



## SUBMISSIONS ON ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REVIEW DRAFT NOW PUBLISHED

APAC thanks all those who made submissions on the Consultation Draft of the proposed Accreditation Standards for Psychology Programs. Most of the submissions, are now published on our website [www.psychologycouncil.org.au/submissions\\_introduction](http://www.psychologycouncil.org.au/submissions_introduction).

In all we received 120 submissions, including some from overseas. Most of the submissions were from higher education providers, or from individual academics, but there were also many individual private practitioners who provided input. We valued especially the input received from students.

Approximately half of the submissions concern competencies for the Counselling Psychology Area of practice. The remainder cover a wide range of matters, with a small number of key concerns reappearing in many submissions.

At our recent Board Meeting, APAC Directors discussed the submissions and the matters raised by stakeholders. A summary of responses to the consultation questions is at [www.psychologycouncil.org.au/\\_responses\\_summary](http://www.psychologycouncil.org.au/_responses_summary)

Directors were pleased to note that, overall, the response was positive in regard to the new format and the new approach we have taken to the Standards. Stakeholders welcomed a more outcomes-focused approach with increased flexibility in relation to inputs, and in design and delivery aspects of programs. However, many expressed concern that the less restrictive approach to inputs may have unintended negative consequences. In formulating amendments to the Draft we are endeavouring to allay the concerns expressed while transitioning to a new model which we believe is more in keeping with current best practice.

The key concerns identified by many stakeholders are currently under consideration by the APAC Standards Working Group and the Board, and some sections of the proposed Standards will be redrafted to address the problems articulated.

As well as these key issues, which were common themes in the larger submissions, many very helpful suggestions were made as to minor changes to wording or content which would improve understanding or more accurately reflect good practice in particular situations. Many of these suggestions will be incorporated in the amended draft of the standards.

In some cases, clarification will be provided as to why the concerns are not able to be addressed. In this latter group the issues tend to relate to aspects of psychology education which are not the remit of APAC; the standards are intended to apply to the content of courses which are accredited for the purposes of registration as a health professional under the National Law. APAC recognises that many students are not on pathways to professional registration, and that all higher education psychology programs should achieve recognised standards of content and delivery but the Accreditation Standards for Psychology Programs are developed and administered by APAC under an agreement with the Psychology Board of Australia, for the purposes of accreditation under the National Law which governs the registration of health professionals. Thus, while acknowledging the crucial importance of these aspects of the programs of the study of psychology across the country, they are not specifically addressed in the Standards as they are under the control of the higher education providers.

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