

THE PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR PSYCHOLOGY

GUIDELINES TO PREPARE FOR THE NATIONAL BOARD EXAMINATION FOR INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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

1. Preparing for the National Board Examination for Industrial Psychology
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 Industrial Psychology

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 internship years.

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

The format of the paper, therefore, is usually in the form of one or more written case studies followed by a variety of questions that require you to demonstrate that you can appropriately apply your knowledge. Questions may ask you to describe and resolve any ethical issues, provide an organisational diagnosis and/or conceptualisation, and discuss how you would intervene as an Industrial Psychologist. There may be other questions that test your knowledge of the scope and professional identity of Industrial Psychology.

The Scope of the Examination Paper

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

The definition of Industrial psychology, which should always inform your approach to psychological assessment, organisational diagnosis, conceptualisation and intervention, is as follows:

Definition of Industrial and Organisational Psychology

Industrial Psychology is a specialist category within professional psychology concerned with the performance and wellness of people at work and with how individuals, groups and organisations behave and function. Its aim is to help individuals pursue meaningful and enriching work, and to assist organisations in the effective management of their human resources. Industrial psychologists provide psychological assessment, diagnosis and interventions to address psychological factors of critical relevance to organisations and their members.

The 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. Therefore, of the nine areas of competency, the examination will be confined to (1) Problem Diagnostic and Intervention Planning (2) Intervention Design (3) Psychological Assessment, 4) Professional Practice, 5) Communication and Reporting, 6) Ethics and legislation. (For a complete list of competencies, please consult the document, [Minimum Standard for the training of Industrial Psychology](#) available in the HPCSA website.

1. Problem Diagnostic and Intervention Planning

Industrial Psychologist should be able to diagnose organisational problems and plan appropriate intervention by:

- a) conducting needs and risk analysis, assess client requirements and priorities,
- b) defining the goals and outcomes of chosen psychological interventions through applying contextual knowledge, techniques, analytical skills and insight,
- c) defining and setting goals for the interventions, communicating these effectively to the client and identify criteria for effectiveness and goal achievement.

2. Intervention Design

Industrial Psychologist should be able to design appropriate intervention through:

- a) Applying appropriate knowledge and insights of the South African population and psychological measurement theories and techniques,

- b) Analysing the design requirements for instruments and methods to be used for assessment and/or interventions,
- c) Designing and/or developing client centred solutions,
- d) Designing or adapting tests, instruments, systems and methods,
- e) Conducting studies to compare instruments (e.g. tests, ratings scales), techniques and methods, and to establish feasibility, reliability, validity and unbiasedness.
- f) Conducting studies to evaluate the effectiveness, client satisfaction, user friendliness and cost-benefits of a service, instrument or technique.

3. Psychological Assessment

Industrial Psychologist should have the ability to use psychological assessments to:

- a) Diagnose and assess human behaviour in a variety of workplace-related settings by applying knowledge, theories and techniques of both psychology and psychometrics,
- b) Determine potential and/or suitability for training, development and employment for a particular position,
- c) Diagnose work place related psychopathology (for example trauma, stress and burnout),
- d) Assess individual and group perceptions, attitudes and behaviours related to careers and HR practices,
- e) Assess organisation-level perceptions, attitudes and behaviours related to structure, culture and management styles and practices,
- f) Determine workforce characteristics or organisational structure and context (for example organisational design or job analysis to determine behavioural success criteria).
- g) Procedurally refer individuals to appropriate professionals in a variety of contexts and systems

4. Professional Practice

Industrial Psychologist should:

- a) Identify and implement objectives and comprehensive interventions of work or project plans,
- b) Enhance and/or promote individual, group or organisational well-being and optimal functioning,
- c) Work in collaboration with other health care professionals as part of the implementation of psychological services and interventions that ensures career and workplace related adjustment.

- d) Identify and implement objectives and comprehensive person-orientated interventions that enhance optimal functioning of individuals, groups and organisations such as the implementation of selection practices that optimise the fit of individuals to jobs, leadership training, conflict resolution, mediation, coaching, career counselling and team development,
- e) Design interventions to identify, understand and promote various aspects of psychological well-being and resilience, including the ability to provide short-term counselling as part of individual and systemic interventions like post-trauma counselling, crisis counselling, and job stress related counselling,
- f) Facilitate interventions for individual and group processes to ensure effective organisational functioning.
- g) Design interventions that introduce changes in work environments,
- h) Identify and implement interventions that provide advice, training, support and consulting services,
- i) Apply principles of psychology in consulting processes when implementing interventions with organisations, groups and individuals in a business setting.
- j) Influence the use of instruments, techniques and methods for optimising working conditions that enhance individual, group or organisational functioning (for example, ergonomic workplace improvements, employee compensation, appraisal technology or performance management methodology and employment relations).
- k) Design strategies that inform consumer behaviour,
- l) Design interventions that identify, understand and manage physical and psychological health challenges that influence employee capability and productivity.
- m) Conduct scientific interventions and research,
- n) Influence policies applicable to a variety of sectors and issues based on various aspects of psychological theory, research and services.

5. Communication and Reporting

Industrial Psychologist should:

- a) Communicate the results of interventions and research to clients and other appropriate stakeholders taking ethical and confidentiality requirements into consideration,
- b) Provide verbal or written feedback on assessment and intervention results,
- c) Compile reports on the results of assessments and other intervention outcomes,
- d) Report on research and implement the findings of such research into policy and practice.

6. Ethics

- a) Industrial Psychologist demonstrates professional conduct,
- b) Industrial Psychologist work within the scope of Industrial and Organisational Psychology practice and competence.
- c) Industrial Psychologist observes the regulatory framework, professional standards and codes of ethics and conduct.

7. Legislation

- a) Ability to acquire and apply knowledge of relevant legislation frameworks that influence psychological practice and research.

Recommended Reading

The following list is not exhaustive. It is recommended that you consult current and relevant readings that will help you to prepare adequately for the National Board Examination and demonstrate knowledge of the core competencies identified above.

- Bergh, Z. (2018). Introduction to Work Psychology. 2nd Ed. South Africa: Oxford University Press.
- Corey, G., Nicholas, L. J., & Bawa, U. (2017). Theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy. 2nd SA Ed. Cengage learning.
- Meyer, W.F., Moore, C. & Viljoen, H.G. (2016) *Personology: From individual to ecosystem*. Johannesburg: Pearson Education SA.
- Articles and readings on the current world of work/ Fourth industrial revolution, such as: Ghislieri C, Molino M and Cortese CG (2018) Work and Organizational Psychology Looks at the Fourth Industrial Revolution: How to Support Workers and Organizations? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9:2365.doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02365
- Code of practice for psychological and other similar assessment in the workplace. (2006). Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa (SIOPSA) In association with People Assessment in Industry (PAI).

To practice 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.
- 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](#).
- As Industrial Psychologists, you should understand and appreciate the mental health and psychological implications of the HIV pandemic and be familiar with the [HPCSA Good Practice Guide \(HIV\)](#).

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 should be familiar with relevant workplace legislation including the [Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998](#), the [Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995](#), and the [Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997](#).

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://oapen.org/search?identifier=1004362>

As already stated, the list of readings and legislation above is far from exhaustive. You should also consult your own course readings and material that address these core competencies of Industrial Psychology listed above in the broad areas of assessment, diagnosis, formulation and intervention, and those that deal with contextual issues such as basic conditions of employment, employment relations and more.

If asked to provide a case formulation (or case conceptualisation), you should do so in such a way as to describe and explain the clients' psychological functioning (a client could be an individual, group, or organisation), no matter how impaired, including always their strengths and resources, and, very importantly, illustrate the influence of relevant social, cultural, political and economic factors. Always stay true to the philosophical tenets of Industrial Psychology.

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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