Psychologists Registration Board

Draft Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists

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 Standards of Proficiency for Psychologists.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Psychologists Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes
- Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes: Information for Education Providers
- Programme Information Guidelines for Education and Training Providers

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 to 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 objective 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

    - there are two sets of criteria; core and profession specific
    - 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

    - there is one set of standards; profession specific
    - the standards of proficiency specify the threshold skills and abilities required for entry to the register

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 the 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.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for the Psychologists Registration Board under five domains:

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

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. There are two sets of criteria; core and profession specific. Together, the core and profession specific criteria form the Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed.

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet **all** of the 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. Students graduating from a non-approved programme are not eligible to apply for entry to the profession's register.

Supporting CORU documentation

This document should be considered in conjunction with the following documentation:

- Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes
- Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Psychologists - Guidelines for Programme Providers
- Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Psychologists
- Approval and Monitoring Guide
- Programme Information Guidelines for Education/Training Providers

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

Graduates will:

1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession

2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice, domains of practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional

3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference

4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure

5. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the assessment/diagnostic, therapeutic/management and social care process

6. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care

7. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics* for the profession issued by the Registration Board

8. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups

9. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers

10. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given. Be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users or the wider public.

11. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting, having due regard for the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession.

12. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse

13. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation

14. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing

15. Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained

16. Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent, including with individuals with lack of capacity

17. Recognise personality responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made

18. Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate

19. Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources

20. Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

Graduates will:

1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user

2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, age, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs.

3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns

4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-treatment, where appropriate.

5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required.

6. Be able to communicate in English at a standard equivalent to C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

7. Demonstrate a critical understanding of how to use media including digital and social media in an ethical, confidential and professional manner

8. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation

9. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession

10. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements

11. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the limitations of confidentiality

12. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice

13. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management

14. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals, treatments and interventions

15. Be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users, recognising and maintaining boundaries and be able to manage associated challenges

16. Understand explicit and implicit communications in a practitioner – service user relationship

17. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

18. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting

19. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

3. Safety and Quality

Graduates will:

1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs

2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, within their domains of expertise

3. Be able to determine the appropriate assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests, within their domains of expertise

4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process

5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals

6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments

7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care

8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user

9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or audit the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews

10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns

11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement

12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any

identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current
legislation/guidelines

13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and
guidelines

14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to
service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection
prevention and control strategies

4. Professional Development

Graduates will:

1. Be able to engage in and take responsibility for professional development

2. Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice

3. Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice

4. Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately

5. Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, professional supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice

6. Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the profession, for individuals, groups and communities

2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant biological sciences, human development, social, and behavioural sciences and other related sciences, together with a knowledge of health and wellbeing.

3. Know, understand and critically appraise the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice

4. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including translation of theory, concepts and methods to clinical/professional practice

5. Be able to identify and understand the impact of governmental, organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on health and social care provision

6. Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of practical, technical and clinical/professional skills

7. Demonstrate ability to conduct or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research including qualitative and quantitative approaches, and have a critical understanding of ethics in research.

8. Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision

9. Be able to demonstrate a critical understanding of psychological health and resilience, psychological conditions (including severe and enduring psychopathology), the psychological impact of these conditions on (occupational, educational, social, emotional, behavioural, physical and cognitive) functioning, and be able to formulate these within psychological frameworks and theory.

10. Critically understand and be able to formulate the scientific underpinnings of psychology as a discipline, including theoretical models, frameworks and therapeutic models of psychological practice

11. Have a critical understanding of biological psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, psychopathology, personal and individual psychology, and social psychology

12. Critically understand the historical, conceptual and cultural aspects of psychology as a discipline and the impact of differences such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, religion and age on psychological wellbeing or behaviour.

13. Critically understand the current policy frameworks applicable to the work of their profession and the role of psychology in the development and implementation of policy on health and well-being on a national and international level.

14. Critically understand the role of the psychologist across settings and services, and be able to distinguish and communicate their domain(s) of expertise

15. Critically understand the importance of effective supervisory frameworks and be able to make use of supervision.

16. Recognise the need for and be able to promote psychological wellbeing.

17. Recognise that service users have the right to self-determination

18. Be able to undertake psychological assessments relevant to the service user group including evidence informed psychological tests, self-report measures, direct and indirect observations and/or interviews with service users, family members and/or carers and relevant others

19. Based on assessment, be able to formulate and implement plans for psychological therapeutic interventions or onward referrals within psychological frameworks/theory

20. Be able to evaluate the effect of their life experiences, own characteristics, values and practices on interactions with service users and be able to critically reflect on this to improve practice.

21. Be able to utilise reflective practice and self-awareness within the practitioner – service user relationship

22. Demonstrate a critical understanding of how psychological practice is influenced by regulations, national guidelines and standards, findings of inquiries and associated reports; issues and trends in public policy development

23. Be able to recognise the importance of maintaining professional and ethical boundaries within the practitioner – service user relationship

Glossary

Act	The Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).
Assessment (Standards of Proficiency)	The process of working out what the needs of the service user are. It is a review of the evidence at hand
Code of professional conduct and ethics	The standard of conduct, performance and ethics to which a member of that profession must adhere throughout the course of their work
Council	The Health and Social Care Professionals Council, established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).
Criterion/criteria	The requirements for the design, organization and management of an education and training programme to ensure that it can consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency
Designated profession	A health or social care profession that is designated under Section 4(1) or Section 4(2) of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005.
Education provider	The institution that offers an education and training programme and which control key aspects of the programme including admissions, curriculum deliver, quality management, placement management and assessment.
Fitness to Practise	Fitness to Practise is concerned with establishing whether or not a registered health and social care professional has the skills, knowledge, character and health to practice their profession safely and effectively.
Grand-parenting period (also referred to as the transitional period)	The transitional period known also as "grand-parenting" is the name of the process by which existing practitioners can apply for registration. The grandparent period runs for two years from the date of opening the register.
Register	A register established and maintained under Section 36 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).
Registrant	In relation to a designated profession, this means an individual whose name is currently on the register of members for that profession.
Registration Board	A board established under Section 26 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).

Service user	Service user is the term used to describe a person who uses, requests or is affected by the services of registrant.
Standards of proficiency	The threshold skills and abilities required for entry to the register
Threshold standards	Threshold standards for entry to the profession are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional qualities that should be demonstrated by graduates of an approved programme for the safe and appropriate practice of the profession
Treatment	The choice of intervention available. A deliberate and structured process usually based on a theoretical or practice-based model and having an expected outcome.