

October 11, 2011

Dear Registrants:

**RE: Entry Level Education Qualification for Registration**

The Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology announced, at the March 2006 AGM, its intention to move towards the doctoral level as the entry level educational qualification for registration to practice psychology in Nova Scotia. A committee was struck in 2007 to examine such a change but that committee was subsequently disbanded when it was perceived as not sufficiently representative of the psychology profession in Nova Scotia.

In April 2009 the Board invited applications from all registrants interested in serving on a new Entry Level Committee. The Board also invited registrants to submit letter or written briefs expressing their opinion to the committee. After reviewing the applications, NSBEP appointed eight psychologists to the committee. The Entry Level Committee was asked to explore the merits of moving to the doctoral level for entry to practice psychology in Nova Scotia. The committee was also charged with identifying barriers to such a change and any unintended consequences that may result from such a change.

The Board identified several reasons for considering a change: (1) the doctoral degree is the standard for licensure in the vast majority of jurisdictions in North America; (2) in the Maritimes, both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island announced plans to move to the doctoral level, leaving Nova Scotia as the only Maritime province registering psychologists at the master's level; and (3) one implication of the Agreement on Internal Trade is that mobility is now based on the least onerous entry to practice standard. Nova Scotia may become a "source" site of registered psychologists who can move to another province and become registered where they otherwise would be considered ineligible.

The Entry Level Committee began meeting in September 2009. The committee reviewed written submission from registrants, collected information from other jurisdictions in Canada and the U.S., reviewed literature on licensure, examined information on complaints, and surveyed employers regarding number of positions, vacancies, and education level. The committee also invited registrants to attend meetings held in Wolfville, Yarmouth, Halifax and Truro.

The Entry Level Committee submitted its report to the Board in March 2011. The report identified three broad options, as well as the pros and cons associated with each (The report is posted on the NSBEP website). The first option was to maintain the status quo, with the Board continuing to register psychologists at both the master's and doctoral level. The second option was to move to a two tier registration, with the Board registering psychologists at the doctoral level and psychological associates at the master's level. The third option was to move to a doctoral level only registration.

The Board met on September 15, 2011 to consider the three broad options identified by the committee. The Board first considered the question of maintaining the status quo, or making a change to entry level requirements. After much deliberation, the Board voted unanimously in favour of making a change to entry level requirements. The second question considered by the Board was whether this change should be to a two tier registration, or to a doctoral level only registration. Again, after much deliberation, the Board voted unanimously to move toward adopting the doctoral degree for entry to practice psychology in Nova Scotia.

A change in entry level requirements will not happen quickly. For instance, it is expected that having new legislation written and approved by government will take many years. If new legislation is approved by government, there would be a delay of several years before new entry level requirements would be implemented, so as to allow trainees, at that time, to graduate and become registered. Consequently, it may be up to ten years before new entry level requirements come into effect, if in fact, they are approved by government.

As stated in the past, such a change to entry level requirement will have no effect on your registration status. Psychologists registered at the master's level will continue to be registered with NSBEP and will continue to use the title "psychologist". Current master's level Candidates will continue to complete the requirements for full registration. The change to entry level requirement will apply to new applicants only after new entry level requirements come into effect (which as stated above will be several years in the future).

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all those registrants who participated in the process by writing letters, submitting written briefs, or attending the meetings with the Entry Level Committee.

Sincerely,

Allan R. Wilson, Ph.D.  
Registrar