

**Health Professions Council  
Standards of Proficiency for Applied Psychologists  
Professional Liaison Group (PLG)**

**Standards of proficiency – first draft**

**Executive Summary and Recommendations**

**Introduction**

The attached paper is a first, working draft of the standards for applied psychologists.

**Decision**

This paper is for discussion.

**Background information**

None

**Resource implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Appendices**

None

**Date of paper**

21<sup>st</sup> August 2007

## Standards of proficiency for applied psychologists 1<sup>st</sup> draft

### Key

PS: Suggested profession-specific standards

### Key points

- This draft incorporates information gained from the mapping of the QAA benchmark for clinical psychology to the standards of proficiency.
- This is a first, working draft and hence is not complete at this stage.
- In standard 2b.1, the clinical scientists' standards of proficiency have been referred to as a starting point for detailing the research basis of applied psychology.
- The group is invited to comment on the draft standard and identify:
  - a) areas where additional profession-specific standards for applied psychologists are necessary; and
  - b) areas where profession-specific standards for particular applied psychology disciplines might be necessary.

A further draft of the standards will be brought back to the next meeting of the PLG.

Registrant applied psychologists must:

	<b>Professional autonomy and accountability</b>
<b>1a.1</b>	<p><b>be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand the need to act in the best interests of service users at all times</li> <li>- understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council</li> <li>- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing</li> <li>- be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession</li> </ul>
<b>1a.2</b>	<b>be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner</b>
<b>1a.3</b>	<b>understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality</b>
<b>1a.4</b>	<b>understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent</b>
<b>1a.5</b>	<b>be able to exercise a professional duty of care</b>
<b>1a.6</b>	<p><b>be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem</li> <li>- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative</li> <li>- know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional</li> <li>- recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions</li> </ul>
<b>1a.7</b>	<b>recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly</b>

<b>1a.8</b>	<p><b>understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice</li> <li>- understand the need to maintain high standards of personal conduct</li> <li>- understand the importance of maintaining their own health</li> <li>- understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning</li> </ul>
PS	<p>- <i>be able to manage the physical and emotional impact of their practice</i></p>

Ref	Standard
	<b>Professional relationships</b>
<b>1b.1</b>	<p><b>be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users and their relatives and carers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team</li> <li>- understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals</li> <li>- be able to make appropriate referrals</li> </ul>
<b>1b.2</b>	<b>be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team</b>
PS	- <i>understand the role of the applied psychologist across a range of settings and services</i>
<b>1b.3</b>	<b>be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and carers</b>
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>be able to evaluate the feedback needs of service users</i></li> <li>- <i>be able to select the appropriate means for communicating feedback to service users</i></li> <li>- <i>be able to explain the nature and purpose of specific psychological techniques to service users</i></li> </ul>
<b>1b.4</b>	<p><b>understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users</li> </ul>

Ref	Standard
	<b>Identification and assessment of health and social care needs</b>
<b>2a.1</b>	<b>be able to gather appropriate information</b>
<b>2a.2</b>	<b>be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques</b> - be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment
<b>2a.3</b>	<b>be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate</b>
<b>2a.4</b>	<b>be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected</b>
PS	- <i>be able to interpret assessment methods</i>
PS	- <i>be able to conduct risk assessment</i>

Ref	Standard
	<b>Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs</b>
<b>2b.1</b>	<p><b>be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice</li> <li>- be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures</li> <li>- be aware of a range of research methodologies</li> <li>- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving</li> <li>- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice</li> </ul>
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>be able to conduct fundamental research</i></li> <li>- <i>be able to summarise and present complex ideas in an appropriate form</i></li> <li>- <i>be able to present the outcomes of research to peers in an appropriate form</i></li> <li>- <i>be able to search and critically appraise literature and other sources of information</i></li> </ul>
<b>2b.2</b>	<p><b>be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments</li> <li>- be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice</li> </ul>
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>be able to adapt practice where necessary to take account of organisational and cultural contexts</i></li> <li>- <i>be able to make appropriate decisions in the absence of complete data</i></li> </ul>
<b>2b.3</b>	<p><b>be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors</li> </ul>

<b>2b.4</b>	<b>be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully</b> - understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
PS	- <i>be able to develop psychological formulations using the outcomes of assessment, drawing on theory, research and explanatory models</i>
<b>2b.5</b>	<b>be able to maintain records appropriately</b> - be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines - understand the need to use only accepted terminology in making records



Ref	Standard
	<b>Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions</b>
<b>2c.1</b>	<p><b>be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care</li> <li>- be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the service user</li> <li>- recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes</li> <li>- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately</li> </ul>
<b>2c.2</b>	<p><b>be able to audit, reflect on and review practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance</li> <li>- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures</li> <li>- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement</li> <li>- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate</li> <li>- understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection</li> <li>- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review</li> </ul>
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>recognise the role and value of supervision in an applied psychology context</i></li> <li>- <i>be able to recognise gaps in the evidence base and, where necessary, adapt practice to meet the needs of service users</i></li> </ul>

Ref	Standard
	<b>Knowledge, understanding and skills</b>
<b>3a.1</b>	<p><b>know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction</li> <li>- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process</li> <li>- recognise the role of other professions in health and social care</li> <li>- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention</li> </ul>
<b>3a.2</b>	<p><b>know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual, groups or communities</b></p>
<b>3a.3</b>	<p><b>understand the need to establish and maintain a safe a practice environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be aware of applicable health an safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these</li> <li>- be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation</li> <li>- be able to select appropriate protective equipment and use it correctly</li> <li>- be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks to service users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control</li> </ul>