



The Professional Board for Psychology

# Minimum standards for the training of Registered Counsellor

February 2019

**QUALIFICATION:** Board Approved BPsych degree  
(Registered Counsellor)

**FIELD:** Health or Social Sciences

**SUB-FIELD:** Health Sciences

**NQF LEVEL:** 8

**CREDITS:** 480

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

The qualification is aimed at producing competent, ethical and professional Registered Counsellors who can meet the psychological needs of the people living in South Africa. The Professional Bachelor of Psychology (BPsych) degree (Registered Counsellor) 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.

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

### ***Definition of Registered Counsellor***

Registered Counsellors are psychological professionals with special expertise in providing psycho-education and conducting psychological and preventative interventions that focus on the promotion and enhancement of psychosocial wellbeing for individuals, families, groups and communities. Registered Counsellors perform psychological screening, basic assessment and psychological interventions with individuals and groups aimed at enhancing personal functioning.

A Registered Counsellor's technically limited interventions are delineated by a scope of practice outlined in Form 258.

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

- A National Senior Certificate
- Other requirements stipulated by the collaborating University or training institute

## 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 Bachelor of Psychology (BPsych) degree programme is open to applicants in possession of a National Senior Certificate or an equivalent; and who satisfy other requirements as stipulated by the training institutions.

## MINIMUM COMPETENCIES

The following exit level outcomes (ELO), including the successful completion of an approved 6 month or 720 hour face-to-face practicum must be achieved by the applicant to be awarded the qualification:

### 1. Psychological Assessment

- a) Demonstrates the ability to perform screening of psychological functions, including cognition, interests, aptitudes and personality.
- b) Demonstrates the ability to conduct primary mental status screening in order to refer clients for more specialized mental status assessment.
- c) Demonstrates the ability to perform a limited number of psychological tests in which training has been completed, excluding projective, neuropsychological and diagnostic tests. Also demonstrates the use of basic psychological assessment procedures such as structured interviews and observation.
- d) Demonstrates the ability to perform these psychological assessment activities in a variety of contexts, i.e. health, education, labour etc., at a level of delivery equivalent to primary healthcare.
- e) Demonstrates the ability to identify clients in need of more sophisticated psychological assessment, including advanced mental status assessment. The demonstration of competence to foreclose on appropriate referrals to Psychologists or other professionals for ongoing assistance and/or intervention.

### 2. Psychological Interventions

- a) Ability to conceptualize client's presenting problems within the framework of appropriate explanatory models.

- b) Ability to protect and promote the psychological well-being of communities and individuals at risk.
- c) Ability to integrate and apply the necessary components required to ensure a supportive and confidential relationship.
- d) Ability to provide preventative and developmental counselling interventions.
- e) Ability to identify clients requiring more advanced psychological intervention in order to appropriately refer these clients to psychologists and/or other professionals.
- f) Ability to apply the components and phases of basic counselling and the use of a semi-structured intervention model.
- g) Ability to appropriately select counselling interventions for the purposes of prevention and amelioration of presenting psychological challenges as well as mental health promotion.
- h) Ability to apply a range of short-term, supportive, and psycho-educational interventions.
- i) Ability to contain the presenting difficulties and support to assist in the restoration of a previous/more adaptive level of functioning.

### **3. Professional Practice**

- a) Demonstrates knowledge and insight into the ecosystemic context within which people live and the determinants and risk factors associated to psychological challenges within these contexts.
- b) Demonstrates understanding of the fundamental prescriptions of the South African healthcare systems in terms of laws, policies and healthcare delivery.
- c) Demonstrates the ability to examine possible causes or sources of developmental challenges and potential reasons for disturbances in the developmental process.
- d) Demonstrates the knowledge of different theoretical perspectives and their application when addressing the psychological challenges of clients.
- e) Demonstrates understanding and application of the components and phases of basic counselling and the use of various psychological intervention models.
- f) Demonstrates awareness of and effective use of interpersonal skills that enhance therapeutic relationships in multicultural contexts, including those that involve children, adolescents and adults.

- g) Demonstrates proficiency in implementing and presenting psycho-education workshops and presentations on topics relevant to local communities.
- h) Demonstrates the ability to conceptualize clients' psychological challenges throughout the interlinking developmental phases.
- i) Demonstrates basic knowledge of basic psychological challenges and understanding of diagnostic systems relevant to psychology.
- j) Demonstrates the ability to perform these psychological interventions in a variety of sectors (Health, Education, Employee Wellness Programmes, labour etc.) at a level of delivery equivalent to primary health care.
- k) Ability to refer clients to relevant professionals in a variety of systems, including health, education, legal and labour systems.

#### **4. Research**

- a) Ability to evaluate and apply best fit research design, methodology and analysis. Including: High levels of theoretical engagement, intellectual autonomy, independent self-managed learning, conducting and reporting on research under supervision.
- b) Demonstrates the ability to complete a research project which can be conducted in a community setting.
- c) Work as individuals or in groups to evaluate and apply best fit research design, methodology and analysis.
- d) Apply knowledge and understanding of research methodology.
- e) Demonstrates the ability to work ethically (an ethics committee must review research proposals for ethical compliance).
- f) Demonstrate the ability to keep records of all data related to ethical clearance of research proposals.

#### **5. Ethics and Legislation**

- a) Recognises moral and ethical principles and legal responsibilities for the practice of Psychology.
- b) Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the Codes of Professional Ethics of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology and international best practices.

- c) Demonstrates the ability to conduct all aspects of psychological practice and research in accordance with the guidelines for professional practice compiled by the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology.
- d) Demonstrates knowledge of relevant legislative frameworks which impact on and underpin psychological practice and research.
- e) Demonstrates the ability to conduct research and practice in accordance with these legislative parameters.
- f) Understanding of the limitations and boundaries of own professional competence.

### **CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOMES**

#### **1. Assessment Criteria**

- a) Identifying challenges and selecting treatment alternatives is demonstrated during the assessment and planning phases of client care.
- b) Critical and creative thinking skills are used to envisage short-term treatment options.
- c) Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community is demonstrated by interactions with other psychologists and health professionals.
- d) Sensitivity to diversity is evidenced through respectful and humane acceptance of and ability to adapt to all cultural and social contexts.
- e) Organising and managing the self is demonstrated by self-monitoring and the in-depth review of interactions with 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 with clients, the psychological team, other health professionals and the broader public and relevant stakeholders. It is also exhibited in the appropriate use of psycho-education and information sharing.
- h) The acceptance of the world as a set of interrelated systems is essential to the understanding of a Registered Counsellor. Also relevant, it how they position themselves within the broader context of psychology and other healthcare systems.

- i) The development of entrepreneurial abilities and personal and professional skills is demonstrated by initiative in sourcing employment opportunities and the ethical management of an independent practice.
- j) Continuous self-development is accessed by participation in life-long learning activities, continued professional development and other opportunities for professional growth.

### **INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT**

In relation to the programme, assessment should be continuous, align to an outcomes-based educational approach and training (OBET) as well as SAQA's guidelines for 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
- Psycho-education workshops and class presentations
- Seminars
- Peer evaluations
- Simulations in structured learning environments
- Learning portfolios.

Summative assessments include:

- Written examinations
- Oral examinations
- Practical examinations
- Supervisor reports (where applicable)
- Objective simulated evaluation scenarios

### **INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY**

In keeping with psychological services offered internationally in both developing and developed countries, the practitioner functions within the internationally recognised

domains of counsellor, health promoter and psycho-educator, change agent and practice manager. At this level, it provides for the possibility for postgraduate education in the field of psychology.

### **ARTICULATION POSSIBILITIES**

Horizontal and vertical articulation with the following programmes is possible.

- Horizontally with Bachelor of Psychology (Psychometry)
- Vertically with Master's degree in Psychology
- Vertically with Doctorate in Psychology