



The Professional Board for Psychology

Minimum standards for the training of Clinical Psychology

February 2019

QUALIFICATION:	Board Approved Master's Qualification
FIELD:	Health or Social Sciences
SUB-FIELD:	Health Sciences
NQF LEVEL:	9
CREDITS:	Minimum of 180 credits

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE FOR THE QUALIFICATION

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

The Professional Master's degree in Clinical Psychology 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 Clinical Psychology. 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 clinical psychologists 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 Clinical Psychologist in Independent Practice.

Definition of Clinical Psychology

Clinical psychology is a specialist category within professional psychology that provides continuing and comprehensive mental and behavioural healthcare to individuals and groups across the lifespan. This includes the assessment, diagnosis,

evaluation, and treatment of psychological and mental health disorders that range from mild to severe and complex. Psychological assessment, diagnosis and formulation are based on biological, social and psychological factors. Clinical psychologists deliver a range of high-intensity psychological interventions with demonstrated effectiveness in treating mental health disorders and psychological distress associated with medical conditions.

LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE

Bachelor degree majoring in Psychology and an Honours degree in Psychology (Four years)

Or

An accredited Bachelor of Psychology (BPsych) degree.

The following courses must have been studied prior to selection into the Master's Clinical Programme: Psychological assessment, Psychopathology, Developmental Psychology, Personality and Psychotherapeutic Methods, Research Methodology.

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 an accredited programme in Clinical Psychology is open to applicants in possession of a recognised Bachelor degree with a major in Psychology and an Honours degree in Psychology, or an accredited Bachelor of Psychology (BPsych) degree; and who satisfy other requirements as stipulated by the training institutions.

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES

The following exit level outcomes (ELO) must be achieved by the applicant to be awarded the qualification¹:

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

1. Psychological Assessment

Clinical psychologists should have the ability to use psychological assessment to conceptualise, diagnose, plan and monitor therapeutic processes and outcomes by:

- a) Using a range of psychometric and other psychological procedures, including systematic interviewing to establish the presence of clinical signs and symptoms of psychological distress.
- b) Assessing the neuro-cognitive, personality and emotional functioning of adults and children.
- c) Performing comprehensive mental status assessment in combination with the use of formal diagnostic classification systems.
- d) Diagnosing a broad range of psychiatric disorders and psychological disorders.
- e) Communicating effectively psychological findings to a variety of recipients in different formats.
- f) Performing neuropsychological and psycho-legal assessments
- g) Recognizing the need for further investigations and refer to other disciplines.

2. Psychological Interventions

Clinical Psychologists should have the ability to develop theoretical and aetiological formulations in order to:

- a) Apply psychological interventions to people (individuals, groups, families) with psychiatric, medical and neurocognitive conditions.
- b) Perform a range of psychological interventions with individuals and groups, including adults and children, based on a diversity of psychological theories.
- c) Identify, understand and promote coping with psychological distress and life challenges.
- d) Identify psychological emergencies and intervene.
- e) Enhance mental health functioning of individuals, groups, families and communities.
- f) Work in different contexts e.g. community, medical and/ or mental health settings and implement appropriate evidence-based interventions.

- g) Apply a range of intensive, long-term interventions as well as short-term, supportive, psycho-educational interventions. (Specific interventions will vary by settings in which clinical psychologists operate, and according to the scope of practice).
- h) Have knowledge of the theory and practice of more than three evidence based models of psychological therapy.

3. Professional Practice

Clinical Psychologists should;

- a) Adhere to their scope of practice and where indicated and refer clients/ patients to relevant professionals accompanied by appropriate referral reports.
- b) Be able to identify and liaise with locally available resources and facilities for clients/ patients with particular needs.
- c) Have the ability to conduct various aspects of psychological practice and research in a manner that is cognizant of and sensitive to diversity (e.g. socio-economic status, language, culture, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation).
- d) Understand and apply relevant aspects of legislation.
- e) Perform psychological practice and research in contexts such as those related to clinical, health psychology and neuropsychological matters.
- f) Have competence in the management of client/patient information.
- g) Establish protocols and contracts with clients/patients (individuals, groups, organizations, government departments).
- h) Have knowledge of psychopharmacology and basic non-invasive clinical skills.
- i) Communicates clearly using verbal and written skills in a professional context, demonstrates clear understanding and use of professional language which will also be used in a court of law.
- j) Demonstrate knowledge of assessment for forensic purposes.
- k) Work in a multi-disciplinary team by way of making psychological contributions in the discussions.
- l) Demonstrate familiarity and knowledge of medical terminology and first aid.
- m) Demonstrate knowledge in the planning, establishment, and management of a

business practice.

4. Research

- a) Clinical Psychologists should have the ability to design, manage and conduct ethical and responsible research which contributes to psychological knowledge, theory and practice, to report on such research, and implement the findings of such research in policy and practice
- b) Conduct research in collaboration with other health care practitioners.

5. Policy Development and Programme Design

- a) Ability to provide advice on the development of policy applicable to a variety of sectors and issues, particularly those that impact on psychological functioning and wellbeing of people, based on psychological theory and research.
- b) Ability to design, manage and evaluate a range of psychologically-based programmes in diverse settings (health, education and labour)
- c) Ability to design and implement promotive, preventative, curative and supportive programmes.

6. Training and Supervision

- a) Ability to train other practitioners and provide such training and supervision in accordance with the requirements of their category of registration and scope of practice.
- b) Ability to present cases in multi-disciplinary settings.

7. Ethics

- a) Clinical Psychologists have a thorough knowledge of the code of professional ethics of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology.
- b) Clinical Psychologists have the ability to conduct all aspects of psychological practice and research in accordance with guidelines for professional practice of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology.

8. Legislation

- a) Knowledge of relevant legislative frameworks which impact on psychological practice and research.
- b) Ability to conduct research and practice in accordance with these legislative parameters.

CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOMES

1. Assessment Criteria

- a) Identifying and solving problems is demonstrated during the assessment and planning phases of client care as well as during the intervention phase of client care.
- b) Critical and creative thinking skills are used in developing therapeutic interventions.
- c) Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community is demonstrated in the interactions with other psychologists and health professionals.
- d) Cultural and aesthetic sensitivity is evidenced through providing acceptable and satisfying professional care across social contexts.
- e) Organising and managing the self is demonstrated in the successful management of clients.
- f) Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information is indicated in the successful generation and execution of research and appropriate psychological services.
- g) Effective communication, both verbally and in writing, is demonstrated through the successful engagement of clients, the psychological team, other health professionals and the broader public and other relevant stakeholders in all spheres of practice.
- h) Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems is indicated in the range of activities of the successful Clinical Psychologist and how this professional locates her/himself within the broader psychology system.
- i) Development of entrepreneurial abilities, the use of personal and professional skills is indicated by the successful sourcing of new/alternate employment opportunities.
- j) Continuous self-assessment is performed as indicated in the life-long learning activities and accompanying professional growth.

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.

Formative assessment may include:

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

Summative assessments include:

- Written examinations
- Oral examinations
- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)
- Practical examinations
- Supervisor reports
- Objective simulated evaluation scenarios
- Research dissertations.

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 clinical psychology programmes offered worldwide vary, the training of clinical psychologists 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 Master's degrees in other areas of Psychology
- Vertically with Doctorate in Psychology