



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh
Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Psychologists Registration Board

Draft Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists

(For entry to the Psychologists Register)

Version Public Consultation, October 2026

Bord Clárchúcháin na Síceolaithe

Psychologists Registration Board

About this Document

CORU is Ireland's multi-profession health and social care regulator. The role of CORU is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

This document sets out the Psychologists Registration Board's *Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists (for entry to the Psychologists Register)*.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Psychologists (for entry to the Psychologists Register)

Freedom of Information and Data Protection

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council is subject to the Freedom of Information and its records are subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2004.

Any personal data received by CORU will be used for the purpose of programme approval and monitoring and shared with those involved in these processes.

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Introduction

The *Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)* provides for the establishment of Registration Boards, each responsible for establishing and maintaining a register for its profession. Being entered onto a register allows a person to use the professional title protected for that profession.

Statutory registration plays an essential role in supporting high-quality, safe, and accountable health and social care services in Ireland. Its purpose is to protect, support, and inform the public by ensuring that registered professionals are appropriately qualified and regulated, whether they work in the public sector, the private sector, or are self-employed.

Each Registration Board is required to set the minimum standard that a person must meet to join its register (or a division of a register). These requirements are known as the *Standards of Proficiency*, and they describe the threshold level of knowledge and skills needed for safe and effective practice.

What are standards of proficiency?

The Standards of Proficiency set by a Registration Board outline the minimum level of knowledge and skills an applicant must demonstrate to ensure public protection and to be eligible for entry to the register.

Under the *Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)*, anyone applying for entry to a register - whether they are a recent Irish graduate or trained in another country - must hold a qualification approved by the relevant Registration Board.

For the purposes of registration, an approved qualification is one that shows the applicant has met the *Standards of Proficiency* required for that profession. This means every qualification must be assessed against these *Standards*.

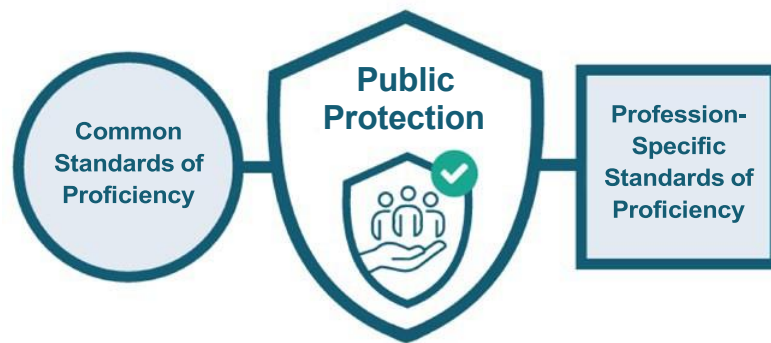
- **For graduates of approved education and training programmes in Ireland**, the Registration Board has already assessed the programme to ensure it meets all the *Standards of Proficiency*.
- **For applicants with internationally awarded qualifications**, they must also demonstrate achievement of all the *Standards* before joining the register. This may be shown through a combination of their qualification, post qualification practice, and continuing professional development.

The *Standards of Proficiency* are the foundation of the Registration Board's regulatory system. They apply to every applicant, whether they trained in Ireland or in another country. The *Standards* ensure that all applicants have reached the minimum level of knowledge and skill needed to practise safely. By requiring this, the Registration Board fulfils its statutory purpose, protecting the public.

Each register, or division of a register, for every profession regulated by CORU must have its own set of *Standards of Proficiency*.

The *Standards* are made up in two parts:

- *Framework Standards*, which are set by the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and apply to all CORU-regulated professions; and
- *Profession-Specific Standards* which each Registration Board develops to set out the specific knowledge and skills of the profession.



Entry to a register requires that an applicant has demonstrated achievement of all the Standards of Proficiency, both the Framework and the Profession-Specific Standards.

The Framework *Standards of Proficiency* are set out under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Responsibility
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

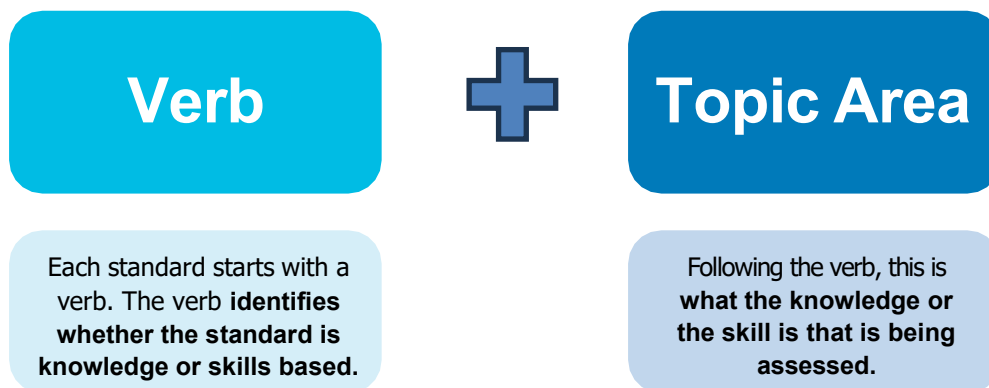
Each Registration Board adopts the *Framework Standards* and includes its *Profession-Specific Standards* under Domain 5.

How are the Standards of Proficiency articulated?

In this most recent update to its Framework *Standards of Proficiency*, the Health and Social Care Professionals Council has adopted a **principles-based approach**. This reflects developments in regulatory practice as well as teaching and learning approaches in higher education in Ireland and internationally.

A principles based approach focuses on what a person **must know** or **be able to do** at the point of entry to the register, rather than how they should achieve it. In other words, the *Standards* describe the required outcomes - the knowledge and skills a new registrant must demonstrate.

Because of this focus on outcomes, principles-based standards are written to be clear, measurable, and easy to interpret. Each standard is structured around two main components:



Most standards will also include a third component that forms part of their overall structure:



Applying this understanding of verb, topic area and purpose

Standard 1G that requires entrants to the register to be able to: *apply equality and diversity theory and legislation in order to provide inclusive service-user care.*

- **Verb:** *Apply* – this is a skills-based standard that will require assessment through active engagement in practice of the profession
- **Topic Area:** *equality and diversity theory and legislation*
- **Purpose:** *in order to provide inclusive service-user care* – this provides direction on how equality and diversity theory and legislation should be applied, and sets the context for assessing that application.

More information on principles-based *Standards of Proficiency* and their application is available as part of the *Regulatory Essentials* suite of resources available on the CORU website here: <https://coru.ie/health-and-social-care-professionals/guidance/>

Domain 1

Professional Autonomy and Responsibility

Entrants to the Psychologists Register are able to:

- 1A:** Act within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession.
- 1B:** Maintain personal and professional boundaries.
- 1C:** Integrate current evidence with service user ¹ preferences and values, to inform their professional judgement and decision-making.
- 1D:** Take responsibility for their independent decisions and actions.
- 1E:** Demonstrate awareness of services users' autonomy and legal capacity and the role of advocacy in supporting service users.
- 1F:** Identify and evaluate evidence to plan and deliver interventions.
- 1G:** Apply equality and diversity theory and legislation in order to provide inclusive service-user care.
- 1H:** Demonstrate awareness of tools which support their self-care and of the importance of wellbeing, mental health and resilience for their practice.
- 1I:** Demonstrate awareness of their obligations as a registered professional including those contained in the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.
- 1J:** Recognise their child protection responsibilities and demonstrate awareness of child protection legislation, policy and procedures.
- 1K:** Recognise their adult safeguarding responsibilities and demonstrate awareness of how to respond appropriately where there is a risk of harm to adult service users.

¹ **Please Note:** *Service User* is the term used to describe a person, persons or group who request(s), uses and is affected by the services of a registered psychologist.

Domain 2

Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

Entrants to the Psychologists Register are able to:

- 2A:** Use effective communications skills in their interactions with service users and others in order to build professional relationships.
- 2B:** Use a variety of approaches and technologies in a range of health and social care settings in order to communicate effectively with service users and colleagues ensuring confidentiality, privacy and data protection.
- 2C:** Provide person-centred care with respect for the service user's human rights and dignity.
- 2D:** Work collaboratively with service users to facilitate their active participation in shared decision making, including decisions in respect of how their information is managed.
- 2E:** Demonstrate respect, rigour, and accuracy in the gathering, recording and sharing of essential information for effective health and social care.
- 2F:** Work collaboratively with colleagues to provide safe and effective care.
- 2G:** Pay due regard to the information needs of their service users in order to communicate information to them in a way which is clear, timely, complete and accurate.
- 2H:** Work collaboratively with, and learn from, other professionals, in order to support multidisciplinary working to provide integrated care.

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Domain 3

Safety and Quality

Entrants to the Psychologists Register are able to:

- 3A:** Provide safe, ethical, and evidence informed care in response to the needs, will and preference of service users.
- 3B:** Assess their practice against appropriate standards to improve their practice quality.
- 3C:** Apply principles of quality improvement to practice in order to improve the quality of service user care and outcomes.
- 3D:** Apply principles of risk management to service delivery in order to improve the safety of service user care and outcomes.
- 3E:** Maintain clear and accurate records.
- 3F:** Recognise the contribution that sharing knowledge and skills and learning from practice, including mistakes, can make to safe and effective care.
- 3G:** Use digital technologies and social media deliberately with due cognisance of the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.
- 3H:** Utilise critical inquiry skills in order to engage in research-informed practice and practise-informed research.

Domain 4

Professional Development

Entrants to the Psychologists Register are able to:

- 4A:** Use the skills of review and reflection to support and enhance their practice.
- 4B:** Evaluate their learning needs in order to engage in continuing professional development.
- 4C:** Seek professional support, including supervision/mentoring, to support and enhance their practice.

Domain 5

Profession Specific Knowledge and Skills

Entrants to the Psychologists Register are able to:

- 5A:** Critically appraise the historical, philosophical, theoretical and methodological foundations of various scientific methods.
- 5B:** Critically appraise psychological concepts, constructs and theories.
- 5C:** Critically analyse the impact of contextual factors on psychological wellbeing.
- 5D:** Critically analyse the factors that influence professional relationships, including power dynamics between the practitioner and service user.
- 5E:** Apply ethical decision making processes.
- 5F:** Critically evaluate the different methods of assessment.
- 5G:** Plan assessments and select appropriate assessment methods, critically evaluating and integrating the service user's need.
- 5H:** Conduct assessments safely and ethically
- 5I:** Critically evaluate the theory and application of evidence-based psychological interventions.
- 5J:** Critically evaluate assessment data, within relevant conceptual frameworks, research and service user needs/strengths, in order to design intervention plans
- 5K:** Apply interventions safely and ethically
- 5L:** Monitor and evaluate intervention(s) and revise as appropriate
- 5M:** Demonstrate knowledge of the safe and ethical application of consultation models of service delivery
- 5N:** Critically reflect on the ongoing impact of one's own culture, values, experiences, beliefs and biases on their professional practice and use such reflection to inform practice

- 5O:** Integrate professional knowledge, skill, judgement and values into their practice in order to provide high-quality and safe service user-centred care.
- 5P:** Appraise relevant legislation, policies and systems which govern practice in order to perform any statutory duties and meet their duty of care.
- 5Q:** Act with due cognisance of the will and preference of each service user, within the limits of their own knowledge, skills, competence and experience in order to practise autonomously, safely and effectively.

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