

APPENDIX D – CORE COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY

The College evaluates all applicants for a certificate of registration authorizing autonomous practice on the basis of five core competencies articulated in the *Mutual Recognition Agreement, 2004* (MRA) among Canadian psychology regulators

<http://www.cpa.ca/docs/File/MRA2004.pdf>

In the MRA, the competencies are described and the requisite knowledge and skills for each competency are identified.

Competence comprises knowledge, skill, judgment and attitudes, which when integrated, result in appropriate and effective action being taken in a particular situation (*Rodolfa, Bent, Eisman, Nelson, Rehm & Ritchie, 2005*).

The five core competencies are:

- 1) Interpersonal Relationships,
- 2) Assessment & Evaluation,
- 3) Intervention & Consultation,
- 4) Research, and
- 5) Ethics and Standards.

The College has adopted the following definitions of these five core competencies:

1. Interpersonal Relationships

This basic competency forms part of all the other competencies. Psychological associates normally do their work in the context of interpersonal relationships (parent-child, spouses, boss-employee, etc.). They must therefore be able to establish and maintain a constructive working alliance with their clients, and possess adequate cultural competency.

Required knowledge:

- (a) Knowledge of theories and empirical data on the professional relationship, such as interpersonal relationships, power relationships, therapeutic alliance, interface with social psychology, and more specific knowledge of the fluctuations of the therapeutic/professional relationship as a function of the intervention setting.

- (b) Knowledge of self, such as motivation, resources, values, personal biases, and factors that may influence the professional relationship (e.g. boundary issues).

- (c) Knowledge of others, such as the macro-environment in which the person functions (work, national norms, etc.) and the micro-environment (personal differences, family, gender difference, etc.).

Required Skills:

Effective communication, establishment and maintenance of rapport, and establishment and maintenance of trust and respect in the professional relationship.

How this core competence is evaluated:

The required knowledge and skills in interpersonal relationships is evaluated on the basis of supervised experience and an oral examination.

2. Assessment and Evaluation

A competent professional psychological associate draws on diverse methods of evaluation, determining which methods are best suited to the task at hand, rather than relying solely or primarily on the formalized testing as an automatic response to situations requiring assessment. The appropriate subject of evaluation in many instances is not an individual person but a couple, family, organization, or system at some other level of organization. The skills required for assessment can and should be applied to many situations other than initial evaluation, including, for example, treatment outcome, program evaluation, and problems occurring in a broad spectrum of non-clinical settings. The primary purpose of psychological assessment is to provide an understanding that informs a practical plan of action. It may result in a diagnostic classification or in the identification of strengths or competencies.

Required knowledge:

Assessment methods, knowledge of populations served, human development, and diagnosis. (Note: all applicants are expected to demonstrate graduate training in assessment and evaluation. In addition,

applicants will be evaluated on their formal preparation to formulate and communicate diagnoses; however the College may permit applicants to acquire some of the formal training for diagnosis after completion of the graduate degree.)

Required skills:

Formulations of a referral question, selection of methods, information collection and processing, psychometric methods, formulation of hypotheses and making a diagnosis when appropriate (see note above), report writing, and formulation of an action plan.

How this core competence is evaluated:

The required knowledge and skills in assessment and evaluation is evaluated on the basis of graduate courses in the psychology degree program, supervised practice, and an oral examination.

3. Intervention and Consultation

The intervention competency is conceptualized as activities that promote, restore, sustain, and/or enhance positive functioning and a sense of well-being in clients through preventative, developmental, and/or remedial services. A broad, comprehensive vision of the intervention competency should include explicitly theory as well as the following knowledge and skills.

Required knowledge:

The learning of an array of varied interventions with individuals and systems (e.g., couples, families, groups, and organizations), a respect for the positive aspects of all major approaches (which should reflect an openness to varied viewpoints and methods), awareness of when to make appropriate referrals and consult, awareness of context and diversity, and knowledge of interventions that promote health and wellness.

Required skills:

Establish and maintain professional relationships with clients from all populations served, establish and maintain appropriate interdisciplinary relationships with colleagues, gather information about the nature and severity of problems and

formulate hypotheses about the factors that are contributing to the problem through qualitative and quantitative means, select appropriate intervention methods, and analyze the information, develop a conceptual framework, and communicate this to the client.

How this core competence is evaluated:

The required knowledge and skills in intervention and consultation are evaluated on the basis of graduate courses in the psychology degree program, supervised experience, and an oral examination.

4. Research

Professional psychology programs should include research training such that it will enable students to develop: a basic understanding of and respect for the scientific underpinnings of the discipline, knowledge of methods so as to be good consumers of the products of scientific knowledge, and sufficient skills in the conduct of research to be able to develop and carry out projects in a professional context and, in certain cases, in an academic context with the aid of specialized consultants (e.g. statisticians).

Required knowledge:

Basic knowledge of research methods and of the applications of scientific research, including applied statistics and measurement theory, the logic of different models of scientific research (from laboratory experimentation to quasi-experimental and field research), and qualitative research methods (including observation and interviewing), etc., particularly with respect to the nature of reliability and validity in the gathering and interpretation of qualitative data.

Required skills:

Critical reasoning skills, applications of various research approaches to social systems, and the ability to write professional reports.

How this core competence is evaluated:

The required knowledge and skills in research are evaluated on the basis of graduate courses in the psychology degree program and a completed graduate research project.

5. Ethics and Standards

Professionals accept their obligations, are sensitive to others, and conduct themselves in an ethical manner. They establish professional relationship within the applicable constraints and standards.

Required knowledge:

Ethical principles, standards of professional conduct, responsibilities to clients, society, the profession, and colleagues, awareness of potentially conflicting principles, standards for psychological tests and measurements, standards for conducting psychological research, and jurisprudence and local knowledge.

Footnote:

Rodolfa, E.; Bent, R.; Eisman, E.; Nelson; Rehm, L.; and Ritchie, P.O. A Cube Model for Competency Development: Implications for Psychology Educators and Regulators. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, Vol. 36(4), Aug 2005, 347-354.

Required skills:

Ethical decision-making process, proactive identification of potential ethical dilemmas, and resolution of ethical dilemmas.

How this core competence is evaluated:

The required knowledge and skills in ethics and standards are evaluated on the basis of graduate courses in the psychology degree program, supervised experience, a written examination, and an oral examination.