

The APS position on education and training standards for the psychology profession

- The APS advocates for the introduction of a minimum requirement for registration of a Masters degree to align Australian standards with international standards. This will involve the phasing out of the 4+2 pathway coupled with other measures to ensure the provision of sufficient university postgraduate professional training places and the sustainability of the psychology workforce.
- The APS works to influence, but is not responsible for, registration standards in Australia and has led sustained efforts for over a decade to raise the minimum qualification for registration as a psychologist to a Masters degree.
- In 2000, the APS raised the minimum qualification for full membership of the APS to a Masters degree.
- The Psychology Board of Australia (PBA), and prior to it the State and Territory Psychology Registration Boards, have indicated their support for a single postgraduate pathway (a six-year university degree) to registration but this has been inhibited by: resistance from State Health Departments due to workforce requirements (the workforce demands for psychologists exceed supply); poor government funding for universities providing training places in postgraduate psychology degrees; and the application of the Trade Practices Act to the professions in 1991.
- A joint goal agreed between the APS and the PBA is to work towards a minimum education and training standard for psychologists in Australia of six years of university training. This will require significant increases in government funding for university postgraduate professional training for psychologists to ensure a viable workforce of psychologists.
- The APS has successfully lobbied for initiatives to increase the number of trainee psychologists selecting the postgraduate pathway to registration, including increased postgraduate scholarships and funded postgraduate placement schemes, and continues advocacy for increased funding for university psychology courses.
- In 2009 the APS developed a new 5th year postgraduate diploma in professional practice, and successfully advocated for a change to registration standards across all States and Territories to introduce a new '5+1' pathway as a transitional alternative for the 4+2 pathway towards the ultimate goal of a minimum requirement of a professional Masters degree for registration. This new interim pathway incorporates a five-year sequence of university psychology training followed by a one-year accredited workplace internship under probationary conditions. The fifth year postgraduate diploma is totally focussed on professional

practice through both theoretical and practicum components. The interim step will enable a transitional period to increase postgraduate entry places in professional psychology programs and aims to provide an equivalent number of places as those currently needed for training through the 4+2 pathway.

Skills and competencies of registered practitioners

- The APS respects the decisions of State/Territory Registration Boards that are mandated to ensure all registered psychologists (generalists and specialists) are competent to practice psychology. Recently, the Registration Boards have instituted supervisor accreditation processes to ensure that the professional training in the two-year internship of the 4+2 pathway meets a required set of core competencies. The new standards for the internship component of the '4+2' pathway proposed by the Psychology Board of Australia (PBA) provide even more rigorous criteria for this training.
- Workplace internship training ('4+2' pathway) that is approved by State/Territory Registration Boards equips psychologists with general psychological knowledge and skills. Due to the highly variable nature of this training, the APS supports the introduction of accreditation for the workplace internship and an examination for entry into the profession via this pathway to increase quality control.
- APAC-accredited postgraduate professional training provides psychologists with formal education and training in specialist psychological knowledge and skills. This specialist training should be recognised through a specialist registration mechanism to enable the public to identify suitably qualified psychologists.
- Although there is some overlap between the training for the nine specialisations within psychology, there are also significant differences.