



The Professional Board for Psychology

Intern Counselling Psychologists:

SGB for Counselling Psychology

February 2019

NAME OF QUALIFICATION: Master's degree in Counselling Psychology

FIELD: Health or Social Sciences

SUB-FIELD: Health Sciences

NQF LEVEL: 9

CREDITS: 240

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE FOR THE QUALIFICATION

The qualification is designed to produce competent, ethical, and professional Counselling Psychologists who can address the psychological needs of individuals, communities, and organizations within South Africa. The program focuses on developing practitioners who are proficient in traditional therapeutic practices and capable of navigating emerging challenges in mental health, including digital transformation, social justice issues, and the increasing complexity of mental health needs in society.

Aligned with the National Framework for Human Resources for Health in South Africa and the National Qualifications Framework, this Professional Master's degree in Counselling Psychology ensures that graduates are responsive to the psychological demands of the South African population.

The curriculum incorporates contemporary practices to prepare graduates for future challenges in Counselling Psychology. Upon completion, graduates will be eligible for registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as Counselling Psychologists in Independent Practice, ready to address evolving mental health needs and contribute to the well-being of South Africans.

Definition of Counselling Psychology

Counselling Psychology is a specialist category within professional psychology that promotes the personal, social, educational, and career functioning and well-being of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Counselling psychologists assist with normal developmental issues and work to prevent and alleviate psychological and mental health disorders ranging from mild to moderate severity. Central to their practice are psychological assessment, diagnosis, and

formulation, which draw on a holistic understanding of individuals' lived experiences and sociocultural contexts. Counselling psychologists may also engage in forensic work, providing assessments and expert opinions in legal contexts. They deliver a range of psychological interventions that leverage the therapeutic potential of positive relationships and emphasize individuals' strengths and resources.

LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE

Bachelor degree majoring in Psychology and an Honours degree in Psychology (Four years)

or

An accredited Bachelor of Psychology (BPsych) degree

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is managed by higher education institutions. However, all academic and training programs must meet the minimum requirements and competencies set by the Board.

ACCESS TO THE QUALIFICATION

Admission to an accredited program in Counselling Psychology is open to applicants with a recognized Bachelor's degree majoring in Psychology and an Honours degree in Psychology, or an accredited Bachelor of Psychology degree, who meet the additional requirements set by the training institutions.

QUALIFICATION RULES

The following exit level outcomes (ELO) must be achieved by the applicant to be awarded the qualification:

1. Psychological Assessment

- a) Knowledge of psychological measurement and psychometric theory, including the ability to judge the reliability and validity of psychometric tests in different social contexts and for different social groups.
- b) Knowledge of a range of psychological issues and problems, including life stressors and more severe issues with which individuals, families, groups,

communities, and organizations may struggle, such as developmental and adjustment problems, psychological crises, and mental and behavioral disorders.

- c) Competence in using ICD and DSM diagnostic systems to diagnose mental and behavioral disorders, as well as knowledge of informed critiques of these systems.
- d) Ability to conduct a comprehensive intake interview to obtain a detailed history and coherent description of the client's (individuals, couples, families, groups, communities, or organizations) psychological functioning.
- e) Ability to appropriately select and accurately administer culturally sensitive instruments and norms to assess intellectual, behavioral, emotional, personality, neuropsychological, and career functioning.
- f) Ability to accurately interpret and integrate data from intake interviews, records, psychometric assessments, and other sources to generate coherent case conceptualizations (formulations) that describe and explain clients' (individuals, couples, families, groups, communities, or organizations) psychological functioning, including their strengths and resources, while recognizing the influence of sociocultural contexts.
- g) Ability to formulate useful recommendations, including, when appropriate, clear and specific recommendations for psychological interventions.
- h) Ability to communicate the results and recommendations of assessments in written and verbal form clearly, constructively, and accurately.
- i) Ability to offer a well-supported medicolegal opinion and provide appropriate expert testimony when required.
- j) Ability to conduct psychological assessments and prepare reports for forensic contexts, including offering well-supported medicolegal opinions and providing appropriate expert testimony when required.
- k) Ability to effectively collaborate within multidisciplinary teams, contributing psychological expertise to enhance the overall understanding and management of clients' needs.

2. Psychological Interventions

- a) Knowledge of the theory and practice of more than three evidence based models of psychological therapy (for example, cognitive therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, narrative therapy, person-centred therapy etc.).
- b) Ability to formulate and conceptualise cases and plan interventions utilising at least one consistent theoretical orientation, drawing on the relevant empirical research and appropriately matched to own clinical expertise and client preferences.
- c) Ability to implement counselling and psychotherapeutic interventions to enhance psychological functioning and well-being, and address psychological problems that fall within the scope of practice for Counselling Psychology, including typical life stresses and more severe issues, including developmental and adjustment problems, psychological crises and trauma, as well as mild-to-moderate mental and behavioural disorders.
- d) Ability to implement these interventions in different contexts, including educational, community, health, correctional and work/organisational settings.
- e) Demonstrates an appreciation of sociocultural contexts in which people are situated, including the ways in which socio-political and economic factors cause human distress.
- f) Ability to initiate and sustain mentoring relationships utilising sound interpersonal and communication and other counselling skills to assist people in their learning, personal and professional development.
- g) Ability to design and provide psychoeducation, as well as community and public health interventions to prevent or delay psychological problems that fall within the scope of practice of Counselling Psychology, reduce the negative impact of these problems, and/or promote psychological health, optimal functioning and well-being.
- h) Ability to facilitate group processes, including, mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative justice.
- i) Ability to support and enable vulnerable groups to express their views and concerns, and access information and services, and to defend and promote their rights.

3. Professional Practice

- a) Knowledge of the theory and practice of more than three evidence-based models of psychological therapy (e.g., cognitive therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, narrative therapy, person-centered therapy, etc.).
- b) Ability to formulate and conceptualize cases and plan interventions using at least one consistent theoretical orientation, drawing on relevant empirical research and appropriately matched to one's clinical expertise and client preferences.
- c) Ability to implement counselling and psychotherapeutic interventions to enhance psychological functioning and well-being, addressing psychological problems within the scope of Counselling Psychology, including typical life stresses and more severe issues such as developmental and adjustment problems, psychological crises, and trauma, as well as mild-to-moderate mental and behavioural disorders.
- d) Ability to implement these interventions in various contexts, including educational, community, health, correctional, and work/organizational settings.
- e) Demonstrates an appreciation of sociocultural contexts in which people are situated, including the impact of socio-political and economic factors on human distress.
- f) Ability to initiate and sustain mentoring relationships using sound interpersonal and communication skills to assist individuals in their learning, personal, and professional development.
- g) Ability to design and provide psychoeducation, as well as community and public health interventions, to prevent or delay psychological problems within the scope of Counselling Psychology, reduce the negative impact of these problems, and/or promote psychological health, optimal functioning, and well-being.
- h) Ability to facilitate group processes, including mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative justice.
- i) Ability to support and enable vulnerable groups to express their views and concerns, access information and services, and defend and promote their rights.
- j) Ability to work effectively within multidisciplinary teams, ensuring that psychological interventions are integrated into broader care plans.

- k) Ability to apply psychological interventions in forensic contexts, providing therapeutic services and assessments that may be used in legal settings, including the provision of expert testimony when necessary.

4. Research

- a) Ability to design, manage, and conduct ethical and responsible research, utilizing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods, which contributes to psychological knowledge, theory, and practice. This includes the ability to report on such research and implement its findings in policy and practice.

5. Policy Development and Programme Design

- a) Ability to provide advice on the development of policy applicable to various sectors and issues, particularly those that impact psychological functioning and well-being, based on psychological theory and research.
- b) Ability to design, manage, and evaluate a range of psychologically-based programs in diverse settings and organizations, such as health, education, and labour, that promote strengths, well-being, and optimal functioning.

6. Training and Supervision

- a) Ability to develop training programs and to train other practitioners (including, for example, registered counsellors, psychometrists, nurses, teachers, lay counsellors, and community workers) in basic psychological skills.
- b) Ability to make appropriate use of supervision and to demonstrate this, with the capability to provide supervision to student psychologists, intern Counselling Psychologists, registered psychologists, and training and registered counsellors after three years of appropriate post-qualifying experience.

7. Ethics and Legislation

- a) Demonstrates advanced knowledge and application of the code of professional ethics of the HPCSA and the Professional Board for Psychology.
- b) Knowledge of relevant legislative frameworks that impact psychological practice and research.
- c) Ability to act in accordance with these ethical and legal frameworks.

- d) Understanding of the limitations and boundaries of one's professional competence.

CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOMES

1. Assessment Criteria

- a) Identifying and solving problems is demonstrated during the assessment and planning phases of client care as well as during the intervention phase of client care.
- b) Critical and creative thinking skills are used in developing therapeutic interventions.
- c) Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community is demonstrated in the interactions with other psychologists and health professionals.
- d) Cultural and aesthetic sensitivity is evidenced through providing acceptable and satisfying professional care across social contexts.
- e) Organising and managing the self is demonstrated in the successful management of clients.
- f) Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information is indicated in the successful generation and execution of research and appropriate psychological 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 stakeholders in all spheres of practice.
- h) Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems is indicated in the range of activities of the successful Counselling Psychologist and how this professional locates her/himself within the broader psychology system.
- i) 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
- Practical assessments, for example, client assessment
- Literature reviews
- Case studies
- Class presentations
- Role plays
- Seminars
- Peer evaluations
- Simulations in structured learning environments
- Learning portfolios.

Summative assessments include:

- Written examinations
- Oral examinations
- Practical examinations
- Supervisor reports
- Objective simulated evaluation scenarios
- Research dissertations.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY

Many of the competencies described in this document are adapted from the competencies of Counselling Psychology as described by the Society of Counselling Psychology (Division 17 of the American Psychological Association) and the American Board for Counselling Psychology, the New Zealand Psychologists Board, the Australian Psychological Society and the Health and Care Professions Council (UK).

This qualification, compared to similar qualifications internationally, produces a comprehensive and balanced practitioner, equipped to address issues of assessment and intervention within a wide range of psychological and life challenges. The practitioner functions within the internationally recognised domains of therapist,

counsellor, health promoter, researcher, educator, change agent, expert witness and practice manager.

ARTICULATION POSSIBILITIES

Horizontal and vertical articulation with the following programmes is possible.

- Horizontally with Master's degrees in other areas of Psychology and the broader Social Sciences
- Vertically with Doctorate in Psychology

MODERATION OPTIONS

- a) Providers offering learning towards this qualification must be accredited by the relevant ETQA, currently the HEQC, in conjunction with the HPCSA. In particular, accreditation is dependent on providers demonstrating that their curricula and or learning programme(s) meet the requirement as specified by the HPCSA.
- b) Moderation of assessment will be overseen by the appropriate ETQA according to moderation principles and procedures.

CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF ASSESSORS

- a) Assessors must be registered in terms of the requirements of the relevant ETQA.
- b) Assessors and moderators must be used in a manner that fits into the quality management system of the provider and in accordance with the institutional tuition and assessment policies. This must also apply to the appointment of outside assessors and/or moderators.
- c) Assessors and/or moderators must be registered as Counselling Psychologists. External moderators should ideally hold a doctorate.
- d) A minimum of three to five years of appropriate experience in the field being assessed.