

THE PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR PSYCHOLOGY

GUIDANCE TO PREPARE FOR THE NATIONAL BOARD EXAMINATION FOR PSYCHOMETRY

This guidance is written for trainee and previously registered Psychometrists who are obliged to write the National Board Examination to demonstrate their command of the competencies of Psychometry. The guidance is divided into four parts as follows:

1. Preparing for the National Board Examination for Psychometry
2. The Scope of the Examination Paper
3. Recommended Reading
4. Writing the Examination

In addition to this guidance, please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the [Examination Policy for Psychologists, Registered Counsellors and Psychometrists \(Form 255\)](#).

Preparing for the National Board Examination for Psychometry

It is important that you take time to prepare for the National Board Exam and not simply rely on your learning from your academic and practicum.

To prepare adequately for the Board Examination for , you should be able to demonstrate a good understanding of professional identity of Psychometry and demonstrate that you can apply your professional knowledge as a Psychometrist to relevant cases in an ethical manner.

The format of the paper, therefore, is in the form of multiple choice questions that assess your psychometric knowledge (Section A) and one or more written case studies followed by a variety of questions that require you to demonstrate that you can appropriately apply your knowledge (Section B). You may be asked to describe and resolve any ethical issues, provide a case formulation, and discuss how you would intervene as a Psychometrist. There may be other questions that test your knowledge of the scope and professional identity of a Psychometrist.

The Scope of the Examination Paper

The scope of the examination paper is determined by the Board's definition of Psychometry and list of competencies of Psychometry, both of which have been recently updated.

Definition of Psychometry

A psychometrist is a psychological practitioner that performs psychometric assessments in a variety of contexts. This includes administering, scoring, interpreting, report-writing and providing feedback based on psychometric assessments; and contributing to the development of psychological tests and procedures particularly for the South African context.

The Professional Board for Psychology's mandate to protect the public means that the emphasis of the Examination should be on the areas that involve direct contact with vulnerable clients. (For a complete list of competencies, please consult the document, [Minimum standards for the training of Psychometrists](#)).

In essence, areas of competence that need to be focused on, are highlighted for each of the critical core competency areas.

Instrumental Knowledge and Skills

a. Range of tests and experiences

The Psychometrist must use an appropriate range of tests including:

- i. Group and individually administered tests;
- ii. Tests that tap general cognitive ability;
- iii. Tests that tap specific cognitive, perceptual, and psychomotor functions;
- iv. Tests that tap personality-related functioning
- v. Tests for children and adults;
- vi. Organizational type tests for organizational development and job selection;
- vii. Computer based tests and Internet based tests

b. Test administration

The Psychometrist:

- i. is able to evaluate tests to be able to choose appropriate tests;
- ii. will understand and interrogate Psychometric properties of tests in deciding on appropriate tests to use;
- iii. will understand the limitations of particular tests;
- iv. has adequate knowledge of the manual of each test that is used;

- v. is well prepared for the test session;
- vi. adheres strictly to the instructions provided in the manual;
- vii. gives clear, concise instructions; administers the test according to best practice and guidelines with due respect for the client;
- viii. completes the answer sheet correctly and correctly scores it.

c. Scoring and interpretation

- i. has adequate knowledge of the scoring procedures or criteria for each test that is used;
- ii. has adequate knowledge of norm scores, how to transform between different norm scores and learns how to choose appropriate norm tables;
- iii. becomes proficient at converting raw scores to scale or norm scores and in using cut-points to interpret/classify test performance;
- iv. has the ability to calculate appropriate norm scores if required;
- v. understands the limits to the generalizability of norms provided;
- vi. is able to take contextual factors and relevant data into account during test administration and interpretation

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

- a. being able to appropriately prepare test-takers for the test;
- b. establishing rapport with test takers and asking appropriate questions during the intake interview;
- c. interacting with relevant persons (e.g., parents, employers);
- d. administering tests by speaking clearly and coherently;
- e. being able to clearly and professionally report on the findings;
- f. providing clear and well- presented written feedback on the findings according to the constructs/criteria of the relevant test manual;
- g. providing clear and well-presented oral/verbal feedback on the findings to suit the level of the client.

Contingency Management Skills

Psychometrists are equipped to handle:

- a. routine problems that may arise during test administration, scoring and verbal feedback;
- b. a test-taker's questions during test administration and verbal feedback;

- c. situations where there is the potential for test misuse or for misunderstanding the administration and scoring of the test, interpretation of test scores and/or reporting of the test scores.

Basic Practice Management and Referral Skills

- a. the requirements regarding advertising professional services;
- b. how to prepare a business plan, start and manage a practice;
- c. how to implement an accounting system and an appropriate fee structure as per the tariffs set;
- d. about the need for indemnity insurance;
- e. how to identify when the needs or symptoms with which a client presents fall outside his/her expertise and should be dealt with by another health care professional;
- f. how to refer a client to an appropriate professional peer within the health care system (e.g., psychologist, general practitioner, social worker).

Ethics and Legislation

- a. Psychometrists will have a thorough knowledge of the code of professional ethics of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology
- b. Psychometrists will have the ability to conduct psychological assessment and research in accordance with guidelines for professional practice of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology
- c. Psychometrists will have knowledge of relevant legislative frameworks which impact on psychological practice and research.
- d. Psychometrists will have the ability to conduct research and practice in accordance with these legislative parameters

Recommended Reading

You will need to consult readings that will help you to appropriately demonstrate the competencies that are listed above. Some useful ones are described below, though the list is not and can never be exhaustive:

To practise ethically in South Africa, you should be able to demonstrate sound knowledge of the relevant HPCSA policies. These include the following:

- The ethical code for Psychologists. This includes two documents: The first is the [Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practitioners Registered under the Health Professions](#)

[Act, 1974](#) that applies to all registered health professionals, and the second is [Annexure 12 - Rules of Conduct Pertaining Specifically to the Profession of Psychology](#).

- It is essential that you make sure that you are very familiar with the ethical code to practice ethically in South Africa. The ethical readings can and should be complemented but never replaced by other sources. Good complementary readings include the work of Alfred Allan and others (E.g., [Allan, A. \(2016\). Law and Ethics in Psychology: An International Perspective \(3rd Ed.\). Place: Inter-Ed](#)).
- You should also be familiar with the [List of Classified Tests \(Form 207\)](#), and understand the purpose of test classification, which is described in the [Policy on the Classification of Psychometric Measuring Devices, Instruments, Methods and Techniques \(Form 208\)](#).
- Other important HPCSA policies that could be covered in the Exam include the revised [Policy Document on Business Practices](#).

Ethical practice should also comply with the laws of the country in which you will work. Candidates should familiarise themselves with the relevant sections of the following National legislation:

- [Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 108 of 1996](#). This chapter is the Bill of Rights that enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. Psychological Acts must always be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the Bill of Rights.
- Also relevant is the [National Health Act, 61 of 2003](#) that provides a framework for a structured uniform health system within the Republic, taking into account the obligations imposed by the Constitution and other laws on the national, provincial and local governments with regard to health services.
- It is advisable that you familiarise yourself with the [Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974](#) that established the Health Professions Council of South Africa and the Professional Boards to provide for control over the education, training and registration for and practising of registered Health Professions. You must of course be very familiar with your scope of practice contained in [Form 94](#).
- [The Children's Act, 38 of 2005](#) governs all the laws relating to the care and protection of children and is therefore very relevant to the practice of Psychometry. Similarly, the [Child Justice Act, 75 of 2008](#) specifies the laws that apply to accused children.
- [Section 8 of the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998](#) refers to psychological testing in the workplace, which you should know. Though written for the workplace, the

requirements are applicable in many other contexts. Indeed, make sure that you appreciate the use and potential abuse of psychological instruments in our multicultural, post-apartheid era.

There are many readings that you may want to consult to prepare yourself to answer questions on psychometric assessment. The following text is a good resource and freely available:

[Psychological Assessment in South Africa: Research and applications](#), edited by S. Laher & K. Cockcroft (Eds.) and published by Wits University Press in 2013. The text is open access and can be freely downloaded <http://oopen.org/search?identifier=1004362>

Others:

- Cohen, R.J. & Swerdlik, M.E. (2010). [Psychological Testing and Assessment: An Introduction to Tests and Measurement \(Seventh Edition\)](#). McGraw-Hill: Boston.
- [Foxcroft, C. & Roodt, G. \(2013\)](#). Introduction to Psychological Assessment in the South African Context (Fourth Edition). [Oxford University Press: South Africa](#).
- [Kaplan, R.M. & Saccuzzo, D.P. \(2013\)](#). Psychological Assessment and Theory: Creating and Using Psychological Tests (8th Edition). [Wadsworth, Cengage Learning: Canada](#)

Writing the Examination

Though you will by now have successfully written many exams in your life, it is always good to be reminded to approach the paper carefully and systematically. Arrive early, so that you do not put yourself under any unnecessary stress. Check that you have been given the correct paper (it has happened that candidates have written the paper for another category). Make sure that you read the instructions, case studies and the questions very carefully. Examinations are stressful, and it is easy to misread a question or miss an important detail in the case study.

Manage your time carefully. Often when candidates fail the exam, it is because they did not manage to complete all the questions. Allocate time to each section according to their proportional values; If, for example, a question is worth 25 marks out of 100, you should spend no more than a quarter of your time on it, which for a three-hour exam, is 45 minutes.

Spend a few minutes to structure your answers rather than immediately responding and always try to leave enough time at the end to review your answers carefully.

Good luck.

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