



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

Psychologists Registration Board

Pre-Registration Education and Training Requirements, Psychologists Register Public Consultation, October/November 2026

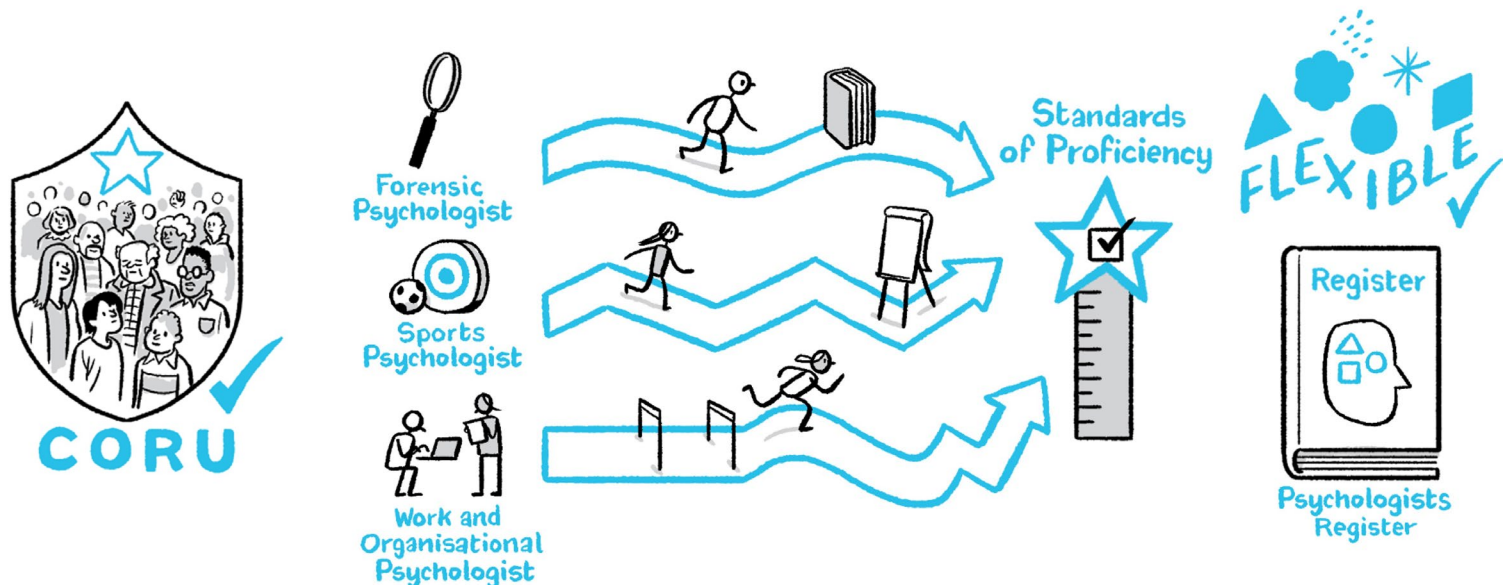


Table of Contents

Introduction	2
The Psychologists Registration Board	3
Identifying a Regulatory Model	3
Setting Threshold Regulatory Requirements for Entry to the Psychologists Register	5
Psychologists Registration Board's Consultation Process	6
Chapter 1: Standards and Criteria: The Basics	7
Stage One: Setting the Standards of Proficiency	7
What are the Standards of Proficiency used for?	8
Where do the Standards of Proficiency come from?	9
Stage Two: Setting the Criteria for Education and Training Programmes	10
What is the Criteria used for?	10
Where does the Criteria for Education and Training Programmes come from?	11
Relationship between the Standards and Criteria	12
Chapter 2: Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists	14
Regulatory Essentials	16
How did the Board prepare its draft Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists?	17
Drafting Principles	17
National and International Mapping	18
Chapter 3: Criteria for Education and Training Programmes	20
Criterion 1.1: Level and Class of Qualification	21
Criterion 2.5: Extent of Exposure to Practice Placement	22
Chapter 4: Have your say!	24

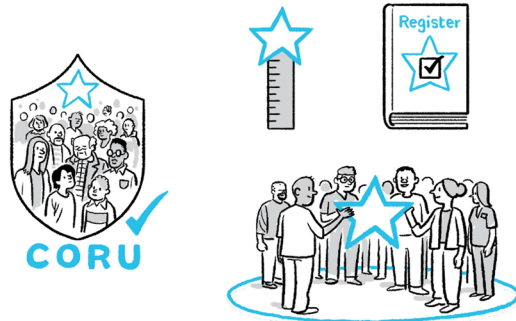
Introduction

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

CORU was established under the *Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)*, which sets out how regulation works and which professions fall under its remit. Under this legislation, CORU is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and 12 Registration Boards, each Board being responsible for one or multiple of the professions named in our Act. Together, they form the regulatory system that ensures professionals entering and practising within these professions are appropriately qualified, competent, and committed to high standards.

To learn more about CORU and its different regulatory functions, see our interactive *Regulatory Wheel* and click on the different segments to find out more information about each regulatory activity. The Regulatory Wheel is available as part of our Regulatory Essentials Resources on the CORU website:

[Regulatory Essentials - Coru](#)



Scan the QR code to access CORU's suite of Regulatory Essentials resources.



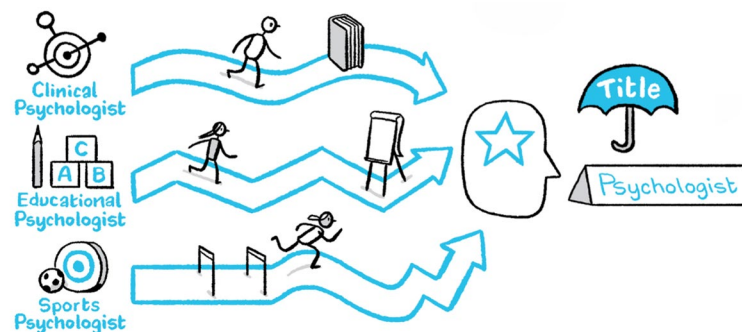
The Psychologists Registration Board

On 21 July 2017, the then Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD, confirmed the establishment of the Psychologists Registration Board. Under the requirements of the *Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)*, the Psychologists Registration Board is ultimately responsible for protecting the professional title 'psychologist' in Ireland, meaning that when statutory regulation is introduced only those practitioners who are registered – and have therefore demonstrated the threshold level of competence for safe practice – can legally use the title.



Identifying a Regulatory Model

Unlike other professions that CORU has introduced regulation for, psychologists do not have a single education and training pathway, aligned to a singular set of threshold standards, for entry into practice in Ireland. Entry into practice is through specific psychology specialisms – for example, as a clinical psychologist, an educational psychologist, a sports and exercise psychologist or a health psychologist. This multiplicity of entry points into practice of the profession and differing education and training pathways has introduced additional complexity to the process of establishing statutory regulation that will protect the professional title 'psychologist'.

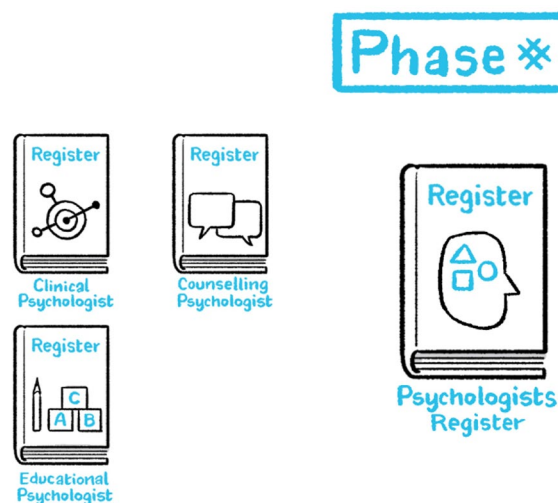


The Psychologists Registration Board has remained committed to establishing a regulatory model that will both facilitate the protection of the title ‘psychologist’ and allow for the continuation of education and training through different specialisms. To this end, the Board has developed a bespoke regulatory model that will be introduced in two phases.



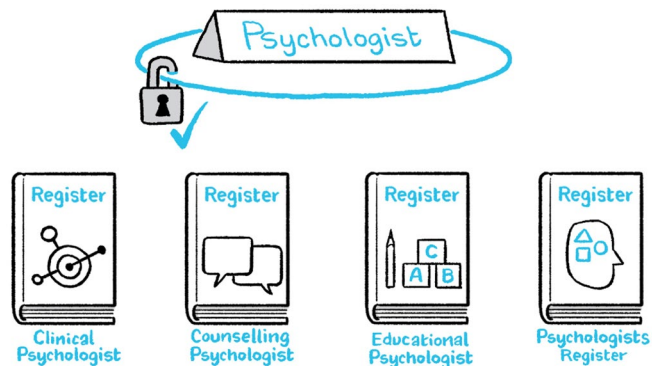
Having undertaken a detailed risk-based evaluation of all psychology specialisms, including consideration of the risk to the public, the complexity of the work involved and service users engaged with, as well as the readiness of education programmes to align to regulatory requirements, the Board identified that it was in a position to progress, as part of **Phase One**, the introduction of regulation for three specialisms: clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists and educational psychologists. During this phase of work, the Board will establish **three separate registers**: one for each of these three specialisms.

The Board has made significant progress towards the establishment of these registers having set and published its *Standards of Proficiency* and *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* for these three registers (available [here](#) on the CORU website), as well as having consulted on the Codes of Professional Conduct and Ethics and the CPD Guidance and Support for these specialisms. It is anticipated that the Board will be in a position to open these registers during 2027.



Phase Two of this work will see the establishment of a *fourth register*, what will be known as the **Psychologists Register**. This register will facilitate the establishment of regulation for all other psychology specialisms. This means that any practitioner – outside of clinical, counselling and educational psychologists – wishing to use the title ‘psychologist’ will be required to be registered on the Psychologists Register.

In total, the Psychologists Registration Board will be responsible for four separate registers and, while separate, they will work together to ensure that any individual practising in Ireland and using the protected professional title '*psychologist*' is subject to statutory regulation.



More information on the Board's regulatory model is available as part of the *Regulatory Essentials* video and factsheet resources on the Regulation of Psychologists in Ireland available [here](#) on the CORU website.

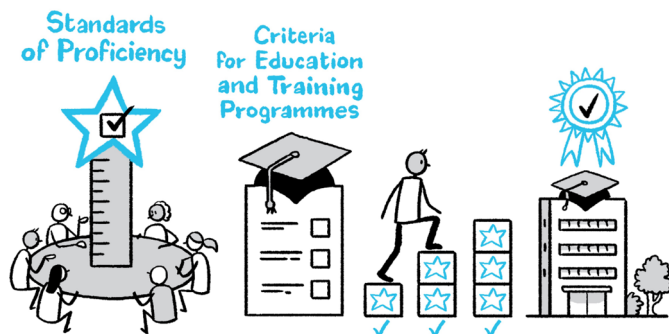
Setting Threshold Regulatory Requirements for Entry to the Psychologists Register

The first task any Registration Board must do when seeking to establish regulation for the first time is to set the **threshold knowledge and skills requirements** needed for entry to the register. These requirements are known as the *Standards of Proficiency*.

Please Note: The Standards of Proficiency **do not** apply to existing practitioners at the time when the register opens. There is a separate registration route, known as the Grandparenting Pathway, for existing practitioners. The *Standards of Proficiency* will apply only to new or recent graduates (at the time the register opens) and to applicants holding internationally awarded qualifications (who do not meet the requirements set out for existing practitioners).



Education providers design their education and training programmes to deliver on all the *Standards of Proficiency* and seek approval from the Registration Board to have the programme approved. This programme approval process requires that the education provider demonstrates how its programme meets the *Standards of Proficiency* **and** a second set of regulatory requirements, specific to education providers offering programmes in Ireland: the *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*. The *Criteria* sets out the programme management and quality assurance requirements that an education provider must have in place to provide assurance that its programme consistently delivers graduates who have achieved all the *Standards of Proficiency*.



Psychologists Registration Board's Consultation Process

The Psychologists Registration Board has prepared its ***draft Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists*** (for entry to the *Psychologists Register*) for public consultation, along with its ***draft Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*** (for entry to the *Psychologists Register*) and has commenced a public consultation process seeking feedback from all stakeholders on these draft documents.

This eBook resource aims to support stakeholders in engaging with this consultation process by providing an introduction to both documents and the process the Registration Board undertook in preparing them. This eBook should be read in conjunction with the guidance available as part of the *Regulatory Essentials* suite of resources, which includes videos and factsheets on a range of issues from explaining what statutory regulation is, the different types of regulatory standards and a number of resources on understanding Standards of Proficiency and how they are applied. These resources can be accessed here:

[Regulatory Essentials - Coru](#)



Chapter One

Standards and Criteria: The Basics



When establishing regulation, there are a number of different stages a Registration Board must work through in order to put in place the necessary regulatory and legal infrastructure to open a register. The ability to progress through these different stages is dependent on being able to complete one stage before moving on to the next.

Stage One: Setting the Standards of Proficiency

The first stage of this process is the ability of the Registration Board to articulate the threshold knowledge and skills needed for safe practice for entry to the register – i.e. *what* an individual needs to *know* and *be able to do* at the point of entry into practice. This means that the standards are set at the entry level of proficiency needed to enable a person to practise autonomously and safely and, in so doing, keep the public safe.



Key Point

It is important to remember that in setting the threshold knowledge and skills in its *Standards of Proficiency*, a Registration Board recognises that proficiency in practice exists on a continuum.

For every practitioner, their knowledge and skills evolve over time and will change through their experience, engagement in continuing professional development and additional post-qualifying training. The *Standards* articulate what is needed for entry onto the register, what a practitioner must be able to do on **day one** working as a regulated professional. Therefore, the *standards* reflect what is needed at this specific point on the continuum of proficiency. As such, the *Standards* will not fully reflect how an existing practitioner sees their practice.



Standards of Proficiency are comprised of two types of requirements:

- ➔ **Knowledge Based Requirements:** describe the elements of theoretical, conceptual or learned knowledge required for safe practice of the profession; and
- ➔ **Skills Based Requirements:** describe the application of knowledge and learning, oftentimes in the context of practice-based education.

The *Standards* form a foundational pillar in the regulatory and legal infrastructure a Registration Board puts in place when establishing regulation. The *Standards* work alongside the *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics* and *Continuing Professional Development* – both of which registrants must adhere to – to ensure the safe practice of practitioners and, through this, provides assurance of public protection. The development of the *Code* and guidance around *Continuing Professional Development* will be part of a subsequent stage of development, following the setting of the *Standards of Proficiency*.



What are the Standards of Proficiency used for?

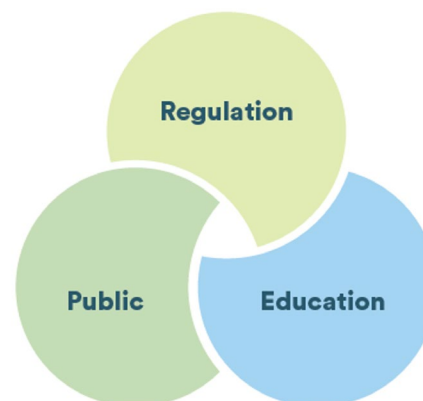
The *Standards* are used in three key ways:

- ➔ **Registration:** set the minimum level of knowledge and skills required for entry to the register. The *Standards* are used to assess new graduates (or recent graduates when a register opens) from Irish education and training programmes **and** applicants who hold an internationally awarded qualification.

The *Standards* are not used to assess registration applications through the Grandparenting pathway.

- ➔ **Education:** education providers that prepare students to practise the profession upon graduation – and seek approval for their programmes from the Registration Board – use the *Standards* to design their education and training programmes.

- ➔ **Public:** the public can use the *Standards* to understand the threshold level proficiency they can expect from a registered health and social care professional.



Where do the Standards of Proficiency come from?

As a multi-profession regulator, CORU currently has responsibility for the statutory regulation of 12 health and social care professions. While each of these professions each have their own distinct character, practice and identity, there are naturally areas of commonality across these different professions, including around the threshold proficiencies for safe practice.

Reflecting this, the Health and Social Care Professionals Council establishes what is known as the *Framework Standards of Proficiency*. These are shared proficiencies across each of the different health and social care professions and are articulated in the first four domains of the *Standards of Proficiency* document.

Council reviews its *Framework Standards* cyclically to ensure that they reflect developments in health and social care practice in Ireland, international regulatory trends, along with changes in education and curriculum delivery. Council's most recent review of its *Framework Standards* was completed in January 2025 and followed a detailed and substantial public consultation and stakeholder consultation process in 2023 and 2024.

Key Point

Domains One to Four in the *Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists* are Council *Framework Standards*. These standards are not the subject of the present stakeholder consultation process.



Each Registration Board adopts the *Framework Standards of Proficiency* and then is able to add profession-specific proficiencies in Domain Five of the document: *Profession Specific Knowledge and Skills*. These are the standards that the Psychologists Registration Board has drafted and are specific to the practice of the psychology profession across its varied and different specialisms.

More information on the process the Psychologists Registration Board undertook in preparing the draft *Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists* for public consultation is available in the next chapter of this eBook.

Stage Two: Setting the Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

Having prepared a draft set of *Standards of Proficiency*, a Board – on the basis of the knowledge and skills requirements set out in its draft *Standards* – moves to the second stage of its work: the setting of its *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*.

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes



The *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* identify the design and management requirements that an education provider must meet in order to ensure that its programme can consistently produce graduates that achieve the *Standards of Proficiency*.

By ensuring that an education and training programme meets the *Criteria*, an education provider is demonstrating there are satisfactory systems and mechanisms in place to ensure students graduating from the programme have achieved the threshold knowledge and skills required to practise proficiently, safely and autonomously upon entry to a register and into professional practice.

What is the Criteria used for?

The *Criteria* is used as part of the **approval and monitoring of education and training programmes** by a Registration Board.



Each Registration Board operates what is known as a *qualifications-based* register, meaning that entry to the register is on the basis of holding an *approved qualification* (***please note that there is a separate registration route for existing practitioners at the time a register opens***).

Approved qualifications – for the purposes of the entry pathway for new graduates (known as the Section 38 application pathway – more information available [here](#)) – are those qualifications that have been assessed by the Registration Board and are listed by the Board on its list of approved qualifications, known as its *Approved Qualifications Bye-Law*.

Education providers seeking approval from the Board for its education programme to be listed on this *Approved Qualifications Bye-Law* must demonstrate how its programme meets all the requirements set out in the *Criteria* in order to evidence how it ensures that each student who completes the programme has achieved all the *Standards of Proficiency* and how it has the assurance, through its curriculum, assessment and programme management process, that this happens consistently across each student cohort.

Key Point

Programme approval is granted to an education and training programme that demonstrates to the Registration Board that its programme delivers on ***all*** the *Standards of Proficiency* and ***all*** the *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*.

Where does the Criteria for Education and Training Programmes come from?

Similarly to the development of the *Standards of Proficiency*, the Health and Social Care Professionals Council sets its *Framework Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* that applies across all of CORU's regulated professions. This is because, in the main, the quality assurance processes and mechanisms that an education provider needs to have in place to deliver a regulated programme are consistent irrespective of the regulated profession.

Each Registration Board, mirroring the process for the development of *Standards*, adopts Council's *Framework Criteria* and is able to make profession-specific adaptations. Specifically, the Board is able to set **two profession-specific criteria**:

- ➔ **Criterion 1.1:** the threshold level and class of qualification for entry to the register
- ➔ **Criterion 2.5:** the level of exposure to practice education required during the course of an education and training programme

In tandem with its cyclical review of its *Framework Standards*, Council also reviews and revises its *Framework Criteria*. Council's most recent review of its *Framework Criteria* was completed in January 2025 and followed a detailed and substantial public consultation and stakeholder consultation process in 2023 and 2024.

Key Point

The majority of the requirements set out in the *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* are part of the Council Framework adopted by a Registration Board.

The only two profession-specific criteria that a Registration Board sets are **Criterion 1.1 and Criterion 2.5**.

These are the only two criteria that are the subject of this present consultation process.

The Psychologists Registration Board has drafted criteria 1.1 and 2.5 specific to the practice of the psychology profession across its varied and different specialisms and presented them for public feedback as part of this consultation process.

More information on the process the Psychologists Registration Board undertook in preparing the draft *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* for Psychologists for public consultation is available in the chapter three of this eBook.

Relationship between the Standards and Criteria

While the *Standards* are used in a number of regulatory functions and the *Criteria* has a single regulatory role in the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes, both documents work together as part of this process to ensure that the training of future graduates prepares competent professionals ready for professional practice. In placing a robust quality assurance process around an education programme that ensures the achievement of the *Standards*, there can be confidence that future graduates emerge from a programme prepared for safe and autonomous practice.



This difference in use does not confer a hierarchy within the relationship between the documents. Any education and training programme seeking regulatory approval must meet all the standards and criteria.

The *Criteria* then does not add anything to the *Standards* but provides the frame around which these knowledge and skills proficiencies are consistently delivered through an education and training programme.

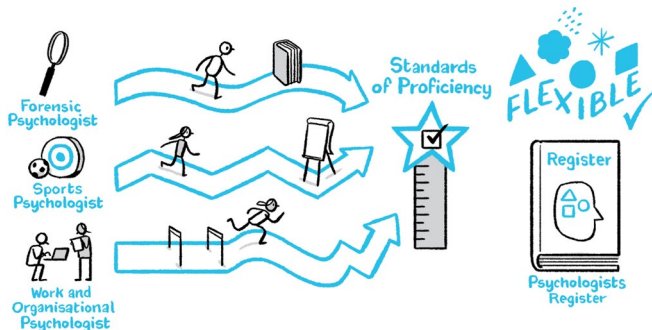
Please Note: If, as part of your review of the Board's draft *Standards of Proficiency and Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for the Psychologists Register* you are comparing them against the *Standards* and *Criteria* the Board has already set for entry to its three other registers for clinical, counselling and educational psychologists, you will notice some differences in the Council *Framework* documents adopted.

This is because the *Standards* and *Criteria* set by the Psychologists Registration Board for clinical, counselling and educational psychologists were set on the *previous* version of Council's *Framework*. The revised *Framework* documents that the Board has adopted for setting its *Standards* and *Criteria* for the *Psychologists Registers* were agreed by Council in January 2025, after the Psychologists Registration Board had commenced the process of setting its *Standards* and *Criteria* for its first three registers.

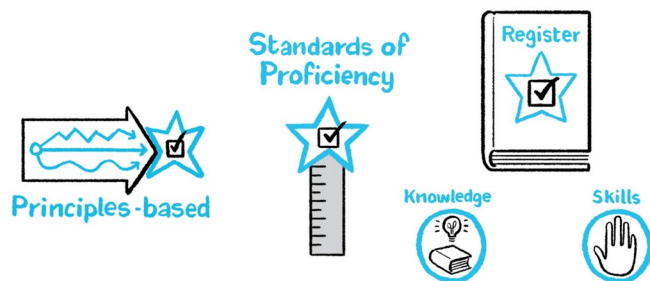
Chapter Two

Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists

In the bespoke regulatory model, designed by the Psychologists Registration Board, to facilitate protection of the professional title 'psychologist,' the fourth register of this model – what will be known as the *Psychologists Register* – will accommodate multiple and different areas of psychology practice. This requires that the threshold standards of knowledge and skills needed for entry to this register must allow for flexibility in their application across the range of psychology specialisms.

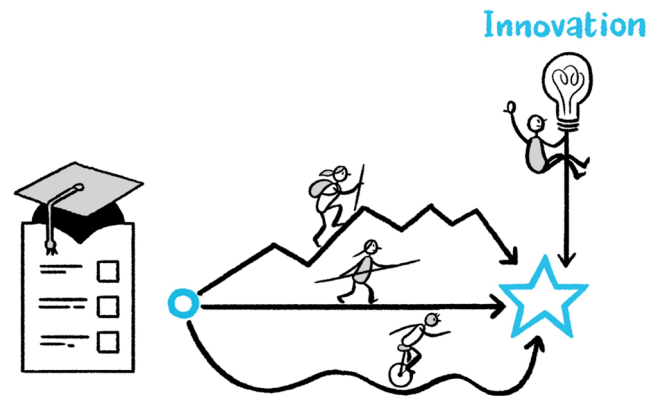


The Board has drafted what are known as *Principles-Based Standards of Proficiency*. A principles-based approach to setting regulatory standards means that rather than articulating detailed instructions or rules that are to be followed, what is set out are broadly defined principles that describe the intended outcome. There is a shift in the focus from the process by which a standard is demonstrated (*how* something must be done) to the outcome of the standard to be achieved (*what* must be achieved). In focusing on the knowledge or skill-based outcome to be achieved and articulating that, there is a recognition that there are multiple ways to achieve a standard and, therefore, greater flexibility is provided in how this achievement can be demonstrated.



In the context of the *Psychologists Register*, the Board's adoption of a principles-based approach means that it has drafted *Standards of Proficiency* that articulate the knowledge and skills applicable across the range of psychology specialisms that are needed for public protection at entry to the register. The draft standards presented as part of this public consultation process will apply, for instance, to Sports and Exercise Psychologists and Forensic Psychologists as they will to Health Psychologists and Work and Organisational Psychologists.

This **does not** mean that all these psychology specialisms are folded in together. Education and training programmes can – and will – retain the unique character and identity of each of these specialisms through how each design and delivers its education and training programme. Specialism-specific education and training is facilitated by the setting of principles-based standards. Indeed, because of the inherent flexibility provided for in their design, this is the mechanism through it is possible to provide for the regulatory protection of the title '*psychologist*,' while facilitating the continued training at entry level into practice through specialisms.



Key Point

While there are common *Standards of Proficiency* for entry to the Psychologists Register, it is important to remember that the *Standards* are only used for **entry to the register**. When a practitioner is registered, he or she is required to adhere to their *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*. This *Code* sets the regulatory standards for all practitioners and requires that an individual is legally required to practice *within the limits of their knowledge, skills, professional competence and training*.

Key Point (continued)

Take for example an individual who trains as a Health Psychologist and another who trains as a Behavioural Psychologist. Both will be registered on the Psychologists Register and will have met the same threshold standards of knowledge and skills. However, their training will have been through different education pathways, specific to different psychology specialisms. While both will be on the same register, it is important to remember that regulatory action can be taken if an individual starts to practice outside of their professional competence and training.



Regulatory Essentials

In order to support understanding of principles-based *Standards of Proficiency*, how these are applied in a regulatory context and, more specifically, how these will be applied as part of the *Psychologists Register*, CORU has developed a suite of resources – *Regulatory Essentials* – that are available from the CORU website [here](#).

In preparing your feedback as part of this consultation process, in addition to reviewing the content of this eBook, you are encouraged to take time and watch the videos and read the Factsheets on the *Regulatory Essentials* webpage as these will help to support your understanding of the draft *Standards of Proficiency* in advance of submitting consultation feedback.



How did the Board prepare its draft Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists?

The draft *Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists* is comprised of five domains – or areas – of knowledge and skills. The first four of these domains – as detailed below – are common standards that apply across each of the professions CORU regulates and addresses areas around communication, teamworking and professional development. These are the standards set by the Health and Social Care Professionals Council, which the Psychologists Registration Board has adopted.

Domain 5 articulates the standards specific to the practice of psychology.

Informed by international regulatory and psychology expertise from Australia and Europe, along with national psychology and education quality assurance and regulatory expertise, the Psychologists Registration Board has prepared a draft set of profession-specific principles-based standards, articulated in Domain 5 of the consultation document.

Drafting Principles

At the start of the drafting process, a number of guiding **drafting principles** were agreed. All decisions taken had to meet the following principles:

- ➡ Each of the standards drafted had to be ***applicable to all psychology specialisms***
- ➡ The overriding concern in setting the standards was to ***ensure public protection***
- ➡ The articulation of the standards must allow for ***assessability and measurability*** to allow for their application
- ➡ The standards must be proportionate in line with the requirements established by the ***European Union's Directive on Proportionality (Directive (EU) 2018/958)***



National and International Mapping

There were a number of stages to a comprehensive mapping exercise that provided the basis for determining the content of the standards themselves.

Firstly, before the adoption of Council's *Framework Standards of Proficiency*, an extensive mapping exercise was undertaken to test their applicability across the varied specialisms of psychology practice the *Psychologists Register* is designed to accommodate. The *Framework Standards* were mapped against the *International Declaration on Core Competencies in Professional Psychology* – an internationally agreed framework that has been used in other international jurisdictions for the setting of threshold regulatory standards – and the *Psychology Board of Australia's Professional Competencies for Psychologists*, the most recently revised international regulatory standards (available in the English language) that are applied across all psychological practice, regardless of the specialism.

On the basis of this mapping process, it was concluded that there was significant alignment between the *Framework Standards* and the knowledge and skills required for entry into practice across the four domains of *Professional Autonomy and Responsibility, Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking, Safety and Quality and Professional Development*. It was agreed that Council's *Framework Standards of Proficiency* provided the foundation upon which to set threshold standards for entry into the *Psychologists Register*.



Having agreed the adoption of the *Framework Standards*, a series of further, detailed mapping activities were undertaken to determine the content required of Domain 5, profession-specific standards. This involved an initial mapping of all *Accreditation Standards* developed by the Psychological Society of Ireland for psychology specialisms to be accommodated under the Psychologists Register to determine the areas of commonality across the specialisms.

To this work, subsequent mapping and review exercises were undertaken that examined the following international regulatory and professional standards:

- ➡ *International Declaration on Core Competencies in Professional Psychology (2016)*
- ➡ *EuroPsy: European Standard and Certificate in Psychology: Regulations (2025)*
- ➡ *Psychology Board of Australia: Professional Competencies for Psychologists (2024)*
- ➡ *Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), United Kingdom: Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists (2023)*
- ➡ *New Zealand Psychologists Board: Core Competencies for the practice of Psychology in Aotearoa New Zealand (2018)*

In completing this mapping process, informed by the underpinning Drafting Principles, three key issues were considered:

- ➡ What are the topic areas that need to be included in the draft *Standards*?
- ➡ Are these topic areas, knowledge or skills-based requirements?
- ➡ The articulation of each individual standards must be at a principles-based level and measurable and assessable.

On the basis of these considerations, the Board has prepared and published its *draft Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists* for public consultation. In advance of the publication of these draft *Standards* as part of this consultation process, CORU held a number of in-person workshops on the draft *Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists* in November 2025, as well as a series of in-person and online engagements with psychologists around the development of regulatory standards more broadly during May and June 2026.

Key Point

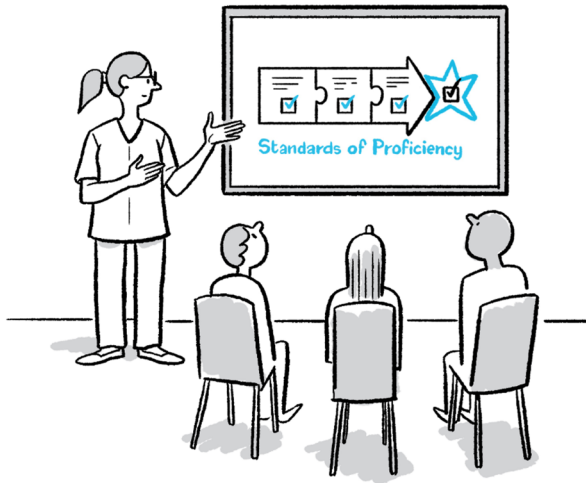
It is important to remember that the Psychologists Registration Board has prepared its **draft** *Standards of Proficiency* for public consultation and is asking for feedback from all key stakeholders to help inform its drafting process.

All the feedback received as part of the consultation process will be reviewed and assessed and will inform the Board's decisions as it finalises its *Standards of Proficiency*. While the Board is ultimately responsible for setting the *Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists*, it is informed by international experience and the experiences and perspectives of those involved in the practice of the profession in Ireland, as well as its own regulatory expertise.

Chapter Three

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes* details the curriculum, assessment, programme management and quality assurance requirements that an education provider must have in place in order to provide assurance that its education and training programme can consistently deliver graduates who have achieved all the *Standards of Proficiency*.



In preparing its draft *Criteria* for its *Psychologists Register*, the Psychologists Registration Board has adopted Council's revised *Framework Criteria* document.

While the profession-specific criteria for the Board to make have remained the same in this revised iteration of the *Criteria*, it is important to highlight that in its revision, Council reduced the number of overarching criteria from six to four. Most notable is the removal of a distinct practice placement criterion. Instead, practice education requirements have been integrated into the revised criterion on how the programme is designed and delivered and the criterion concerned with programme management and quality assurance processes. This highlights and emphasises the role of practice education as an integrated and essential component of curriculum design and assessment.

Additionally, as part of its revision, Council sought to articulate requirements that provided greater clarity for education providers through:

- ➡ the removal of ambiguous language, such as 'should';
- ➡ ensuring that language such as 'appropriate', 'effective', 'mechanism' and 'process' is used clearly and consistently;
- ➡ the reduction in the length and complexity of the requirements; and
- ➡ the inclusion of an overarching criterion statement that explains the overall, intended outcome of each criterion.

Key Point

There are two profession-specific requirements in the *draft Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Psychologists* that the Psychologists Registration Board has adapted for the psychology profession. These are the two criteria that the Board is seeking feedback from stakeholders on:

- ➡ the threshold – or minimum – level and class of qualification required for entry to the *Psychologists Register* (**Criterion 1.1**); and
- ➡ the required exposure to practice education during the course of an education and training programme (**Criterion 2.5**).

Criterion 1.1: Level and Class of Qualification

The **threshold level** of qualification refers to the minimum level on the National Framework of Qualifications an education and training programme must be designed to in order to deliver the *Standards of Proficiency*.

Associated with the **level of qualification** is what is referred to on the National Framework of Qualifications as the **class of qualification**. There are a range of different 'classes' or 'awards' of qualification, from *Major Awards* and *Minor Awards* to *Special Purpose Awards* and *Supplemental Awards*. What these different classes describe is the nature, size and purpose of the qualification – for example, is it delivering an entire programme of learning where there are a significant number of learning outcomes (i.e. a Major Award, like an Undergraduate Degree or Masters' Degree) or is it delivering part of a programme of learning (i.e. a Minor Award that together with other minor awards can work towards achieving a major award).

The Board's Proposal

The Board examined and considered:

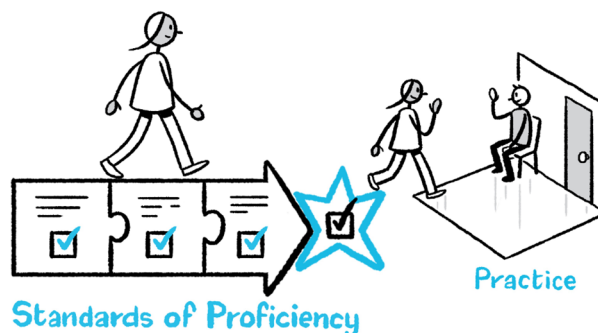
- ➔ the NFQ Level Descriptors which describe the threshold knowledge, skills and competencies required at each level;
- ➔ the NFQ Class of Qualification Descriptors;
- ➔ the draft threshold level of knowledge and skills required at entry to the *Psychologists Register* as articulated in its draft *Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists*;
- ➔ the current qualifications offered in Ireland as pathways into practice across the specialisms the *Psychologists Register* will accommodate;
- ➔ comparator international requirements for entry into practice across the breadth of specialisms; and
- ➔ its obligations under the European Union's *Directive on Proportionality (Directive (EU) 2018/958)* to ensure that regulatory requirements set are proportionate and at threshold for safe practice.

The Psychologists Registration Board is proposing to set the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Psychologists Register at **NFQ Level 9** and set the class of qualification as a **Major Award**.



Criterion 2.5: Extent of Exposure to Practice Placement

One of the pivotal components of a regulated education and training programme that is used as an entry pathway into practice of a profession is the translation of *theory and knowledge* – what is learned in the classroom – into practice of the profession through practice education.



When setting its *Criteria*, a Registration Board articulates the profession-specific level of exposure to practice placement that is required during the course of an education and training programme. There are different ways a Board can do this – one of the most common ways is to set a specific metric, for example in terms of a minimum number of days or hours exposure to practice of the profession.

When considering the threshold exposure to practice placement in the context of the *Psychologists Register*, the Board reflected on the application of its draft requirements across multiple and different psychology specialisms.

In particular, the Board noted that its draft *Standards of Proficiency* are articulated flexibly, at a principles-based level, in order to accommodate application across multiple different specialisms, where their application will likely be different depending on the psychological service offered and the environments of engagement with service users.

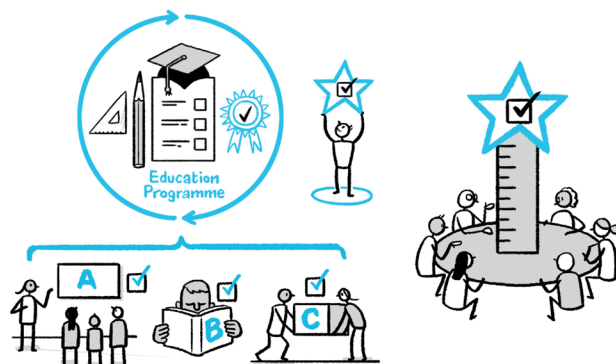
Therefore, the Board concluded that exposure to practice placement in its *Criteria* should reflect this principle of adaptability that allows for application depending on the nature of the specialism, while ensuring achievement of the *Standards of Proficiency*. The Board recognised that given the different application of the *Standards* appropriate to each specialism, some areas of psychological practice may require more exposure to practice education in order to meet the threshold level of proficiency for safe practice when compared with others.

The Board's Proposal

Rather than stipulating a specific metric for exposure to practice placement during the course of an education and training programme, the Board has proposed the following articulation:

Criterion 2.5: *The duration of practice placement across the programme is sufficient to ensure students' achievement of the standards of proficiency.*

The Board has proposed this wording because it retains the intended outcome of the criterion: namely, that exposure to practice education must facilitate achievement of the standards, while facilitating flexibility in application, providing education providers, who have the expertise in the design and delivery of education programmes, with the flexibility to determine what level of exposure is required to deliver on the standards.



Key Point

It is important to emphasise that this criterion does not operate in isolation. Rather, the application of all elements of the *Criteria* is assessed by the Board as part of the programme approval process. Therefore, when an education provider makes the assessment of how much placement exposure is required to deliver on the standards, it must provide a rationale and evidence of this to the Board detailing how the programme's curriculum and assessment ensures all the standards - including those skills-based standards that must be practically demonstrated - are achieved.

Chapter Four

Have your say!



The Psychologists Registration Board's *draft Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists* and *draft Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Psychologists* area available to access on the CORU website: [Current Consultations - Coru](#)

We are looking for your feedback on:

- ➡ whether the *Standards of Proficiency* are set at threshold level for entry to the register;
- ➡ the level and class of qualification for entry to the register; and
- ➡ the articulation of the criterion around exposure to practice education during the course of an education and training programme.

You can provide feedback by completing the online questionnaire – accessible on the CORU website: [Current Consultations - Coru](#) – or by emailing directly to strategyandpolicy@coru.ie

The consultation is open for feedback from Monday, 5 October 2026 and will close on Friday, 27 November 2026.

You can access all consultation materials, along with guidance and supporting resources – including *Regulatory Essentials* – on the CORU website: www.coru.ie