

2nd October, 2015

**Submission regarding consultation on ending the higher degree exemption
from sitting the National Psychology Examination**

As a current postgraduate student in the clinical psychology teaching programme at James Cook University, I would like to join with my fellow students in indicating our support for the continued higher degree exemption from sitting the national psychology exam – Option one (Status Quo). Within the submission, the issue of accreditation is raised arguing that it is constrained in its ability to regulate and oversee at the individual level. However, this overlooks the breadth of assessment, and number of academic professionals that mark the individual at the postgraduate level. Individuals are not assessed by a sole academic professional throughout the Masters and Doctoral programmes; we are assessed by multiple academic and clinical professionals who are specialists in their area. This provides multiple checks of our competence across the postgraduate curriculum, reinforced by the minimum 200 hours of supervision across placements. Feedback from assessments further refines skills, which are applied throughout clinical placements. Thus competence at the postgraduate level is broader given the requirements of the accredited course. It is no longer purely examinable skills, we have repeatedly had to prove competence at the theoretical, ethical, and clinical level. We also must attain minimum clinical practice standards, as assessed by a range of accredited Clinical Psychologists. This extensive process alone should preclude us from having to sit an exam that is "not designed to be tricky or onerous to prepare for".

The introduction of the national examination will also place a disparate strain on students studying from regional and remote areas. Many students studying at James Cook University are located in North and Far North Queensland, and already pay considerable money to travel for attendance of lectures/workshops and placements. Higher degree pathway students are also already paying significant student fees. The loss of income for many students studying fulltime often places significant financial strain on individuals and their families. Clinical placements also often necessitate the ceasing of paid employment to complete unpaid placements, spanning months and for some, necessitating moving to a new city, incurring further cost. Many of us struggle with the costs of completing our degrees already, let alone

be required to pay for flights, accommodation, and exam fees for an exam that is unnecessary for us given the length of time and extraordinary effort we have already put into gaining accreditation.

If Option Two is decided, the deadline of Option (c) [enrol in any higher degree program after 1 July 2016] is supported given it presents the most equitable solution for students.

Regards,

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