



The Professional Board for Psychology

# **Minimum standards for the training of Neuropsychology**

May 2022

## **NAME OF QUALIFICATION: BOARD APPROVED MASTER'S QUALIFICATION**

**FIELD** : Health Sciences

**SUB-FIELD** : Neuroscience

**NQF LEVEL** : 9

**CREDITS** : Minimum of 180 credits

### **RATIONALE AND PURPOSE FOR THE QUALIFICATION**

The qualification is aimed at producing competent, ethical and professional Neuropsychologists who can meet the psychological needs of the people living in South Africa.

The Professional Master's degree in Neuropsychology is aligned with the National Framework for Human Resources for Health in South Africa and the National Qualification Framework for Education and is responsive to the psychological needs of the South African population.

In as much as there is common psychology practices that overlap, this competency document details the practitioner's education and training and confines the scope specific to the category of Neuropsychology. These competencies, as specified by Rule 21 of the Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practitioners Registered under the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974, confines the scope to areas of the profession to which Neuropsychologists have knowledge, skills and experience to practise lawfully, safely and effectively, meeting specified standards. Each accredited programme in professional psychology is understood to be specific to the education and training of a set of competencies for a particular registration category. If joint teaching is offered between programmes, the training institution has to ensure that such joint teaching does not exceed 25% of the curriculum time and/or curriculum.

The qualifying practitioner will be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as a Neuropsychologist in Independent Practice.

### ***Definition of Neuropsychology***

Neuropsychologists assess, diagnose and treat people with cognitive-behavioural and emotional changes resulting from compromised functioning of the central nervous system.

### **LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE:**

- Bachelor degree majoring in Psychology, and
- Honours degree in Psychology with the following core modules: Assessment, Psychopathology, Developmental Psychology, Personality and Psychotherapeutic Methods, Neuropsychological-Physiological- Cognitive Psychology

### **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is within the ambit of higher education institutions. However academic and training programmes have to satisfy the minimum requirements and competencies stipulated by the Board.

### **ACCESS TO THE QUALIFICATION**

Admission to accredited programmes is open to all learners in possession of an Honours degree in Psychology and Neurosciences or equivalent qualification.

### **MINIMUM COMPETENCIES**

The following exit level outcomes (ELO) must be achieved by the applicant to be awarded the qualification<sup>1</sup>:

#### **1 Knowledge**

- a. Knowledge of the fundamental principles underpinning neuroscience
  - i. Neuroanatomy
  - ii. Principles of neuroscience
- b. Historical foundations

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<sup>1</sup> These competencies apply to the M1/M2 years as well as the internship year of professional training.

## History of neuropsychology

- c. Knowledge of conceptual approaches adopted in clinical neuropsychology
  - i. Principles of neuropsychology
  - ii. Models of cognitive neuropsychology.
- d. knowledge of brain behaviour relationships
  - i. contemporary theories
  - ii. consequences of brain lesions
- e. Knowledge of neuropsychometric and statistical principles
- f. Knowledge of methods, terminology and conceptual approaches of the clinical medical disciplines allied to clinical neuropsychology
- g. Knowledge of advances in neuroscience research/practice and its implications for neuropsychological theory/practice
  - i. Basic introduction
  - i. Advanced imaging techniques
- h. Knowledge of contemporary models/frameworks of health, disability and participation
- i. General Clinical Skills.
  - i. Principles of neuropsychological rehabilitations and intervention
- i. Knowledge of all aspects of typical neuropsychological, neurological and neuropsychiatric conditions
  - i. Knowledge of neuropsychological disorders (models of cognition and their relationship to disorders and neural systems)
- j. Knowledge of psychopharmacology

## **2 Assessment competencies**

- a. Conduct a neuropsychological interview.
- b. Formulate clinical questions and hypotheses for the assessment.
- c. Select and administer appropriate assessment tools and procedures.
- d. Gather, analyse, interpret and communicate information relevant to the neuropsychological assessment and its implications for interventions.
- e. Assess and evaluate in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual context.

## **3 Diagnostic competencies**

- a. Formulate differential diagnoses in order to diagnose neuropsychological syndromes or disorders,

- b. Knowledge of interpreting physiological and neuroimaging output and results such as EEG, CT Scans, X-Rays.

#### **4 Intervention competencies**

- a. Knowledge of evidence-based neuropsychological interventions and rehabilitation
- b. Formulate evidence-based neuropsychological treatment, rehabilitation and management plans, taking into consideration the family system, community, education and workplace.
- c. Implement and review neuropsychological treatment, rehabilitation and management plans.
- d. Communicate with clients and significant others, collaborate with other professionals within a multidisciplinary setting.

#### **5 Research competencies**

- a. Develop knowledge in the field of neuropsychology through research,
- b. Develop neuropsychological tests and relevant norms,
- c. Adapt unclassified neuropsychological tests for the South African context.
- d. design and conduct research, which contributes to neuropsychological theory and practice,
- e. Disseminate and implement the findings of research in policy and practice.

#### **6. Ethics and legislation**

- a. Thorough knowledge of the code of professional ethics of the HPCSA, the Professional Board for Psychology and scope of practice for psychologists,
- b. Conduct all aspects of neuropsychological practice and research in accordance with guidelines for professional practice of psychology and the Professional Board for Psychology,
- c. Knowledge of relevant legislative frameworks that impact on neuropsychological practice and research.
- d. Conduct research and practice in accordance with these legislative parameters.

## **CRITICAL CROSS- FIELD OUTCOMES**

### **Assessment Criteria**

- a. Demonstrate the ability to assess, diagnose and treat neuropsychological conditions.
- b. Demonstrate evidence-based knowledge and skills in developing assessment, diagnostic and treatment options.
- c. Demonstrate the ability to work in a multidisciplinary team (MDT), group, organisation or community.
- d. Evidence of cultural sensitivity across social contexts.
- e. Demonstrate organisational and management skills through appropriate management of clients/ patients.
- f. Demonstrate appropriate verbal and written communication skills.
- g. Ability to refer to other psychologists and professionals.
- h. Demonstrate appropriate and professional demeanour and conduct.

## **INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT**

Formative and summative assessment strategies should be used throughout the qualification programme to ensure that exit level and cross-critical outcomes are met.

a) Formative assessment may include:

- Tests
- Written and practical assignments.
- Practical assessments, for example, client assessment.
- Groups and community engagement
- Literature reviews.
- Case studies.
- Class presentations.
- Seminars.
- Peer evaluations.
- Simulations in structured learning environments.
- Learning portfolios.

b) Summative assessments include:

- Written examinations.
- Oral examinations.
- Practical examinations.
- Supervisor reports where applicable.
- Objective simulated evaluation scenarios.
- Research based thesis.

### **INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY**

This qualification, compared to similar qualifications internationally, produces a comprehensive and balanced practitioner, equipped to address issues of assessment and intervention within a wide range of psychological and life challenges. The practitioner functions within the internationally recognised domains of therapist, counsellor, health promoter, researcher, educator, change agent, expert witness and practice manager. While neuropsychology programmes offered worldwide vary, the training of neuropsychologists in South Africa is informed by the unique history of the country and the evolution of the healthcare systems.

### **ARTICULATION POSSIBILITIES**

Horizontal and vertical articulation with the following programmes is possible.

- Horizontally with Masters Degree in other areas of Psychology
- Vertically with Doctorate in Psychology