

Criteria for the vetting of warrant applications

The Malta Psychology Profession Board (MPPB) is bound by law to observe the criteria set forth in the Psychology Profession Act (2004) when determining whether a prospective candidate is eligible for a warrant to practice psychology and obtain the title of registered psychologist.

The Psychology Profession Act (2004), coupled with the criteria established by the MPPB, the legal entity that regulates the profession of psychology by virtue of the same act, requires applicants to adhere to the following criteria. Applicants must:

- a) Be Maltese citizens or else otherwise permitted to work in Malta
- b) Be of good conduct
- c) Have completed a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology of 180 ECTS (inclusive of a dissertation/thesis).
- d) Be in possession of a Master's Degree in Psychology conferred by the University of Malta, or any other professional qualification as the Board, may from time to time prescribe, or a comparable degree which satisfies the requirements of Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications and of the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act with respect to the recognition of qualifications from a university of established standing outside Malta. It is important to note that the Master's degree in Psychology has to be of 90¹ or 120 ECTS, or has to be a Doctorate in Psychology, and have clearly written in the title of the degree conferred the specialisation of psychology in which the applicant has attained expertise. In the case where the degree obtained is obtained in a foreign country, be it a EU country or otherwise, the MPPB needs to be satisfied that the degree obtained states clearly on the prospectus that the qualification would prepare the applicant to practice as a psychologist in the country where the training was obtained (e.g. the applicant must show that the degree fulfils Stage 1 of the British Psychological Society process of chartership in the area of expertise).
- e) Be able to prove that the applicant has undertaken adequate experience in the practice of the profession of psychology in the grade of psychology practitioner² for an aggregate period of at least 2 years full time or its equivalent in part time³. This period of experience in the profession has to be undertaken upon completion of the professional training or degree and it has to be undertaken under the supervision of a registered

¹ These typically are in the following specialisations; Forensic; Health; Organisational; and Sports Psychology. These would require an extra year of supervised practice and completion of a logbook covering the first year of supervised practice.

² Those candidates that apply from the position of assistant psychologist pre or post Masters are still required to practice for 2 years or its equivalent in part-time in the post of psychology practitioner as the board recognizes that the duties of a psychology assistant are inherently different from those of a psychology practitioner.

³ Equivalent in part time means 3770 hours, half of which (except in the case of Academic, Social or Research psychologists) are required to be direct client contact (assessments or psychological interventions).

psychologist. Thus, following completion of the said Master's degree or Doctorate, the psychology practitioner needs to complete:

- i. three years or 5655 hours of supervised practice, in the case of a Master's degree with 90 ECTS.
 - ii. or 3770 hours or two years of supervised practice, in the case of a Master's degree with 120 ECTS.
 - iii. or 1 year or 1885 hours of supervised practice, in the case of a practitioner's doctoral degree.
 - iv. in the specialisation of Clinical, Educational, and Counselling, only Master's degree with 120 ECTS or Doctoral degrees are acceptable in the process for warranting.
- f) Provide attestation that the general competencies⁴ of a psychologist and the core competencies relevant to each recognised specialisation have been attained by the applicant.
- g) Be under the supervision of a registered psychologist and supervisor who is registered with MPPB to provide supervision (unless supervision was obtained by a psychologist registered abroad). Applicants must show that they have carried out:
- i. 135 hours of supervision, if they completed a Master's degree with 90 ECTS, AND keep a logbook of the initial one year of supervised practice post qualification.
 - ii. 90 hours of supervision, if they completed a Master's degree with 120 ECTS.
 - iii. 45 hours of supervision, if they completed a practitioner's doctorate.
 - iv. at least 50% of supervision must be from a supervisor warranted in the same area of specialisation in which one is hoping to be warranted.

Important addendum

If the applicant has completed their professional training abroad, then the applicant needs to prove that the professional training is equivalent to the professional qualification conferred by the University of Malta. Obtaining this equivalency in qualifications is the responsibility of the applicant. Equivalency may be obtained from the Malta Qualifications Council. Identifying the MQRIC level rating by itself is not sufficient to establish equivalence to the Master's degree in Psychology conferred by the University of Malta, as well as subsequent eligibility for warranting. The MPPB also needs to be satisfied that the professional training undertaken by the applicant is equivalent to the training offered by the University of Malta. In addition, if a course is accredited by an overseas accrediting body, this does not automatically mean that it will be recognised by the MPPB, which is the local accrediting Board.

⁴ Explained in detail in the following section of the document.

Attestation of the following competencies in supervised practice:

The warrant applicant needs to provide attestation at the end of the 2-year⁵ practice period post training that they have met the core competencies and skills of the specialisation. The competencies listed below are adapted from the **UK Health Professions Council's Standards** of proficiency for practitioner psychologists⁶, and the list will guide the MPPB when processing applications.

1. General competencies of psychologists⁷

The general competencies that psychology assistants should aim for, and that psychologists should have, are:

- Be able to understand the power imbalance between practitioner psychologists and clients and how this can be managed appropriately.
- Be able to gather the information required through the careful administration of the appropriate assessment techniques.
- Be able to analyse, interpret, and critically evaluate the information collected.
- Be able to formulate and deliver care plans or interventions to meet the needs of the service users.
- Be in touch with the latest developments in the particular field of psychology specialised in, critically evaluate the research, and thus use it as a basis to inform their own practice. Thus the practitioner psychologist is expected to keep abreast with the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge relevant to their professional practice.
- Be able to adapt practice in order to be able to meet the diverse needs of service users.
- Be able to conduct audits, reviews of practice, and/or effectiveness of planned activity. Related to this competence one must keep adequate records (handled and kept in line with appropriate legislation).
- Be able to conduct adequate and appropriate diagnostic procedures, treatment and therapy or other interventions, keeping in the mind the safety of the service users.
- Be able to practice in a non-discriminatory manner, understand the importance and be able to maintain confidentiality (as well as understand where confidentiality cannot be maintained), and understand the need and importance of informed consent and exercise a professional duty of care.
- Be able to reflect critically on their practice and consider alternative ways of working.

⁵ Or its equivalence in part time, or 3 years in the case of a Master's degree that is less than 120 ECTS.

⁶ The MPPB would like to express their gratitude and appreciation to Mr D Knight on behalf of the Health Professions Council for granting permission to use the document entitled Standards of Proficiency-Practitioner Psychologists. For further information regarding this document kindly follow the subsequent link:-

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-proficiency/practitioner-psychologists/>

⁷ The following specializations are exempt from the general core competencies: Academic; Research; and Social Psychologists.

- Be able to understand and maintain a fitness to practice. Psychologists are thus expected to practice within their area of competence and specialisation, maintain high standards of personal conduct and manage the physical, psychological and emotional impact of their practice. Psychologists are also expected by the MPPB to fulfil the requirements set forth in the CPD document.
- Be able to plan, design and deliver training which would take into account the needs of participants.

These competencies will be maintained through mandatory regular supervision and CPD (see CPD document for further details).

2. Core competencies in the different areas of specialisation

Working towards warranting:

The greater part of the psychology practitioner's activities must be in the area of specialisation in which professional training has been received and for which a warrant is being sought. Such activity needs to be demonstrated through relevant attestation by employer and/or supervisor, as a requirement for warranting. Persons working towards warranting must be aware that unsupervised practice in a competence which has not been gained constitutes a breach of ethics (see also the CPD document).

2.1 Child, Adolescent, and Educational Psychologist core competencies: -

- Be competent in the relevant psychological assessments that would be of value to their practice.
- Be able to use the outcome of assessments, and draw on theories and research to develop psychological formulations and therapeutic interventions aimed at helping their clients within various settings.
- Be able to engage in culturally safe assessments and therapeutic interventions, in an individual or a group setting.
- Be able to understand the impact of psychopharmacological and other clinical interventions on psychological work with clients.
- Be able to provide evidence-based practice and research by being able to design and implement research activities.
- Be able to work in a multidisciplinary environment, which would also include the contribution of parents/guardians/carers.
- Be able, through the promotion of psychological wellbeing of their clients, to adopt a proactive and preventative role within educational settings.
- Be able to support the learning of others through the use of psychological skills and knowledge.
- Be able to understand psychological models and factors that might possibly lead to underachievement and social exclusion amongst vulnerable groups.

2.2 Clinical Psychologist core competencies: -

- Be able to use formal assessment procedures (standardised psychometric instruments), systematic interviewing procedures, and other structured methods of assessment.
- Be able to identify, review, and critically appraise a substantial body of research evidence relevant to clinical psychology practice.
- Be able to draw on knowledge of development and/or social and/or neuropsychological processes across the lifespan to facilitate adaptability and change in individuals, groups, families, organisations, and communities.
- Understand and use therapeutic techniques and processes as applied when working with a range of individuals in distress and implement psychological therapy or other interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client and based on a range of evidence-based models of formal psychological therapy.
- Understand the impact of psychopharmacological and other clinical interventions on psychological work with clients.
- Understand and implement psychological models related to working:
 - i. with individual clients, couples, families, carers, groups and at the organisational and community level; and
 - ii. in a variety of settings including in-patient or other residential facilities with high-dependency needs, secondary health care, and community or primary care.

2.3 Counselling Psychologist core competencies: - Understand explicit and implicit communications in a therapeutic relationship.

- Be able to conduct psychological assessments and make formulations of a range of presentations.
- Understand the use and interpretation of tests and other assessment procedures.
- Be able to critically evaluate risks and their implications.
- Be able to contrast, compare, and critically evaluate a range of models of therapy.
- Be able to critically evaluate psychopharmacology and its effects from research and practice.
- Be able, on the basis of psychological formulation, to implement psychological therapy or other interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of a range of clients.

2.4 Forensic Psychologist core competencies:

- Use formal assessment procedures, standardised psychometric tools, systemic interviewing procedures and other structured methods of assessments when assessing clients in a forensic setting.
- Be able to evaluate the risks that clients might pose to self and others and be aware of possible implications this evaluation might have.
- Be able to conduct service evaluations, conduct research and be able to develop psychological methods, theories and instruments in forensic psychology.
- Be able to use psychological formulations in order to plan adequate interventions with clients in a forensic setting. These interventions or psychological therapy are derived from empirically sound psychological formulations aimed at reducing maladaptive and/or socially damaging and offending behaviour displayed by the client. These interventions can be either at an individual or group level.
- Understand the theory and its application to the provision of psychological treatment that focuses on offenders, the victims of offences litigants, appellants and individuals seeking arbitration and mediation.
- Be able to understand the application of psychological theories to the criminal justice and legal system.
- Be able to understand the development of criminal and antisocial behaviour.

2.5 Health Psychologist core competencies:-

- Be able to support the learning of others in the application of psychological skills, knowledge, practices and procedures in the area of specialisation related to health outcomes.
- Be able to design and implement health psychology baseline assessments of behaviour related to health outcomes that are based on appraisal of the influence of the social and/or environmental context.
- Be able to develop psychological formulations using the outcomes of assessment drawing on theory, research and explanatory models.
- Be able to design, plan and implement health psychology interventions based on the assessment and formulation.
- Be able to evaluate and communicate the outcomes of health psychology interventions.
- Be able to critically evaluate risks and their implications.
- Be able to draw on knowledge of developmental, social and biological processes across the lifespan to facilitate adaptability and change in individuals, groups, families, organisations and communities.

- Be able to evaluate and respond to change in health psychology and in consultancy and service-delivery contexts.
- Understand the need to implement interventions and action plans in partnership with service users, groups and other professionals and carers.
- Understand context and perspectives in health psychology.

2.6 Neuropsychologist core competencies: -

- Demonstrate a holistic understanding of the social, psychological, cognitive and vocational impact of acquired brain injury and neurological conditions both for individuals and systems.
- Identify cognitive impairment, behavioural changes and emotional difficulties and provide integrated psychological/neuropsychological approaches to manage these.
- Understand structural organisation of neurorehabilitation services and the role of clinical neuropsychology within such a service.
- Use behavioural observations and to map them to possible neurological, cognitive or emotional underpinnings.
- Perform clinical assessment including history taking, bedside cognitive assessment and mental status examinations and carrying this through to management.
- Tailor neuropsychological assessment to clients and to address appropriate questions.
- Demonstrate familiarity with and select, administer and interpret a wide range of assessment instruments.
- Understand psychometric principles underpinning cognitive testing.
- Describe the range of factors that could affect performance on neuropsychological tests.
- Construct formulations about the client's neuropsychological status by the deductive application of appropriate test instruments in the course of a broader investigation.
- Demonstrate knowledge regarding the neuropsychological profiles associated with a range of common neuropsychological disorders.
- Use neuropsychological formulations dynamically to facilitate a clients understanding and adjustment, and to plan interventions if required, coupled with the ability to revise formulations.
- Use formulation, and devise and deliver evidence-based and tailored neuropsychological interventions.
- Adapt models of therapeutic intervention for psychological difficulty in the context of impaired cognitive functioning.

- Implement psychological interventions appropriate to the presenting 'neuropsychological' difficulty and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client(s).
- Apply principles of management and rehabilitation of neuropsychological/neurological disorders.
- Use up-to-date knowledge and understand the treatment approaches and management of a range of common of neuropsychological, neurological, and neuropsychiatric conditions.
- Understand the role of neuropsychology in mental health services.

2.7 Organisational/Occupational Psychologist core competencies:-

- Be able to act ethically in order to balance the interests of the organisation with individual rights.
- Be able to effectively use formal assessment for personnel selection.
- Be able to use the consultancy cycle and conduct systematic review.
- Be able to research and develop psychological methods, concepts, models, theories and instruments in occupational psychology and use psychological theory for the benefit of organisations and individuals.
- Understand and be able to act and provide advice on policy development concerning employees' and job seekers' legal rights and monitor agreements and practices.
- Be able to understand and effectively manage human-machine interaction and maximise the design of environments and work.
- Be able to effectively conduct performance appraisal and career development.
- Be able to effectively engage in counselling, personal development, and training.
- Be able to effectively negotiate employee relations and motivation.
- Be able to effectively manage organisational development and change.

2.8 Sport Psychologist core competencies: -

- Be able to use formal assessment procedures and standardised psychometric testing and interviewing procedures in assessing their clients within a sport psychology context.
- Be able to construct psychological interventions based on the outcomes of assessment, theories and research relevant to the specialisation of sport psychology.

- Demonstrate an understanding of specific psychological skills such as arousal and anxiety, confidence, coping skills, techniques of relaxation, goal setting, biofeedback, imagery and stress management.
- Demonstrate an understanding of personality and motivational differences. They must also show a grasp of how physical exercise is associated with outcomes such as mood, cognitions and self-esteem.
- Demonstrate an expertise in aspects of sporting activities that have a strong social component like team building, interpersonal communication and leadership skills.

2.9 Academic Psychologist core competencies:-

- Be able to keep abreast of the developments in their area of specialisation.
- Have the necessary skills to conduct both small and group teaching, as well lecturing large groups.
- Be able to support students in their thesis at various levels, that is at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level.
- Prepare and develop academic programs.
- Be able to construct valid course assessments to consult course content.
- Regularly publish in peer reviewed journals.
- Act as reviewers for journals in their area of expertise.
- Contribute to the development of the academic field of expertise and social concerns.
- Be able to conduct and disseminate research.

2.10 Research Psychologist core competencies:-

- Be able to conduct and disseminate research in the area of expertise.
- Be able to conduct research that informs public policy.
- Be able to keep abreast in most recent developments of research methods.
- Be able to keep abreast of the developments in their area of specialisation.
- Be able to publish papers in international peer-reviewed journals having a high impact factor (at least three papers)
- Be able to present studies at an international conference (at least in one conference)
- Be able to act as reviewers for journals in their area of expertise.

2.11 Social Psychologist core competencies:-

- Be able to carry out social psychological research which can contribute to the understanding of societal phenomena.
- Carry out assessments indicated in the learning outcomes of the BPS training in Psychometric Testing - Level A and Level B.
- Contribute to policy making.
- Apply social psychological theories to the understanding of societal issues.
- Carry out research based on sound research techniques.
- Be able to sit on selection boards related to the recruitment of personnel.
- Carry out training related to group work and group dynamics.
- Engage in nontherapeutic work with groups.

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