
MEDIA STATEMENT

REVISED MANDATE OF THE PSYCHOMETRICS COMMITTEE OF THE PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR PSYCHOLOGY

11 July 2019

For immediate release

1. Various options for test classification by the Professional Board for Psychology were considered over a period of time and the Executive Committee of the Professional Board noted that there was still confusion on the role of the Board in terms of the evaluation and classification of psychometric tests and instruments and the fact that the Board was not legally mandated to certify psychological tests.
2. The Psychometrics Committee of the Professional Board was inundated with enquiries related to the High Court Judgment on the current practice of the Psychometrics Committee of evaluating and certifying psychological assessments. The High Court Judgment stated that “certify” was not the same as classify and should not be used interchangeably.
3. Based on legal advice, the High Court Judgment did not refer to the Professional Board or the HPCSA. It referred to the Minister of Labour and the President of the Republic. The Committee was evaluating psychological tests before the amendment to the Employment Equity Act. However, the interpretation of the court judgement within the profession was that the Professional Board should classify tests and not evaluate tests.

4. No legislative framework mandated the Professional Board to issue a certificate once a test was approved, the Professional Board was only legally mandated to publish a list of classified tests.
5. It was not within the mandate of the Professional Board to quality assure psychological assessments. Test publishers and practitioners should be held accountable for the quality of tests. Practitioners should be ethically obligated to ensure that tests were used with fairness and psychometric properties were up to standard.

With this view, the Professional Board for Psychology at its recent meeting revised the mandate of the Psychometrics Committee to be in line with HPCSA regulatory framework. As of February 2019, the Psychometrics Committee will deal with all matters pertaining to test classification (not evaluation), the education and training of psychometrics and psychological assessment.

These include:

- To classify any device, instrument, questionnaire, apparatus, method, technique or test aimed at the evaluation of emotional, behavioural and cognitive processes or adjustment of personality of individuals or groups of persons, or for the determination of intellectual abilities, psychopathology, personality make-up, personality functioning, aptitude or interests by the usage and interpretation of questionnaires, tests projections or other techniques or any apparatus, whether of SA origin or imported, and to report thereon to the Professional Board.
- The Annual publication of a list of psychological tests/psychometric instruments classified by the Professional Board.
- Develop training guidelines/standards related to psychometrics and psychological assessment that can inform and be used in the accreditation of qualifications, universities and internship programmes, when setting the national Board examinations, and for continuing professional development purposes
- Develop guidelines for ethical practice related to test use and psychological assessment and how to assess whether a psychological test meets the required standards

- Develop minimum requirements/standards for psychological tests

Classification will entail verifying whether a test was psychological or not. To this end, practitioners and publishers should submit the full test manual that states the construct(s) tapped by the test, evidence of psychometric properties, an indication as to whether the item content was culturally appropriate. No costs would be attached to test classification by the Professional Board.

END

About the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) also known as Council is a statutory body established under the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974. The HPCSA is committed to protecting the public and guiding the professions. The mission of the HPCSA is quality and equitable healthcare for all.

The HPCSA is mandated to regulate the health professions in the country in aspects pertaining to education, training and registration, professional conduct and ethical behaviour, ensuring Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

In order to safeguard the public and guiding the professions, registration in terms of the Act is a prerequisite for practising any of the health professions registrable with Council.

Issued by:

Daphney Chuma

Head of Division: Corporate Affairs

Health Professions Council of South Africa

Protecting the public and guiding the professions

President: Dr TKS Letlape, Vice President: Mr. LA Malotana, Registrar/CEO: Dr MR Billa

Tel: 012 338 9481

Cell: 071 680 8111

Email: daphneyc@hpcsa.co.za

Protecting the public and guiding the professions

President: Dr TKS Letlape, Vice President: Mr. LA Malotana, Registrar/CEO: Dr MR Billa