



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Briefing on the Regulation of Counsellors and Psychotherapists in Ireland

CORU Information Webinar, *01 September 2023*

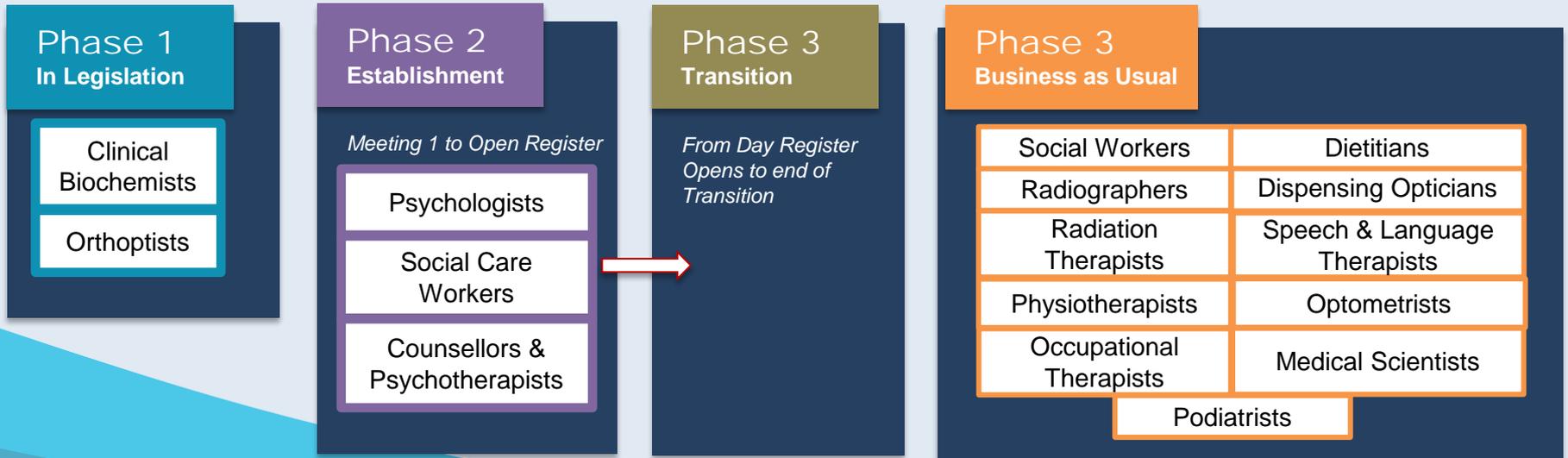
CORU's Mission



“ To protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of the designated professions ”

(Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005)

CORU's Regulated Health and Social Care Professionals



Structure of CORU



Role of Registration Boards



Setting professional standards



Establishing and maintaining a register of members for the profession



Approval and Monitoring of Education and Training Programmes



Recognition of professional qualifications awarded outside Ireland



Setting code of professional conduct and ethics



Public Protection



Counsellors and Psychotherapists Registration Board (CPRB)



Counsellors & Psychotherapists Registration Board



In 2016, the Minister for Health designated the regulation of **counsellors** and **psychotherapists**

Following a 2016 DoH Public Consultation, the Minister determined there would be **one Registration Board** established with statutory responsibility for **two registers**

**Counsellors and
Psychotherapists
Registration Board**

Register for
Counsellors

Register for
Psychotherapists

Establishment of the CPRB



Guided by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended), the Board has been working towards opening its two registers

In February 2017, Minister for Health established the Counsellors and Psychotherapists Registration Board

Key Steps towards Opening a Register



Set its **Standards of Proficiency and Criteria for Education and Training Programmes**

- Threshold level of knowledge, skills and professional attributes for entry to the register
- Requirements that education programmes must meet in order to deliver on the standards of proficiency

Set its *Code of Conduct*

- Approving programmes to be used for entry to the register (under Section 38) to ensure each meets all the Board's Criteria and delivers the Board's Standards of Proficiency

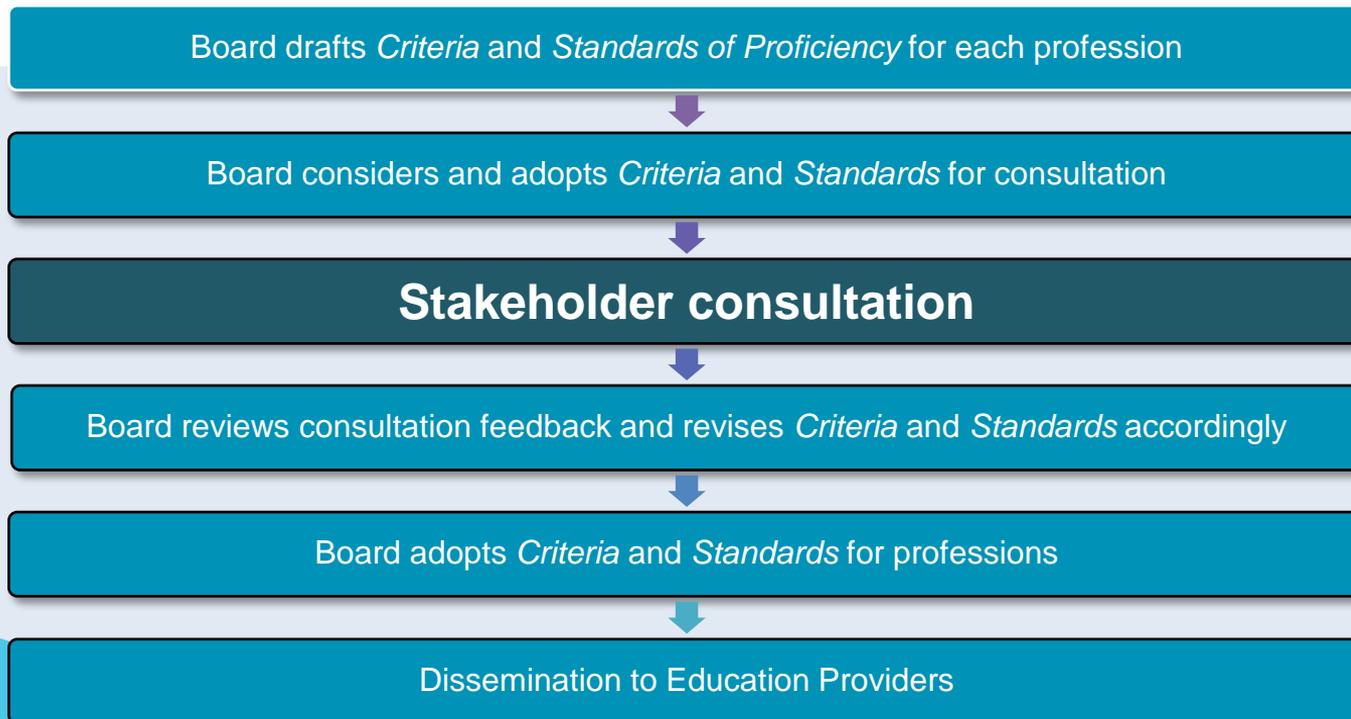
Process of Approving Education and Training Programmes

- The standards of conduct, performance and ethics that a registered member of the profession must adhere to during their course of their work

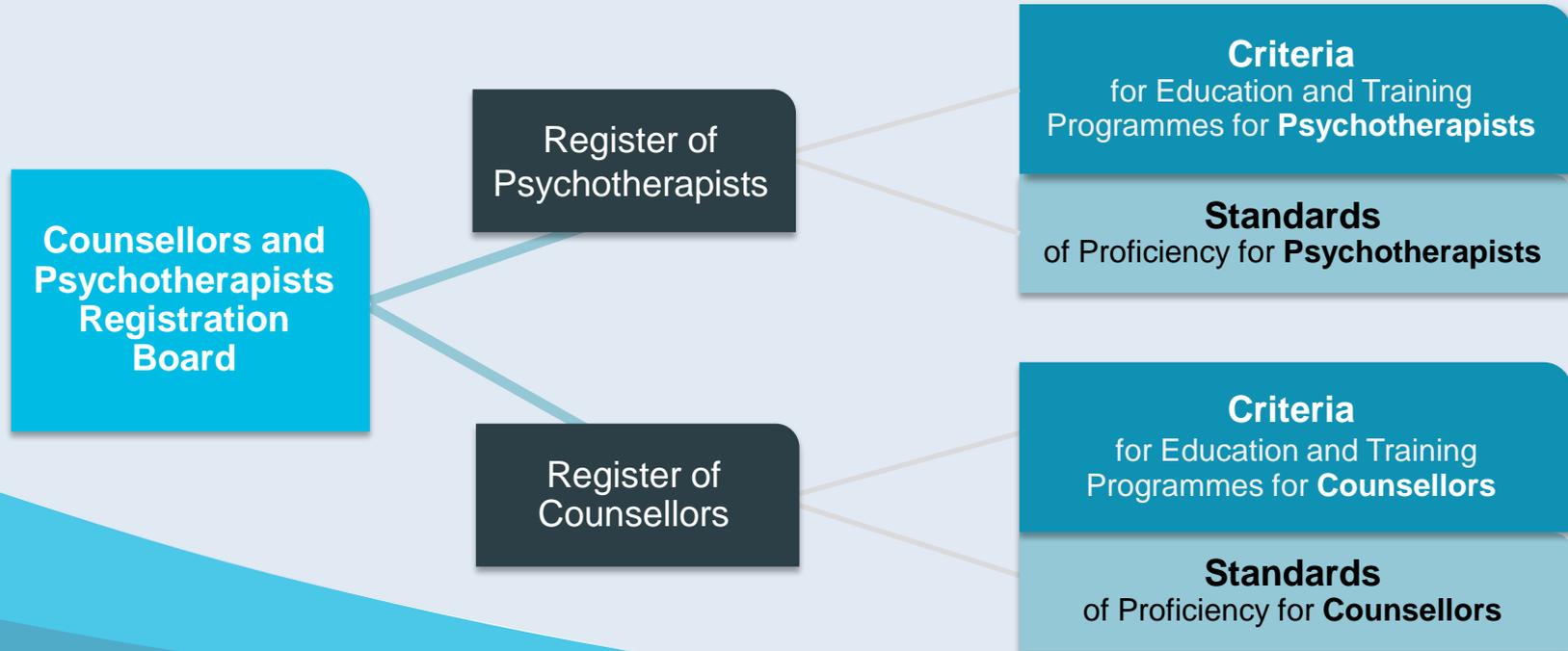
Make its Bye-Laws

- Establish the legal architecture for the opening of the register

Process for setting *Criteria and Standards*



What this means for the CPRB?



Standards of Proficiency



What are the Standards of Proficiency?



Standards of Proficiency

Describe the threshold – **minimum** – level of knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed to enable a person, upon entry onto a register, to practice safely and, in so doing, keep the public safe

Standards of Proficiency for Counsellors

Standards of Proficiency for Psychotherapists



Standards of
Proficiency are
set as Threshold
Standards

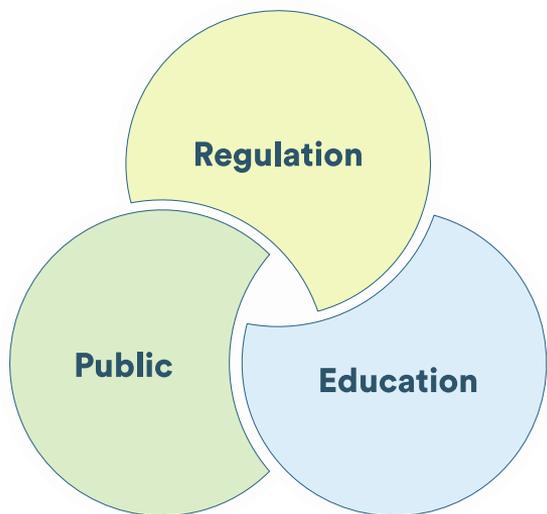
The Board must set **high standards** at the **threshold** level required to protect the public

Threshold = the minimum knowledge, understanding and skills to practice safely

Not optional, desirable or aspirational standards

Start with a focus on public protection and set the threshold standards from that perspective

What are the *Standards* used for?



Regulation

All applicants – from Ireland and internationally – must demonstrate achievement of all the standards as part of the registration process

Education

Education providers that prepare students to practice a profession upon graduation – and which seek approval from the Board – use the standards to design their education and training programmes

Public

Articulate the practice of a profession at entry level and help the public understand what kind of service they can expect.

How are the *Standards* developed?



**Review of
contemporary
evidence-informed
academic literature**



**Review of comparator
international
professional
standards**



**Understanding and
experience of
contemporary practice of
the profession in Ireland**

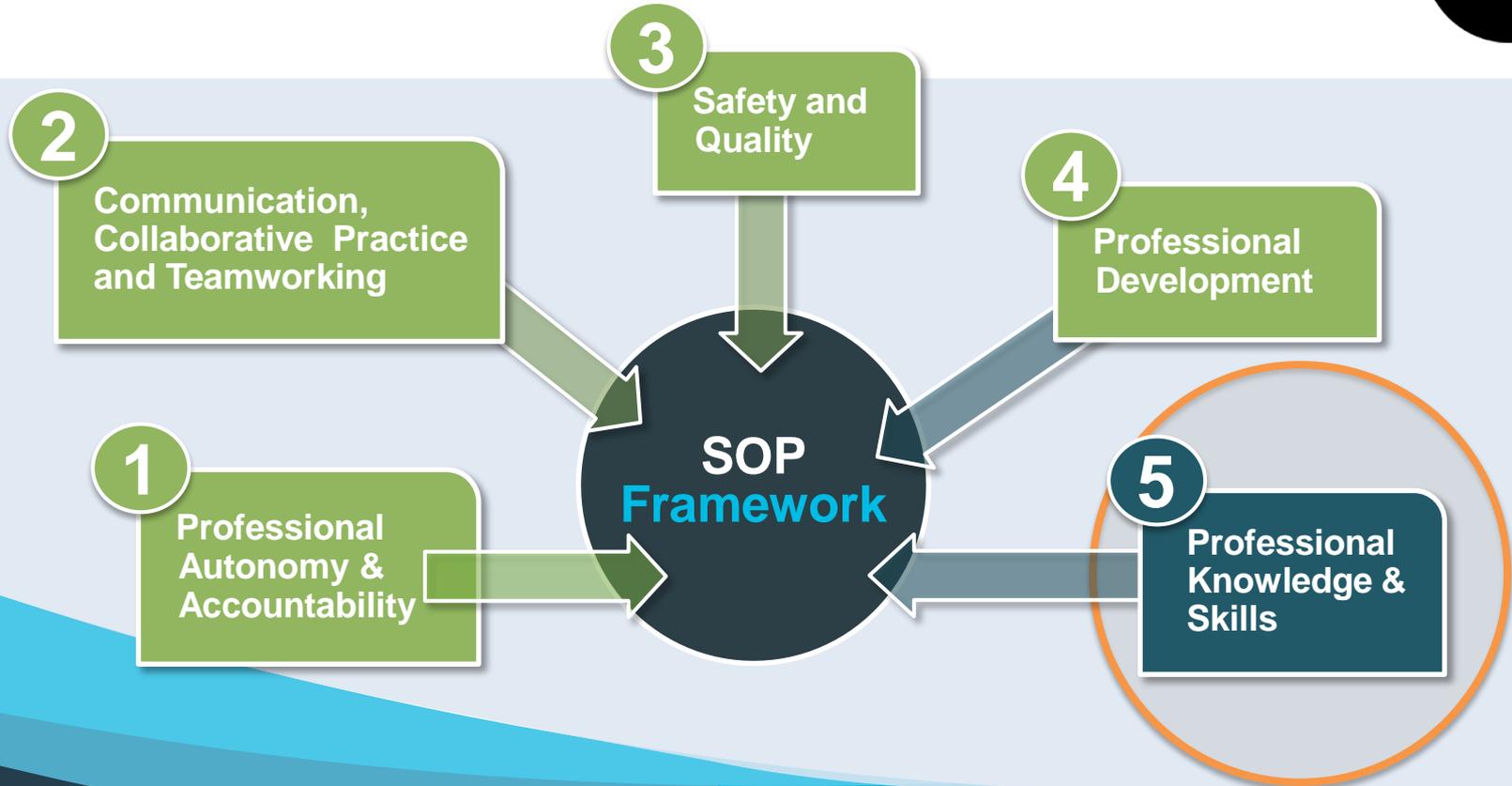


How are the Standards written?



Outcomes:	they provide clarity and direction on the knowledge or skill a graduate must be able to demonstrate
Succinct:	they avoid extensive lists that detail the means around how the knowledge or skill is to be demonstrated
Flexible:	they allow for application across a diverse range of therapeutic environments
Holistic:	they are not standalone or there is no hierarchy; each standard is as important as another. They are interconnected

5 Domains of the Standards of Proficiency



5 Domains of the Standards of Proficiency



Domain 5: Professional Knowledge and Skills



5



Both professions share similar professional characteristics



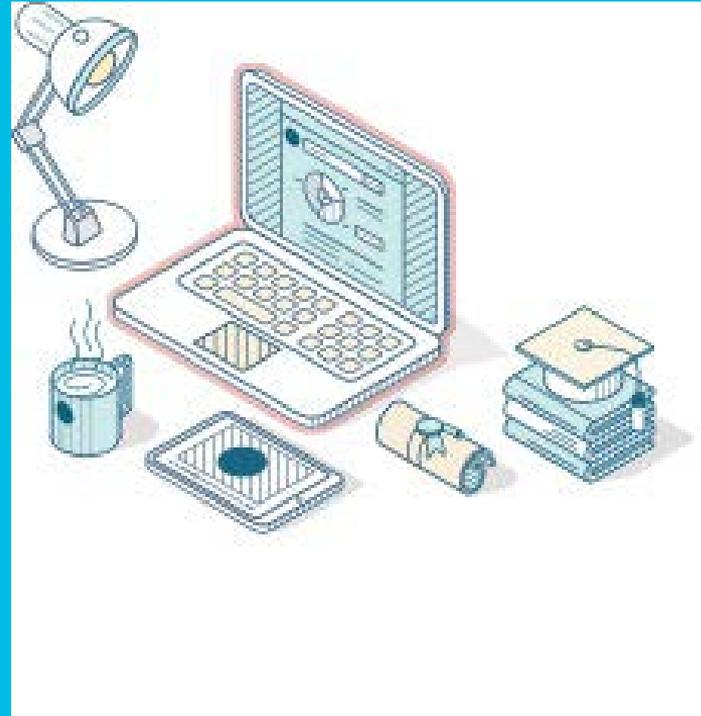
Similarities in the practice of the two professions is reflected in common standards for both.

Be able to maintain professional and ethical boundaries with service users and be able to identify and manage any associated challenges



Board has articulated the **differences** between the two professions that reflect the specific knowledge and skills required to practice each profession

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes



What are the Standards of Proficiency?



Standards of Proficiency

Describe the threshold – **minimum** – level of knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed to enable a person, upon entry onto a register, to practice safely and, in so doing, keep the public safe

Standards of Proficiency for Counsellors

Standards of Proficiency for Psychotherapists

What are the Standards of Proficiency?



Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

Detail how a professional education and training programme should be designed and managed in order to consistently produce graduates who have achieved the **Standards of Proficiency**

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Counsellors

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Psychotherapists

What is the Criteria used for?



1

Approve and Monitor

Education and Training programmes by the Board

2

Qualifications Based Register

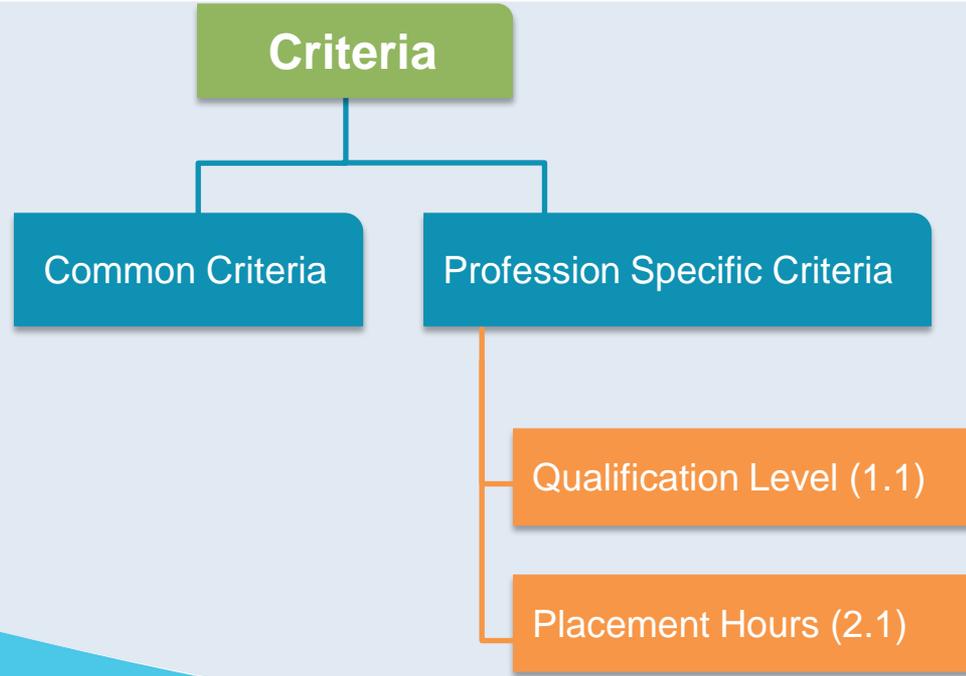
Applies to new and future graduates of approved programmes to join the register once the register is open

3

Not for Existing Practitioners

There is a different route for existing practitioners to join the register during the first two years the register is open

How is the *Criteria* made up?



How is the *Criteria* made up?

All 5 areas work together to ensure a programme can continually produce graduates who have met the standards of proficiency and, in so doing, ensure **protection of the public**



Profession Specific Criteria [1]:

Threshold Level of Qualification for Entry to the Register



What does Threshold Level mean?

- Refers to the minimum level on the National Framework of Qualifications a programme must be designed to in order to **deliver on the standards of proficiency**.
- *Programmes can be designed to a qualifications **level above this threshold** and be considered for programme approval by the Board.*
- But, if the programme is designed at a **level below the threshold**, it **could not deliver on the standards of proficiency** and therefore would not be considered for programme approval.



The Board's Approach



The Board's Draft Criteria



Counsellors
Level 8

Psychotherapists
Level 8

Profession Specific Criteria [2]:

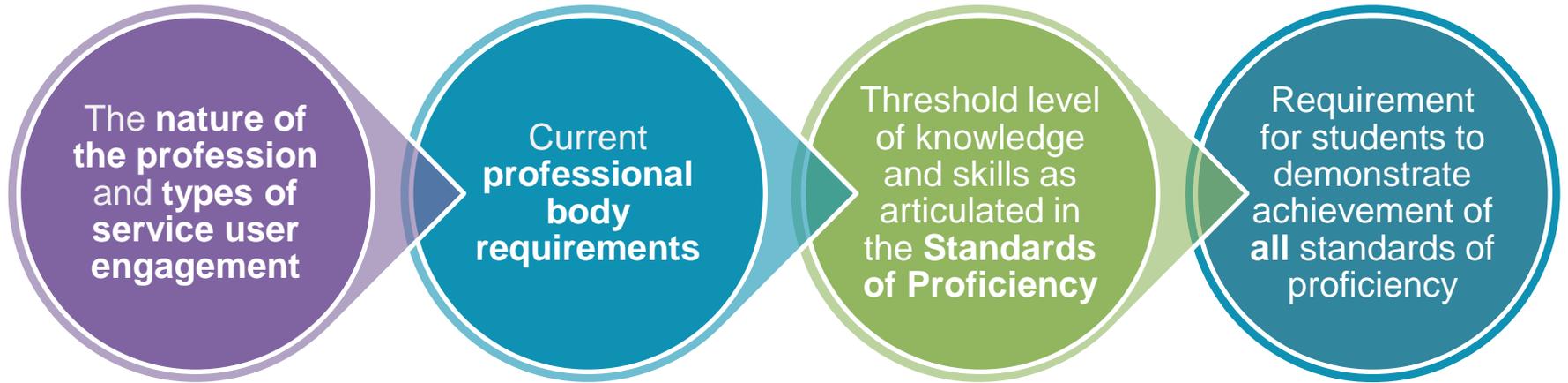
Total Number of Practice Place Hours



Practice Education is an integral part of the training for a future counsellor or psychotherapist

- Provides the opportunity to **translate learning into practice** in a **supervised** practice setting
- Essential component of **student assessment** and their demonstrated **achievement of the standards of proficiency**

How does the Board establish the total number of placement hours?



The Board's Decision



Counsellors

- **450 hours** of practice placement education
- Minimum **300 hours** in **supervised service user contact**
- **75 hours** must be **directly observed service user contact**

Psychotherapists

- **500 hours** of practice placement education
- Minimum **350 hours** in **supervised service user contact**
- **100 hours** must be **directly observed service user contact**



Public Consultation



Public Consultation



Two public consultations on the *Criteria and Standards of Proficiency*:
Separate consultation for counsellors and for psychotherapists



Consultation Questionnaire accessible online at:
www.coru.ie or email feedback to:
strategyandpolicy@coru.ie



Consultation opens on:
4 September 2023

and closes on:
1 December 2023

Have your say!

Communication



www.coru.ie



[@CORUIreland](https://twitter.com/CORUIreland)



communications@coru.ie





Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Thank You

