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October 23, 2025

Dear Registrants,

**Re: Update on DHW Response to NSBEP's Proposed Entry-to-Practice Change**

We are sharing the following communication received from the Department of Health and Wellness titled "Update to NSBEP Registrants from the Department of Health and Wellness on Request for Change to Entrance to Practice," regarding our proposal to change the entry-to-practice credentials for psychologists. Due to a standard government embargo for RHPA migration, the profession-specific regulations have not yet been shared with registrants, but the attached communication provides DHW's response.

The DHW has decided to maintain dual licensure pathways for master's and doctoral graduates. They concluded that the evidence does not support eliminating the master's pathway, citing potential negative impacts on workforce supply and access to care. Instead, DHW has directed NSBEP to pursue reforms to strengthen master's licensure, including educational standards, a proposed reduction in post-graduate supervision from four years to two years with 96 hours of accountable supervision, and an expanded practice framework. For information on the proposed definition of accountable supervision, please refer to NSBEP's Entry-to-Practice Submission.

To provide additional context for registrants, NSBEP notes the following on points raised in the DHW communication:

- Regarding national and jurisdictional considerations, a doctoral degree is required for licensure as a psychologist in British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Quebec, whereas other provinces register entry-level master's graduates as psychological associates (e.g., in Manitoba, Ontario, and Prince Edward Island) or, in some cases, as full psychologists (e.g., in Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan).
- On emerging doctoral programs, the new PsyD at Mount Saint Vincent University is a proposed specialized program in school and child clinical psychology, focused on children and youth, which contributes to addressing needs in child and youth mental health.

The Board is taking time to review this proposal and determine next steps. The suggested change would reduce the current four-year supervision period for master's-level candidates to a two-year, 96-hour model of supervised practice. Because our current policy and existing candidate contracts are based on a four-year structure, we will need to plan any transition carefully to avoid disrupting candidates who are already in progress. As the regulatory framework does not specify a required timeframe, and pending a full review of legal and practical considerations, the Board expects to maintain the four-year policy during this transition period to ensure continuity and stability. Further updates will be provided as decisions are made. Please contact the NSBEP office with any questions.

Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Conor Barker, Ph.D., R.Psych.  
Chair, Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology

## **Update to NSBEP Registrants from the Department of Health and Wellness on Request for Change to Entrance to Practice**

The Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) would like to provide an update to NSBEP registrants on the status NSBEP's 2024 request to DHW to approve a change in the entry to practice education requirement to be a psychologist in Nova Scotia to doctoral level of education only, thereby eliminating the master's graduate entry pathway.

To support its analysis DHW performed extensive consultation with NSBEP the Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment (OHPR), the Office of Addictions and Mental Health (OAMH), the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), the Department of Advanced Education (DAE), and both health authorities.

DHW communicated to NSBEP in August 2025 that the analysis concluded that the evidence provided was not sufficient to support the proposed change and that, if this proposal were to move forward, workforce and access to care in Nova Scotia would be negatively impacted.

The following are the factors that contributed to DHW's decision.

- **Workforce Supply and Access to Care:** Eliminating this pathway would result in negative consequences for access to care, especially in schools and rural or under-serviced communities
- **Lack of Evidence of Harm or Inferior Outcome:** No evidence was provided demonstrating that education level correlates with poorer outcomes.
- **Inconsistency of the Proposal with Broader Health Workforce Model:** DHW acknowledges that a broader scope is held by doctoral graduates at entry-to- practice but contend that multi-profession team-based care models rely on tiered scopes of practice and that referrals across providers with differing qualifications are a standard function of such systems.
- **National and Jurisdictional Considerations:** All Canadian jurisdictions except New Brunswick and Quebec continue to license master's-level psychology graduates.
- **Emerging Doctoral Programs:** The new PsyD program at MSVU will expand doctoral education capacity which will help address long-standing concerns regarding the availability of doctoral-trained practitioners.

DHW has determined that the issue at hand is not the existence of a master's pathway to licensure, but rather specific gaps in the current model used to regulate master's graduates. These include the absence of clearly defined education standards and program oversight, limited structures for post-graduate supervision, and the need for a more formal framework to support expanded practice following residency.

To establish a more robust regulatory framework for master's level practice that addresses issues raised by NSBEP and system partners, DHW is directing NSBEP to pursue targeted regulatory reforms to strengthen and align the master's licensure pathway with modern expectations in health profession regulation which include:

- Establish minimum academic and clinical standards for master's programs in Nova Scotia.
- Explore opportunities for development of a national competency profile with their counterparts in other jurisdictions for further standardization.
- Shorten the period of post-graduate supervision for master's-trained psychologists, exploring moving from four years to two and requiring 96 hours of accountable supervision to align more closely with national standards.
- Establishing a framework that supports master's level psychologists' engagement in aspects of practice, that are not considered to be an entry-to-practice competency, through an advanced/expanded practice framework.

DHW will be working with NSBEP to determine a pathway forward on the directed reforms, including exploration of opportunities to collaborate. DHW has requested NSBEP provide an initial response to this direction by December 1, 2025, with an initial progress update on the required reforms due April 1, 2026.

DHW would like to thank the Board of the NSBEP and the Entry Level Committee for the significant dialogue over the last year.