

Public consultation: Draft competencies for general registration

The Psychology Board of Australia is inviting comments on the *Draft professional competencies for psychologists*. The specific questions the Board is seeking feedback on are listed below. All questions are optional and you are welcome to respond to as many as are relevant or that you have a view on.

Please submit your feedback on this submission template by email to: psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au by close of business **Tuesday 11 April 2023**.

Preferred option
<p>1. Are you in support of updating the professional competencies for general registration? Please provide a rationale for your view.</p>
<p>Your answer: Yes It is important to review and update the ccompetencies in line with developments in legislation, research, environmental and cultural changes</p>
Structure of the updated competencies
<p>2. Do you agree with approach to create a single document that lists all the professional competencies in one place?</p>
<p>Your answer: Yes Streamlines and makes easier to interpret and reference</p>
<p>3. The term 'threshold professional competency' has been introduced to describe the minimum professional competency necessary to practise safely and effectively as a registered psychologist in Australia. Do the Draft professional competencies sufficiently describe the threshold level of professional competency required to safely practise as a psychologist in a range of contexts and situations?</p>
<p>Your answer: Yes</p>
<p>4. We have improved our approach to drafting the competencies to better align with international psychology regulators, to emphasise that the competencies are interconnected (holistic approach) and to improve how we write the competencies (e.g. using action verbs). Do you agree with the updated drafting approach?</p>
<p>Your answer: Yes</p>

5. The Draft professional competencies for psychologists have been written at a high level. This aims to provide both sufficient information for clarity and direction, but also be flexible enough to be relevant to the diverse contexts where psychologists train and work. Did we get the balance right? Please provide a rationale for your view.

Your answer: Yes

Provides examples of competency in different environments

6. The Draft professional competencies for psychologists include a preamble (p. 3-10) and definition section (p. 16-19). Do you support this addition? Is the content clear, relevant and complete?

Your answer: Yes

Content is clear and relevant and is important in understanding the context in which the competencies occur

7. Is the language and structure of the Draft professional competencies for psychologists helpful, clear, relevant and workable? Are there any potential unintended consequences of the current wording?

Your answer: Yes, clear

Organisation of the updated competencies

8. The Draft professional competencies for psychologists propose to reorganise the eight core competencies.

Are you in support of combining the current *Knowledge of the discipline* (Competency 1), and *Research and evaluation* (Competency 5) into a new competency: *Applies scientific knowledge of psychology to inform safe and effective practice* (updated Competency 1)?

Your answer: Yes

This is more succinct and complete

9. The Draft professional competencies for psychologists propose to place an intentional focus on professional reflexivity, deliberate practice and self-care (updated Competency 3). Do you support this proposal? Please explain why.

Your answer: Yes

Emphasises the importance of the psychologist attending to these practices in order to provide ethical and effective service

10. The Draft professional competencies for psychologists include amended and expanded core competencies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and cultural safety (updated Competency 7).

Is there any content that needs to be clarified, added, amended or removed? Please provide details.

Your answer: no

11. The Draft professional competencies for psychologists include an expanded core competency on working with people from diverse groups, including demonstrating cultural responsiveness (updated Competency 8).

Is there any content that needs to be clarified, added, amended or removed? Please provide details.

Your answer: no

Competencies and their descriptors

12. The Draft professional competencies for psychologists outline eight updated core competencies:

Competency 1: Applies scientific knowledge of psychology to inform safe and effective practice

Competency 2: Practices ethically and professionally

Competency 3: Exercises professional self-reflection and deliberate practice

Competency 4: Conducts psychological assessments

Competency 5: Conducts psychological interventions

Competency 6: Communicates and relates to others effectively and appropriately

Competency 7: Demonstrates a health equity and human rights approach when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities

Competency 8: Demonstrates a health equity and human rights approach when working with people from diverse groups.

Do you suggest any changes to the eight core competencies and their descriptors? What would you like to see changed?

Your answer: good as they are

Outcome of implementing the updated competencies

13. We propose that an advanced copy of the professional competencies for psychologists would be published when approved, but not take effect until a later date. The estimated date of effect will be 1 December 2024. This coincides with the annual renewal date for general registration to make it easier for psychologists to plan their CPD and and for stakeholders to prepare to meet the updated competencies.

Are you in support of this transition and implementation plan?

Your answer: Yes

14. We have recommended changes to the *Provisional and General Registration standards* and the *Guidelines for the 4+2 internship program* to remove reference to the current core competencies for general registration and replace with the updated competencies (see Attachments F, G, and H). Are you in support of these changes?

Your answer: yes

15. The Board proposes a transition process and timeframe for updating board documents with the new competencies including the:

- *Guidelines for the 5+1 internship program* (separate consultation in 2023)
- *Guidelines for the National Psychology Exam, and National psychology exam curriculum* (separate consultation in 2023/2024).

Are there any comments you have on the proposed consultation plan and transition timeframes?

Your answer: yes seem appropriate

16. Are there specific impacts for practitioners, higher degree providers, employers, clients/consumers, governments or other stakeholders that we should be aware of, if the Draft professional competencies for psychologists were to be adopted? Please consider both positive impacts and any potential negative or unintended effects in your answer.

Your answer: overall positive impact

17. Would the proposed changes to the Draft professional competencies for psychologists result in any potential negative or unintended effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples or other priority groups in the community? If so, please describe them.

Your answer: Potential that psychologists without access to appropriate training and upskilling may not meet competency resulting in smaller pool of available psychologists.

18. Would the proposed changes to the Draft professional competencies for psychologists result in any adverse cost implications for practitioners, patients/clients/consumers or other stakeholders? If yes, please describe.

Your answer:

May be increased costs related to training and upskilling of psychologists that may be passed onto consumers

Other

19. Do you have any other feedback or comments about the Draft professional competencies for psychologists?

Your answer: