



The Professional Board for Psychology

Minimum standards for the training of Educational Psychology

February 2019

QUALIFICATION: Board Approved Master's Qualification

FIELD: Health and Social Sciences

SUB-FIELD: Health Sciences / Education

NQF LEVEL: 9

CREDITS: Minimum of 180 credits

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE FOR THE QUALIFICATION

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

The Professional Master's degree in Educational Psychology is aligned to 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 Educational 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 educational 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 an Educational Psychologist in Independent Practice.

Definition of Educational Psychology

Educational Psychology is a specialisation of psychology concerned with assessment, diagnosis, formulation, and intervention in contexts that support the learning and development of individuals, with an emphasis on children and young people. Educational Psychologists frequently consult with children, and young people in settings such as the family, school, early childhood and development contexts, social, residential and mental health settings, as well as parents, caregivers, and teachers. Educational Psychology advocates a bio-ecological approach to psychological and educational intervention.

Educational Psychologists have strong foundational knowledge of learning theory, developmental psychology and developmental psychopathology across the lifespan (particularly neurodevelopment and cognitive functioning), the family life cycle, and major theoretical approaches informing the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people, and the family.

Educational Psychologists conduct individual, group and family therapy and other therapeutic interventions, demonstrate psychological consultation skills and have knowledge of a range of psychological interventions required in contexts that relate to the development and learning of individuals, families, groups, and communities. Educational Psychology requires the ability to integrate psychological theory with practice through the application of Educational Psychology theory to complex problems over the lifespan.

LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE

- Bachelor degree in Education with Psychology on NQF level 7 and an Honours in Educational Psychology or Psychology on NQF level 8
- Bachelor degree in Psychology with Education on NQF level 7, or a recognized Council of Higher Education (CHE) approved Post Graduate Certificate in Education and Honours degree in Educational Psychology or Psychology
- Accredited Bachelor of Psychology (BPsych) degree on level 8 with Psychology or accredited Bachelor of Psychology (BPsych) degree on NQF level 7 with Psychology as a major and recognized Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

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 Educational 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 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. Psychological Assessment

- a) Assess cognitive, emotional, social, relational, behavioural, physical and neurodevelopmental functioning by using a range of psychological and educational instruments and techniques.
- b) Assessment includes interviews with stakeholders and observation in settings that impact on learning and development.
- c) Identify and diagnose psychopathology related to the mental health and well-being of children, young people, and their families or caretakers.
- d) Identify severe psychopathology in individuals that impact on the well-being of children and young people (such as parents, caregivers, siblings, teachers, family members) and make appropriate referrals.
- e) Perform mental status assessment.
- f) Conduct individual, group, relational and systemic assessments that inform psychological and educational interventions.
- g) Conduct psycho-legal assessments.
- h) Write comprehensive psychological reports.

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

2. Psychological Interventions

- a) Knowledge of the theory and practice of more than three evidence based models of psychological therapy.
- b) Implement psychological interventions with children, young people, and their families diagnosed with a range of psychological disorders that impact on the cognitive, social, emotional, behavioural and physical development of children and young people and their families.
- c) Identify, understand and promote resilience and well-being of children, young people, their families in their interactions with others in a range of contexts that support learning and development over the lifespan.
- d) Design and implement specialized learning support for a range of individuals with special learning needs and their families/ caregivers in a variety of settings such as special schools, full-service schools, and residential settings.
- e) Demonstrate the ability to select appropriate therapeutic interventions that may include individual psychotherapy, group therapy, and family therapy, to support children, young people, and their families to promote mental health and well-being.

3. Prevention and Development

- a) Design and implement culturally relevant assessment and intervention programmes for individuals, families, groups, and communities to promote resilience and mental well-being.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to establish professional relationships with individuals, groups, families, and institutions in communities through participatory approaches to psychological consultation.
- c) Promote the rights of children and young people who are vulnerable as a result of influences on the family such as divorce or child-headed families, AIDS, substance abuse and community violence or cyber-bullying.

4. Professional Practice

Educational Psychologists demonstrate:

- a) Commitment to adhere to the scope of practice when developing their competencies and when implementing their psychological knowledge and skills.

- b) The ability to refer clients appropriately to professionals in a range of contexts that include health, education, social development, and labour.
- c) Sensitivity and awareness of the impact of culture, equality and diversity (including but not limited to gender, sexuality, religion, language, race and socioeconomic status) on their professional practice.
- d) Advanced skills in case conceptualization, the ability to apply psychological and educational theories to inform their practice, and to evaluate the appropriateness of psychological interventions for a broad range of clients and contexts.
- e) Competence in understanding legislation relevant to understanding and promoting the best interests of children, young people and their families, and develop the skills to conduct psycho-legal assessments.
- f) Psychological consultation skills in a range of contexts that require transdisciplinary collaboration to support the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social development of children, young people, and their families.
- g) Skill in all aspects of practice management ranging from informed consent practices, contracting with clients, management of confidential information, report writing and billing.
- h) The ability to work in a non-discriminatory manner.
- i) Skills in change management and advocacy.

5. Research

- a) Design, manage, conduct, report on and supervise psychological and educational research.
- b) Implement and evaluate the findings of such research in policy and practice.

6. Policy Development and Programme Design

- a) Advise on policy development applicable to a diverse range of issues related to the mental health and well-being of children, young people and their families in a range of contexts to support learning and development, especially related to poverty and contextual disadvantages
- b) Design, manage and evaluate a range of educational psychological programme
- c) Design, implement and evaluate preventative and supportive programmes, particularly for vulnerable children and young people and their families or caretakers.

7. Training and Supervision

- a) Develop and implement training programmes to train other professionals, para-professionals and parents/caregivers in basic educational psychological theories and skills.
- b) Provide ongoing supervision of other professionals such as registered counselors, students, interns, and Educational Psychologists.
- c) Provide training and supervision in accordance with the category of registration and the scope of practice.

8. Ethics

- a) Knowledge of the code of professional ethics of the HPCSA and the Professional Board of Psychology.
- b) Conduct all aspects of professional practice and research in accordance with the guidelines for professional practice of the HPCSA and the Professional Board of Psychology.
- c) Conduct research and practice in accordance with these legislative parameters.

9. Legislation

- a) Knowledge of relevant legislative frameworks and regulations which impact on practice and research
- b) Use legislative frameworks and regulation to support and promote the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families in contexts that impact on their learning and development.

CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOMES**1. Assessment Criteria**

- a) Identifying and solving problems is demonstrated during the assessment and planning phases of client care.
- b) Critical and creative thinking skills are used in developing interventions.
- c) Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community is demonstrated in the interactions with other psychologists, education and health professionals
- d) Cultural and aesthetic sensitivity is evidenced through acceptance and satisfaction of professional care across social contexts.

- e) Organising and managing self is demonstrated in the successful management of clients (individuals, groups, and communities).
- f) Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information is indicated in the successful generation and execution of appropriate psychological and educational 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 role-players in all spheres of the Educational Psychologist's practice appropriate counselling.
- h) Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems is indicated in the range of activities of the successful Educational Psychologist and how this professional locate her/himself within the broader psychology and educational system.
- i) Development of entrepreneurial abilities, the use of personal and professional skills is indicated by the successful identification of new/alternate employment opportunities and well as sourcing and generation of funding.
- 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
- Client assessment
- Designing and executing case management programmes
- Literature review
- Case studies
- Class presentations
- Seminars
- Peer evaluations
- Simulations in structured learning environments

- Learning portfolios
- e-learning platforms
- Individual Education Programmes

Summative assessments include:

- Written examinations
- Oral examinations
- Practical examinations
- Supervisor reports where applicable
- Objective simulated evaluation scenarios
- Research-based mini-dissertation

INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY

This qualification, compared to similar qualifications internationally, produces a comprehensive and balanced practitioner, equipped to address issues of assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of a wide range of psychological disorders and educational barriers that affect children, and young people in diverse contexts that support learning and development. The practitioner functions within the internationally recognised domains of psychologist, therapist, researcher, educator, expert witness, change agent and practice manager.

ARTICULATION POSSIBILITIES

Horizontal and vertical articulation with the following programmes is possible.

- Horizontally with a Master's Degree in other areas of Psychology and/or Education
- Vertically with a Doctorate in Psychology, Educational Psychology and/or Education