



The Professional Board for Psychology

# **Policy regarding Registered Counsellors:**

**Framework for Education, Training,  
Registration and  
Scope of Registered Counsellors**

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**The Act** refers to the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974.

**Community context** - includes police and military services, schools, Early Child Development Centres, NGOs, TVET Colleges, Correctional facilities, Employee Assistance Programmes, Primary Health Care Centres, District Hospitals, Hospices and NPOs.

**Counselling** - is a reflective, disciplined relationship between the Registered Counsellor and a client(s) based on trust, relationship with a view to uphold the rationale and purpose of the Registered Counsellor as outlined in this form. This relationship is defined by empathy, equality and positive regard and is receptive, supportive, helpful, and genuine. Counselling skills include but are not limited to the use of active listening skills, and reflection with the aim of assisting clients with more adaptive levels of functioning.

**Crisis** - a state of psychological turmoil in which the person concerned feels unable to cope.

**Crisis intervention** - counselling that focuses on acute or critical situations (e.g. victims or witnesses of crime or violence, accident victims, emergency emotional containment) and the alleviation of distress in these situations.

**Ecosystem** - the dynamic interaction between individuals, couples, families, groups, communities and society.

**Fundamental understanding of psychopathology** - an understanding of psychopathology for the purposes of screening, identification of psychological challenges and accurate referral, where necessary.

### **Primary Intervention:**

- Being the first line of community based psychological support;
- Providing preventative and developmental counselling services and interventions on all systems levels;
- Identifying and addressing causes of problems, or containing expressed emotion so that it does not get worse (secondary intervention);
- Activities designed to ameliorate stressors and help develop peoples coping abilities
- Psycho-education and mental health promotion: A planned, proactive transfer of information designed to promote and enhance psychosocial wellbeing for individuals, families, groups and communities or to reduce or prevent future harm.

**Primary Prevention:**

- Psycho-education and mental health promotion that addresses relevant issues in community contexts
- A planned, proactive transfer of information designed to promote and enhance psychosocial wellbeing for individuals, families, groups and communities or to reduce or prevent future harm.

**Psychological counselling intervention** – Screen, assess, psychological education and training and referral.

**Screening** – the investigation of a possible disruption to a client’s psychological wellbeing and early identification of mental health challenges.

**Supportive** – counselling that assists to alleviating traumatic responses and/or assists clients to adjust to altered circumstances.

## 1 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE FOR THE QUALIFICATION

The qualification is aimed at producing competent, ethical and professional Registered Counsellors who can meet the needs of South Africa in order to make primary psychological services available in diverse settings thereby enhancing psychological well-being of the public. This qualification is critical in providing good quality psychological care at primary health care level.

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 in diverse contexts. The focus of the profession is on prevention, promotion and community based care.

The qualifying practitioner will be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as a Registered Counsellor to render psychological services that are focused on primary prevention and intervention for psychological difficulties in diverse community contexts as well as promotion of psychosocial wellbeing.

## 2 ROLE OF A REGISTERED COUNSELLOR

The role of the Registered Counsellor is to extend psychological services and make them accessible to the diverse South African population. A Registered Counsellor conducts psychological and preventative interventions that focus on the promotion and enhancement of psychosocial wellbeing for individuals, families, groups and communities.

Registered Counsellors differ from other categories of psychology in that they are psychological practitioners who perform psychological screening, basic assessment and psychological interventions with individuals and groups, aimed at enhancing personal functioning. In that their function is to prevent, promote, intervene, and appropriately refer. Their role at a preventative and promotional level involves:

- Providing preventative, developmental counselling services and interventions;
- Screening and identification of mental health challenges;
- Competency in psychometric assessments that fall within the scope of practice as outlined in this form;
- Containment of presenting difficulties, i.e. the alleviation of distress;
- Support to assist in the restoration of a previous/more adaptive level of functioning;
- Psycho-education and mental health promotion;
- Promotion of primary psychosocial wellbeing;
- Working with interdisciplinary professional teams; and
- Referral to appropriate professionals or other appropriate resources according to the guidelines of good practice in the health professions

### **3 OPTIONS FOR OFFERING THE BPSYCH OR BPSYCH HONOURS EQUIVALENT PROGRAMME**

Registration as a Registered Counsellor is contingent on completion of:

- a) a Professional Bachelor's degree in Psychology (a 480-credit qualification with an exit at NQF level 8)
- b) a Bachelor Honours degree or the equivalent to the BPsych degree that incorporates an approved 6 month or 720-hour face-to-face practicum. This is referred to as a BPsych Honours Equivalent programme

Students must have successfully completed an approved 6 month or 720 hour face-to-face practicum. Counselling hours must be recorded in a logbook and countersigned by the supervising Registered Counsellor.

## 4 REQUIREMENT OF REGISTRATION AS STUDENT REGISTERED COUNSELLORS

In terms of the Regulations relating to the registration of Student Registered Counsellors published in terms of Government Notice No 287 of 9 October 2012, all students registered at an accredited institution offering education and training as Registered Counsellors have to be registered as students from the first year of study.

In order to register as a Student Registered Counsellor, Form 53 has to be completed by each student and verified by the educational institution. The following supporting documentation must accompany the application:

- The prescribed registration fee with proof of payment
- A copy of the identity document or birth certificate of the student
- A copy of the marriage certificate of the student (if registering with his/her married surname)

An additional fee in respect of each month or part of a month will be payable should the application be submitted later than four (4) months after the date of registration at the Training Educational Institution

## 5 SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of student Registered Counsellors is undertaken by higher educational institutions according to institutional criteria. All selection criteria must be made available on the website of the University/training institute. Examples of criteria should include but not be limited to:

### 1.1. Academic Criteria

These will be in accordance with the University entrance regulations for Undergraduate and Postgraduate qualifications.

### 1.2. Selection Criteria

These will be in accordance with the accredited BPsych or BPsych Honours Equivalent programme:

- Intra and interpersonal skills

- Potential to learn necessary skills of a Registered Counsellor
- Self-discipline
- Ability to work in a team
- Psycho-social wellness
- Ability to work under pressure
- Ability to work in a community
- Ability to work with diversity
- Reading and writing proficiency
- Computer proficiency.

### **1.3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

These will be in accordance with University procedures and regulations.

## **6 ACADEMIC TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

Academic training in the BPsych Honours Equivalent Degree accredited by the Board as equivalent to the BPsych degree and includes the following:

- Psychopathology
- Developmental Psychology
- Therapeutic Psychology
- Research Psychology
- Psychometric and psychological assessment
- Personality Psychology
- Community Psychology
- Career Psychology.

## **7 PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

Professional training includes but is not limited to the following:

- Professional ethics and conduct
- Interviewing techniques
- Client observation skills
- Basic counselling skills
- An understanding of psychopathology for the purposes of screening, identification of psychological challenges and accurate referral where necessary
- Development of preventative and developmental programmes

- Report writing
- Conceptualization skills, bio-psychosocial and systems theory as appropriate for community interventions
- Structured trauma counselling
- Community understanding and intervention
- Psychometric competencies (within the Registered Counsellor scope of practice)
- Sensitivity regarding cultural beliefs and diversity
- Language sensitivity
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Psycho-educational and mental health promotion skills
- Practice management
- Policy development skills
- Referral expertise
- A thorough grounding in the Ethical Code, practice management model, the Bill of Rights and other relevant legislation.

## **8 RESEARCH PROJECT**

The research project of student Registered Counsellors can be conducted in a community setting. Research projects may be undertaken individually or in groups. The focus is on the student's ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of research methodology.

An ethics committee must review research proposals for ethical compliance. Records must be kept of all data related to ethical clearance of research proposals.

## **9 PRACTICUM TRAINING**

The practicum is an integral part of the BPsych Degree (Registered Counsellor) and BPsych Honours Equivalent programme and is an accredited part of the programme.

- Practicum training in the BPsych Degree (Registered Counsellor) may commence from the last semester of the third year.
- Practicum training in the BPsych or BPsych Honours Equivalent programme has a duration of six (6) months full time or an equivalent of not more than 12 months part-time. An extension limited to a maximum of three (3) months is recommended



should a student Registered Counsellor fail to reach the expected level of competency.

- A practicum must be undertaken in community context and may not be undertaken in a psychiatric setting;
- The practicum focuses on individual and group counselling conducted under supervision
- It also includes the implementation of psycho-education and mental health promotion in which there is a transfer of information by means of presentations and work-shops. Workshops may address relevant issue such as teenage pregnancy, abuse, bullying, drug awareness, bereavement and loss, unemployment or education about the roles and functions of Psychology's categories of registration etc.

#### **1.1. The following guidelines must be adhered to by training institutions:**

- Student Registered Counsellors to sign codes of conduct and confidentiality
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to be concluded between the university/training institute and practicum sites. These must clearly delineate all roles and responsibilities of students, supervisors and the practicum site.
- There needs to be a strong focus on guidelines of good practice and the ethical challenges that arise from supervisees' cases.
- Ensure signing by all clients of Informed Consent Forms
- Log-books detailing the practicum student's hours of service are essential.
- All consent forms and process notes to be securely stored to ensure confidentiality.
- The practicum should be formulated based on the model of training;
- Practical training is being done during the duration of the four-year training;
- The practicum may not be extended beyond 3 months

## **10 SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR REGISTERED COUNSELLORS**

Registered Counsellors are psychological practitioners who perform psychological screening, basic assessment and psychological interventions with individuals and groups, aimed at enhancing personal functioning. Registered Counsellors work in a variety of community contexts including SAPS and SANDF; the Department of Labour; Mortuary services; schools; Student Counselling centres; Early Child Development centres; NGOs;

TVET Colleges; correctional facilities; Employee Assistance Programmes; Primary Health Care Centres; District Hospitals; hospices and NPOs.

More specifically, the Registered Counsellor will:

- a) Manage complete sub-elements of intervention programmes with associated interventions;
- b) Design sub-elements of intervention programmes and processes;
- c) Execute less advanced, more structured interventions.
- d) Devise and implement presentations and work-shops for psychoeducation and mental health promotion.

The following acts fall within the scope of practice of Registered Counsellors:

- a) being the first line of community based psychological support;
- b) providing preventative and developmental counselling services and interventions on all systems levels;
- c) performing supportive psychological interventions to enhance emotional functioning and mental well-being;
- d) performing basic psychological screening for the purpose of mental health as a preliminary screening tool in order to refer appropriately;
- e) developing preventative and developmental interventions on all systems levels;
- f) provide counselling in conjunction with interdisciplinary support teams
- g) provide psycho-education and mental health promotion.
- h) report writing and providing feedback to clients on interventions.

## **11 LIST OF PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS TO BE USED BY REGISTERED COUNSELLORS**

Registered Counsellors should use an assessment process that is multidimensional which includes:

- a) Multiple measures such as norm and criterion-based tests, informal assessment interviewing and observation of behaviour.
- b) Multiple domains of functioning such as attention, cognitive and scholastic development
- c) Multiple sources from family or teachers and other professionals

- d) Multiple settings such as school or work; on a one-to-one basis or with peers or parents
- e) Multiple occasions to obtain relevant and valid information over a period of time

Registered Counsellors should thus obtain training to do assessment in a multidimensional manner and not focus on psychometric testing on its own. A multidimensional assessment process will also infuse a more ethical practice.

The following psychometric tests may be used by Registered Counsellors who should therefore receive training on these tests:

### **LIST OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS TO BE USED BY REGISTERED COUNSELLORS**

<b>INTELLIGENCE</b>
Cattell Culture Fair Intelligence Tests
Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM)
School-readiness Evaluation by Trained Testers (SETT)

<b>ABILITY</b>
Critical Reasoning Test Battery (CRTB1) (CRTB2)
Figure Classification Test
General Reasoning Test Battery (GRT2)
Graduate Reasoning Test Battery (GRT1)
Paper and Pencil Games (PPG)

<b>APTITUDE</b>
General and Graduate Test Batteries
General Scholastic Aptitude Test (GSAT)
Aptitude for School Beginners (ASB)

<b>LEARNING POTENTIAL</b>
APIL
Learning Potential Computerised Adaptive Test (LPCAT)
TRAM-1
TRAM-2

<b>PERSONALITY</b>
Personal, Home, Social and Formal Relations Questionnaire
OPP
15 fq+
Jung

<b>INTEREST</b>
Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ)
Nineteen Field Interest Inventory (19FII)
Occupational Interest Profile (OIP)

Self-Directed Search Questionnaire (SDS)
South African Vocational Interest Inventory (SAVII)
Strong Interest Inventory (SII)

<b>STUDY HABITS</b>
Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA)

DEVELOPMENTAL MEASURES (not for projective purposes)
Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test
Bender
<b>SCHOLASTIC</b>
ESSI Reading and Spelling Tests

**PLEASE NOTE: The following tests require training to be provided by the test distributor**

APIL
Learning Potential Computerised Adaptive Test (LPCAT)
TRAM-1
TRAM-2

## 12 SUPERVISION OF REGISTERED COUNSELLORS

- a) The accredited higher educational institution is responsible for the supervision of student Registered Counsellors;
- b) All psychology categories may supervise student Registered Counsellors, apart from psychometrists industrial and research psychologists
- c) The supervisor will be required to have 3 years post-registration experience
- d) The supervisor must sign a code of conduct and confidentiality
- e) The supervisor should ensure that the student Registered Counsellors adhere to the scope of practice as outlined in this form.
- f) 20 hours structured group or individual supervision is required;
- g) A maximum ratio of 1 supervisor to 5 student Registered Counsellors is prescribed.
- h) The model for supervision is one-on-one and/or group supervision.

## 13 TIMEFRAME FOR REGISTRATION AS A REGISTERED COUNSELLOR

Graduates have to register as Registered Counsellors within three (3) years of completion of their academic and practical training. The six (6) months practicum must be integrated into the four (4) year accredited programme.

- a) Persons who exceed the timeframe for registration as a Registered Counsellor by more than **3 to 5** years will be required to complete an additional **3** month practicum. The onus rests on each individual to ensure that they still have the required competency to practice as a Registered Counsellor.
- b) Persons who exceed the timeframe for registration as a Registered Counsellor by more than **5 to 7** years and **11** months will be required to complete an additional **6** months practicum.
- c) Persons who exceed the timeframe for registration as a Registered Counsellor by **8 years or more** will not be eligible for registration as a Registered Counsellor.
- d) Persons who exceeded the timeframe for registration as a Registered Counsellor by 3 years or more will be required to submit an assessment report from their University or training institute, stating that the University had assessed the individual and was satisfied or not satisfied with the candidate's theoretical knowledge.