process</li> <li>there was unfairness in conducting the exam, or</li> <li>there was an administrative breach during the exam.</li> </ul>
<b>What is the application deadline?</b>	A minimum of 30 days in advance of your intended exam date.	Before the exam or within 14 days after the exam.	Four weeks after sitting the exam.

	Special accommodation	Special consideration	Exam review
<b>What documentary evidence is required?</b>	<p>Verification from your treating health professional or disability support officer stating your condition or diagnosis (e.g. pregnancy), what accommodation is being requested (e.g. additional breaks and snacks), and how this will assist your condition (e.g. to go to the bathroom and to manage morning sickness).</p> <p>Evidence from a supervisor, manager or employer cannot be accepted.</p>	<p>Relevant documentary evidence includes medical certificate, death certificate, police report, exam centre report or report from online proctor, evidence of requirement to attend court or military service.</p>	<p>The grounds and reason for which you are seeking a review.</p> <p>Any relevant supporting documentation.</p>
<b>How to apply?</b>	<p>Email your request and documentation to: <a href="mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au">nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au</a></p>	<p>Email your request and documentation to: <a href="mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au">nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au</a></p>	<p>Email your request and documentation to: <a href="mailto:nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au">nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au</a></p>
<b>What are the possible outcomes?</b>	<p>The requested accommodation(s) are approved, partially approved (only some of the accommodations can be approved), or not approved.</p> <p>If accommodations cannot be organised in time for the current exam sitting (application was received late, accommodations require significant organisation or resourcing) they will be applied to the next exam sitting.</p> <p>The outcome (and reasons) will be communicated to you in writing as soon as possible after your request has been received.</p>	<p>You may be given an opportunity to re-sit the exam at the next available date without incurring additional exam fees.</p> <p>The review will take place within 21 days of receiving the request. You will receive the outcome (and reasons) in writing.</p>	<p>You may be given an opportunity to re-sit the exam at the next available date without incurring additional exam fees.</p> <p>If you failed the exam due to the error in exam process, the Board may decide that the failure will not be counted in the number of failed exams allowed in the <a href="#">exam failure policy</a>.</p> <p>The review will take place after exam results have been released. We aim to provide you the outcome (and reasons) in writing within 21 days after this. Reviews are conducted in line with <a href="#">Ahpra privacy policy</a>.</p>
<b>Where to find more information?</b>	<p><a href="#">Candidate manual</a></p> <p>Section 8; Attachment D</p>	<p><a href="#">Candidate manual</a></p> <p>Section 8; Attachment E</p>	<p><a href="#">Candidate manual</a></p> <p>Section 10</p>

## Attachment G: Exam checklist – What you should know and by when

What every candidate should know	Timeframe	Resources	Yes/in progress
Do I know why I have been asked to sit the exam? Do I need to pass the exam before I can apply for general registration?	Before sitting the exam	<a href="#">Guidelines for the national psychology exam</a> (Particularly sections 2, 3, and 4)	✓
Do I know how educational and regulatory exams are different?	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 1	
Do I know if I am eligible to sit the exam?	Before sitting the exam	<a href="#">Guidelines for the national psychology exam</a> (Particularly section 6)	
Do I know what the exam will test? What content do I need to learn? Do I know about the structure of the exam, the format of the questions, and length of the exam?	Before sitting the exam	<a href="#">Guidelines for the national psychology exam</a> (Particularly section 5)  Candidate manual, Section 2 and 3  Exam Curriculum	
Have I read all the exam resources provided by the Board?	Before sitting the exam	<a href="#">Guidelines for the national psychology exam</a> Exam curriculum Candidate manual Reading list Exam section of the <a href="#">Board's website</a> Sample exam questions Practice exam	
Have I set up a study plan with my supervisor? Am I keeping to my plan to ensure I will be ready to sit the exam? Do I have the supports in place to help me succeed?	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 2, 3, and 4 Exam curriculum Reading list	
Do I know if I want to sit the exam at a test centre or via online proctoring (OLP)? Can I sit the exam in multiple sittings, or sit a shorter exam?	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 5, Attachment B and C	

What every candidate should know	Timeframe	Resources	Yes/in progress
Do I know how to register to sit the exam?  Do I know why it is recommended to sit the exam early in the exam period?	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 5 and 6	
Do I know how to pay for the exam?	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 7	
Do I know how to change my login for the exam portal? Or how to change my exam date? Or change from an OLP exam to doing the exam in a test centre?	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 6,	
Do I have a documented health condition and/or disability and need to request special accommodation so I can sit the exam?	A minimum of 30 days before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 8, Attachment D	
Do I know what my professional and ethical responsibilities are when sitting (and preparing to sit) the exam?)	Before, during and after sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 9	
If sitting the OLP exam:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do I know how to prepare my equipment to meet the technical requirements?</li> <li>Do I have a suitable space at home/work to sit the exam?</li> <li>Do I understand the role of the proctor?</li> <li>Am I clear about the rules and requirements for OLP exams?</li> <li>Do I know who to contact if I need assistance during the exam?</li> </ul>	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 5, Attachment B	
If sitting my exam in a test centre:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do I know what time I need to present for my exam and where?</li> <li>Do I know what kind of identification I need to present?</li> <li>Do I understand the kind of testing environment to expect, including the security processes?</li> <li>Do I know what I can/cannot bring into the exam?</li> <li>Do I know what to do if I am late for my exam?</li> </ul>	Before sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 5, Attachment C	
Do I know what to do if I was unable to sit (or complete) my exam due to exceptional circumstances beyond my control?	Before, during and after sitting the exam	Candidate manual, Section 8, Attachment E	

What every candidate should know	Timeframe	Resources	Yes/in progress
Do I know what to do if I missed my exam date?	After the exam	Candidate manual, Section 10	
Do I know what to do if my exam was suspended or terminated?	After the exam	Candidate manual, Section 10	
When will I receive my results?	4-6 weeks after the exam period ends	Candidate manual, Section 10	
How can I give feedback to the Psychology Board of Australia about my exam experience?	After the exam	Candidate manual, Section 10	
Do I know what to do if I unfortunately failed the exam?	After the exam	<a href="#">Guidelines for the national psychology exam</a> (Section 6 and Attachment A)  Candidate manual, Section 10  Exam form <a href="#">SPPD-76</a>	
Do I know how to request an exam review if there was an administrative breach, or unfairness, deficiency, or an error in the exam process?	Within four weeks after the exam	Candidate manual, Section 10	
Do I know how I plan to celebrate when I pass the exam?	After receiving exam result	NA. This one is up to you!	



## 14. Definitions

**Ahpra** means the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency established under section 23 of the National Law.

**Board** refers to the Psychology Board of Australia established under section 31 of the National Law. The Board delegates some decision-making powers to committees, state and territory or regional boards, or AHPRA.

**Candidate** means any person approved by the Board as eligible to sit the national psychology exam.

**Competency/competencies:** Clusters of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, values, and other attributes that enable a person to act effectively and to a defined standard in a professional practice situation associated with a professional role.

**Competencies for general registration:** Core competencies that underpin the delivery of safe and effective psychological practice to client/s in Australia.

**Exam** means the national psychology exam.

**Exam supervisor** means the staff person who oversees the delivery of the exam at a test centre. Sometimes also called exam invigilator, proctor or exam adjudicator.

**Guidelines:** the [Guidelines for the national psychology exam](#) as published on the Board's website.

**Knowledge:** Facts, information, and culturally informed knowledges, which are acquired through education and experience, which form the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject.

**National Law** refers to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

**National psychology exam (the exam):** The exam helps to protect the public by ensuring that only those practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise psychology in a competent and ethical manner are registered. The exam also helps to ensure a consistent professional standard of psychologists nationally. The exam is one regulatory tool that the Board may use to ensure that all applicants for general registration have obtained a minimum level of applied professional knowledge of psychology.

**Ahpra exams team** refers to Ahpra staff responsible for the operational day-to-day running of the exam, as agreed between the Board and Ahpra in the Health Professions Agreement.

**Practice** means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a registered psychologist in the profession. Practice in this context is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

**Provisional psychologist** means a person registered as a provisional psychologist under section 62 of the National Law to enable that individual to complete a mandatory period of supervised practice to become eligible for general registration as a psychologist.

**Psychological practice:** Any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a registered psychologist in the profession. Psychological practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes using professional knowledge in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on the safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

**Psychologist:** A health practitioner who is competent to carry out assessment and intervention related to psychological and behavioural variables, to improve the wellbeing or performance of individuals, groups, communities, organisations, systems, or society. In Australia, a psychologist is a person who holds general registration as a psychologist under section 52 of the National Law.

**Registered psychologist** in this document includes a psychologist or a provisional psychologist.

**Scaled passing score** means passing the national psychology exam at a score of 70 per cent or higher. Raw scores (the total number of answers that were correct) are arithmetically converted to a scale that ranges from 0 to 100 and takes into consideration differences in difficulty among different versions of the exam. Adjusting scores will ensure that the passing score will remain the same, even if different versions of the exam vary in difficulty. This ensures that candidates will not be penalised if an exam is harder or given an unfair advantage if an exam is easier.

**Supervisee:** A person who receives professional advice, support and guidance from a supervisor to develop greater knowledge, improved skills, and a deeper understanding of accountability.

**Supervision:** A special type of professional relationship in which supportive direction, facilitative activities, and instructive critique is given by the supervisor to help the supervisee to ensure effective and safe care is delivered to clients, to achieve their professional goals, to improve the quality of their work and to develop themselves, their practice, and the wider profession. Supervision should ensure that a supervisee practises within accepted professional standards, provides evidence-based assessments and interventions, engages in professional reflexivity, and does not practise beyond their competence. Supervision is an interactive process between the supervisor and supervisee and provides a professionally stimulating and supportive opportunity for growth.

**Supervisor:** A skilled, experienced, and qualified psychologist or other professional who helps supervisees in the development of their skills, knowledge, and professional values. A supervisor provides a space for teaching, collaborative goal-setting and corrective feedback on a supervisee's performance.

**Board-approved supervisor:** a person who holds general registration as a psychologist and who has been approved by the Board to supervise provisional psychologists or psychologists.

**Threshold professional competency:** The term 'threshold professional competency' is a benchmark that describes the minimum professional knowledge, skills, and other attributes necessary to practise as a registered psychologist in Australia. This is based on the premise that competency can be described on a continuum. The threshold represents the point on the continuum at which the minimum acceptable level of competence is reached to practise safely and effectively as a psychologist.

**Tribunal:** the Board or a panel can refer a notification matter to a tribunal for hearing. This happens in the most serious allegations such as when a practitioner's behaviour constitutes professional misconduct, and when the Board believes suspension or cancellation of the practitioner's registration may be warranted. There are different tribunals operating in each state and territory. Tribunal decisions are independent and public.