



APAC Board Communique

September 2017

APAC ACCREDITATION STANDARDS APPROVED

APAC is pleased to advise that our Accreditation Standards for Psychology Programs have now been approved by the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA), to come into effect from 1 January 2019.

The approved standards, available on the Standards Review page, include the **Standards** themselves, comprising five Domains, and the **Graduate Competencies**, which link in particular to Domain 3: Program of Study.

The standards set out the minimum requirements to be met in order to deliver psychology programs suitable for safe practice of the profession. In recent years a number of other health and care sector accreditation standards have been approved, both in Australia and overseas, that have **public safety** at their core, and this aligns with the National Law's objective of protecting the public. The first domain in our new standards relates to this objective. All five domains are consistent with standards recently released by a number of the other accreditation councils in the AHPRA scheme.

The revision of the Standards has also been informed by the content of applicable international and national standards, and the revised standards reference applicable registration regulations used by the PsyBA for the purposes of registration of practitioners.

Supporting the application of the standards will be an **Evidence Guide**, currently being finalised, and a set of **Accreditation Rules**, including rules relating to transition from the existing standards. These will be published in due course.

Innovations

The new standards will for the first time cover **Professional Competencies for Specialised Areas of Practice**.

We have updated requirements to reflect **contemporary expectations relating to teaching and learning**, including allowing for flexible modes of delivery, and the inclusion of specific emphases on culturally responsive practice and inter-professional learning.

In keeping with **contemporary accreditation practice**, our focus in assessing standards will move from an inputs-based approach to primarily an **outcomes-based approach**.



Implementation

Implementation will start from 1 January 2019, and the new standards will be applied to cycle accreditations in that year. In general, the move to the new standards will take place for each cohort of cycle accreditations annually thereafter.

As a priority, we will be making will be making early contact with 2019 cycle providers, and will work closely with them in the lead- up to the first cycle, to ensure they are fully across the changes.

The content of the standards in relation to curricula is not radically different from current standards, but because of the new outcomes-focus, evidentiary requirements will differ. Further details of this will be made available in the Evidence Guide.

In assessing standards with primarily an outcomes focus assessors will be less concerned with input measures than is required under the current standards. The new standards reference PsyBA registration requirements in an appendix, and these are included as well in the Evidence Guide, along with a number of other inputs, such as student-staff ratios. The inputs mandated by registration standards will be viewed as minimum requirements associated with that aspect of the domain; other input measures, such as student-staff ratios, will be included in the Evidence Guide as an indicator of best practice, but the provider will be able to argue a case for variance from the indicator.

Reaching this point has entailed a long process. We thank all stakeholders for their forbearance and their invaluable contributions in the public consultation phase in particular. We also acknowledge the PsyBA for their guidance, and the fruitful negotiations that we undertook towards the end of the process.

We thank all who have contributed with submissions and other input, and we acknowledge in particular the leadership of Professor Nancy Pachana, who led the APAC Standards Working Group and contributed countless hours to the project.

Professor Simon Crowe, HonFAPS,

Chair, APAC