



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

Psychologists Registration Board

Draft Criteria for Education and Training Programmes 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 *Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Psychologists (for entry to the Psychologists Register)*.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Standards of Proficiency 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 (HSCP Act 2005) provides for the establishment of Registration Boards to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. Entry onto the register allows a person to use the title of that profession. This system of statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality

and accountability in the provision of professional services. The objective of the statutory registration system is to protect, guide and inform the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals are properly regulated and qualified for the job whether they work in the public or private sectors or are self-employed.

The object of the Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

- The approval of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 48)
- Monitoring the continuing suitability of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 49).

Regulatory approval of a programme by a Registration Board is distinct from academic accreditation. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a qualification. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme associated with a given qualification consistently and effectively prepares graduates for entry into register of that profession. To receive approval a programme must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Registration Board. There are two types of requirements:

Criteria for education and training programmes

- the criteria specify the requirements for the design, organisation and management of a programme to ensure that it can consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency

Standards of proficiency

- the standards of proficiency specify the threshold skills and abilities required for entry to the register

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet all of a Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet all of the required standards of proficiency.

A programme which meets the required criteria and standards of proficiency for entry to the register is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. Graduates possessing an approved qualification are eligible to apply for entry to the profession's register. The programme will then be subject to monitoring.

Failure to demonstrate that the programme meets the criteria for programmes and the standards of proficiency, either during approval or subsequent monitoring, will mean that the programme is not approved. If a programme is not approved, the associated qualification will not be listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

Monitoring is a requirement of all approved programmes and is conducted not less than once every five years. Qualifications may be removed from the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law if the associated programme does not meet the Board's requirements under monitoring.

Students graduating from a non-approved programme are not eligible to apply for entry to the profession's register.

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for entry to the register.

This document sets out the Framework Criteria in relation to:

1. Level of Qualification for Entry to the Register
2. Curriculum Design and Delivery
3. Assessment
4. Programme Governance, Management and Quality Assurance

These criteria form each Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed.

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Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that individuals must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by each Registration Board at the level of entry to practice. They are not standards for practice after entry to the register, rather they offer a snapshot of the standards at entry to the register.

In the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes, the standards of proficiency are used to ensure that graduates of an approved programme holding an approved qualification have the required skills and abilities for entry to the Register.

The standards of proficiency for each of the registered professions are detailed in a document called the *Council Framework Standards of Proficiency* which is tailored to the specific requirements of each profession.

Submissions for Programme Approval

A submission for programme approval consists of:

- (a) submission of documentary evidence; and
- (b) a visit.

Through the documentary evidence provided and verbal information gathered during the course of a visit, the Registration Board will determine whether the provider has demonstrated that the programme meets the Registration Board's requirements.

CORU offers further information on the programme approval and monitoring processes and guidance on the preparation of documentation and arrangements for the visit for those providers who wish to make an application for programme approval.

More information and guidance is available on the CORU website [here](#).

Criterion 1

Level of Qualification for Entry to the Register

The level and class of the qualification awarded upon completion of the programme is sufficient to deliver the standards of proficiency.

- 1.1** The threshold level and class of qualification for entry to the Register is NFQ Level 9 (Major Award).

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Criterion 2

Curriculum Design and Delivery

Curriculum design and delivery enable students to achieve the standards of proficiency

- 2.1** The standards of proficiency are embedded in the design of the curriculum.
- 2.2** The curriculum is evidence-informed and relevant to current practice.
- 2.3** The learning and teaching approaches used are appropriate to the effective delivery of the standards of proficiency.
- 2.4** The curriculum design and delivery facilitate the formation of the professional through the integration of theory and practice, with regular provision of feedback and opportunities for reflection and consolidation.
- 2.5** The duration of practice placement across the programme is sufficient to ensure students' achievement of the standards of proficiency.
- 2.6** The sequencing, duration and range of practice placements support students' progressive achievement of the standards of proficiency.
- 2.7** There are requirements for the selection of practice placements which ensure quality learning experiences that reflect the context and environment of practice and enable students to demonstrate achievement of the standards of proficiency.
- 2.8** Each student's allocation to practice placement is based on supporting the student's progressive achievement of the standards of proficiency.
- 2.9** The education provider works in partnership with practice placement providers and both parties agree their respective roles and responsibilities in writing.
- 2.10** There is regular and effective ongoing communication between the education provider and practice placement providers.
- 2.11** Students on practice placement are supervised and supported appropriate to the practice of the profession.
- 2.12** Students are fully prepared and informed of the expectations of the practice placement, including the education provider's Fitness to Practise requirements.
- 2.13** The curriculum includes interprofessional learning activities which are designed to prepare students for interprofessional practice.

Criterion 3

Assessment

Assessment is fair, valid and reliable to ensure successful students achieve the standards of proficiency

- 3.1** Assessment methods are appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the achievement of the standards of proficiency.
- 3.2** The assessment requirements, regulations and rules regarding progression ensure that a student who successfully completes the programme has achieved the standards of proficiency.
- 3.3** Assessments ensure that students have met the aspects of knowledge or skill necessary for public protection, prior to their progression onto supervised practice placement where there is engagement with the public.
- 3.4** Students, educators and practice educators are informed about the assessment methods, regulations, rules for progression and all relevant procedures.

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Criterion 4

Programme Governance, Management and Quality Assurance

Programme governance, management and quality assurance processes are effective in delivering a sustainable, high quality programme

- 4.1** There are effective systems in place for regular and systematic monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement of the programme, which include the appointment of at least one external examiner.
- 4.2** There are effective arrangements in place which ensure all relevant stakeholders, including students, service users, placement providers and employers, contribute to the programme's design and quality improvement.
- 4.3** There is an effective system in place for approving and monitoring the quality of all practice placements.
- 4.4** There are appropriate and sufficient resources to support students in achieving the standards of proficiency.
- 4.5** There are effective and accessible supports in place for the learning and wellbeing needs of students, including while on practice placement.
- 4.6** There is at least one person with qualifications and experience relevant to the profession, who holds responsibility for directing delivery of the programme curriculum and assessment. This person must be registered with the relevant Registration Board.¹
- 4.7** Educators and practice educators have qualifications, knowledge and expertise relevant to their roles in teaching, supervising and/or assessing students.
- 4.8** Educators and practice educators responsible for teaching, supervising and/or assessing the core professional elements of the programme are registered with the relevant Registration Board.¹
- 4.9** Practice placement providers and practice educators are fully informed of, and prepared for, the requirements of the practice placement, including the education and training provider's Fitness to Practise policy and process.
- 4.10** Practice educators undertake training which ensures that they are fully prepared for their responsibilities.
- 4.11** Programme information is clear and accessible and allows prospective students to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme.
- 4.12** Programme information meets CORU's published guidelines.
- 4.13** The admissions process ensures that appropriate entry criteria are met, including criteria related to academic standards, language proficiency, health and criminal records.

¹ Please Note: the requirement for registration with the relevant Registration Board is effective from the close of the transition period. The transition period is operational for two years from the date the register opens.

- 4.14** Where the education provider has a process for recognising applicants' prior learning and/or experience, it includes:
- ☐ the mechanism for evaluating the impact on an applicant's achievement of the standards of proficiency; and
 - ☐ how the education provider ensures that an applicant will achieve all the standards of proficiency by the completion of the programme.
- 4.15** Attendance requirements, including practice placement hours, are specified, there is a method for monitoring attendance and a system for implementing support actions and/or consequences where attendance falls below requirements. This is communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including students and practice educators.
- 4.16** Pre-placement requirements, including academic, legal, occupational health and other requirements, are identified, with action taken when they are not met.
- 4.17** There is a policy and an effective process for addressing concerns about students' professional conduct and fitness to practise that includes clear consequences for student progression.
- 4.18** There is an effective process for students to raise concerns about the programme.
- 4.19** There is an effective process for students to raise concerns about the safety of service users.
- 4.20** There are equality, diversity and inclusion policies in relation to applicants and students and they are implemented and monitored.

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Glossary

Code of professional conduct and ethics

The standards of conduct, performance and ethics to which a member of that profession must adhere throughout the course of their work.

Core professional elements

The taught and practice placement modules of an education and training programme, identified by the education provider, that involve the teaching and/or assessment of profession-specific knowledge and skills (i.e. knowledge and skills directly related to the practice of the profession and achievement of the standards of proficiency).

Curriculum

The design, content and delivery of modules that combined comprise the planned learning opportunities offered to students on an education and training programme.

Education provider

The institution that offers an education and training programme and which controls key aspects of the programme including admissions, curriculum delivery, quality management, placement management and assessment.

Educators

People employed or engaged by an education provider who are involved in teaching, supervising and/or assessing students in the taught environment.

Interprofessional learning activities

Activities where students learn about other health and social care professions and learn with and from other relevant professionals to prepare them for interprofessional practice.

Interprofessional practice

When professionals from different professions work together to provide care for service users.

Practice educators

People who are responsible for teaching, supervising and/or assessing students during the period of clinical or practical placement. This includes the practice educator on site in the placement provider.

Practice placement

A period of clinical or practical experience that forms part of a programme.

Resources

The physical and human resources available to students to support the achievement of the standards of proficiency.

Service user

A person who uses or is affected by the services of registrants or students.

Standards of proficiency

The threshold knowledge, skills and professional capabilities required for entry to the register.

T: 01 2933160 E: info@coru.ie

www.coru.ie