

## **International Project on Competence in Psychology (IPCP)**

*Supported by the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) and International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS)*

# IPCP Progress Report, April 2014

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At the 5<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Licensure, Certification and Credentialing of Psychologists it was decided to take the process onwards in a project that in principle will be supported by IAAP and IUPsyS, and with the same goal; to promote the development of “A global agreement on identifying the benchmark competencies that define professional psychology”. (See Report of the Congress Part 1, September 2014).

The project has been named “International Project on Competence in Psychology – IPCP”. A Work Group has been established which consists of:

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The Work Group held a meeting in Atlanta on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2014. Notes of this meeting and the result of the work done are presented in this document.

A revision of the “Summary Model” discussed in the Stockholm Congress is presented for review by our network/ “reference group”. As before, it is presented as a table with competencies (left hand column) and provisional descriptions (right hand column). There is also an explanation of how the Work Group constructed this revised Summary Model.

Comments on this revision can be sent to [sverre@psykologforeningen.no](mailto:sverre@psykologforeningen.no). Please send your comments by the deadline below so they can be reflected in our report to be presented during ICAP 2014.

**Deadline for Comments: 15 May 2014.**

The comments will be collated by the Work Group and presented at the meeting of IPCP organized in two focus group sessions at the ICAP 2014, Paris, 11th July. Time of day and the location of the meeting room will be announced later.

## Atlanta IPCP Work Group meeting

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The meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at the Wyndham Peachtree Conference Centre, Peachtree City, Georgia, USA.

It was attended by: Sverre Nielsen (Chair), Steve DeMers, Dave Bartram, German Gutierrez, Steve Osborne, Tholene Sodi, Janel Gauthier, with administrative support provided by Amy Hilson and Alex Siegel.

Apologies were received from Buxin Han and Waikaremoana Waitoki.

### Procedure

We reviewed in detail the outcomes provided by the Stockholm Congress Groups (A through J). Given our limited time, we decided to focus our attention on reviewing suggestions relating to the 'Summary of National Models' (See the Stockholm Congress Report Part 1 - Appendices: Appendix 6.5 and Report Part 2, Section 8.0: Written group reports from Day 2).

There were three elements to consider:

1. The list of competences (i.e. the left hand side of the Summary Model)
2. The descriptions of those competences (i.e. the right hand side of the Summary Model)
3. The structure of the model (i.e. the four main section headings)

We decided to focus most of our efforts on the first of these, so we looked at comments made by the Stockholm Congress Groups relating to the original 14 Competences (i.e. the left-hand column of the Summary of National Models headed 'Competence').

The questions we focussed on were:

1. Is there a case for deletion of a competence?
2. Is there a case for addition of a competence?
3. Is there a case for re-wording of a competence?

In doing this we noted that the competences listed were based on an analysis of five major models: four national (USA, Canada, UK and Australia) and one international (EuroPsy). As such, we should be looking for consistency across a number of Groups in the issues being raised before making changes.

We also agreed that we should include only those competences we would expect someone to possess in order to judge them as being a competent applied psychologist. These are competences that the profession and the public should reasonably expect of someone entering the profession and which a professional psychologist should be expected to maintain during their career. We decided to exclude competences which are 'optional' or aspirational.

Rewording was carried out where the meaning of the competence as defined was unclear. It was agreed that explanations in terms of detailed descriptions should remain in the right-hand column.

In the process of doing this we also commented on some issues arising from the descriptions (right hand side of the table) but revisions of this were regarded as being secondary to refining the list of competences.

After reviewing all the Stockholm Group reports and revising the list of competences and their descriptions, we finished the meeting focusing on the structure of the model, particularly the appropriate number and name of competence clusters (i.e. sections). This revised structure is presented below for your review and comment as well.

## Outcomes

Proposed revisions to the Summary Model are shown in the attached table.

### The competences

The main change to the list of competences arose from the decision to focus on core competences and to exclude those which were more aspirational, could be redundant or regarded as optional. This resulted in removal of two of the original 14 competences:

- DP: Contributes to the continuing development of the profession.
- PS: Provides psychological services.

In addition it was noted that aspects of SP (specifically SP3) and of CO (specifically CO4) were also optional and could be removed.

Some wording changes for the remaining 12 were agreed:

- ER: Relates appropriately to others *becomes* ER: Relates appropriately to clients and others.
- WD: Works with diversity *becomes* WD: Works with individual and cultural diversity.
- SP: Operates as a scientist-practitioner *becomes* EP: Operates as an evidence-based practitioner.
- EV: Evaluates own work *becomes* SR: Reflects on own work.
- PA: Conducts psychological assessments *becomes* PA: Conducts psychological assessments and evaluations.
- CO: Communicates effectively and appropriately *becomes* CO: Communicates effectively and appropriately with clients and others.

### The structure

Having considered the various Stockholm Congress Group proposals on structure it was agreed that the initial four categories could be better represented by three:

- Knowledge and skills – the knowledge and skills a competent professional psychologist needs to underpin their competence.
- Professional Behaviour – how psychologists behave, or competences related to the way in which professional psychologists work.
- Professional Activities – what psychologists do, or the activities that undertake in their work.

## The provisional descriptions

In the process of reviewing the competences and the structure there was discussion of suggestions relating to the descriptions. Some specific proposals have already been mentioned – i.e. the exclusion of SP3 and CO4.

It was also noted that a revised version of CO3 should move to PI.

There was no time at the meeting to review all the descriptions in detail. However, following the meeting, Dave Bartram, as one of the authors of the original Summary Model, produced a provisional re-working of the right-hand side of the Summary Model based on the discussions in the Work Group and the suggestions made by the Stockholm Congress Groups. The comments column in the table provides cross references to the Groups' suggestions.

As these changes were not discussed by the whole Work Group they are presented here as 'provisional'. However, it is hoped that they will help clarify the meanings of the 12 competences.

## Issues arising

A number of issues arose during our discussions that will be likely to recur – indeed these were all highlighted at the Stockholm Congress. Resolution of these issues is required before we try to finalise either the overall definition of competence or the set of competences.

## Core vs optional competences

Core competences are those we would expect all psychologists to possess, even if they do not practice them all regularly. We would also expect competence in these areas to have been assessed at entry to the profession and to be the basis for expectations of continuing maintenance of competence whenever one is practising. In defining a core competence we can say that all should possess it at least to the level expected upon entry to the profession and in the context of one's chosen field of practice.

Optional competences are those which some psychologists may possess on entry to the profession but which are more likely to be developed during one's career. They include things like contributing to research, mentoring or supervising others, contributing to the development of the profession, developing specific areas of specialist expertise. In short, such competences involve us in trying to define all those things psychologists might do rather than the core of what 'defines' them as a professional psychologist.

For the IPCP project we regard the attempt to define the core, internationally, as both more tractable and more useful, given the wide range of variation between countries and specialisms in terms of what we are here defining as 'optional'.

## Evidence-based practice

There was much discussion about the use of the term 'science-based'. It was agreed that 'evidence-based' is a more inclusive term notwithstanding the view that much of the evidence base on which psychological practice is built comes from scientific research. It was agreed that terms like this will need to be defined in a glossary to the model.

## **Best Practice**

The term 'best practice' may not be widely understood according to the feedback from some of the Stockholm Groups. For the present this has not been amended in the model, though it was noted that a definition could be incorporated into the proposed glossary.

## **Cross-cultural issues**

A number of issues were raised in relation to 'WD: Works with diversity', relating to the need for cross-cultural sensitivities. Revisions to WD have been proposed which it is hoped will address these issues as core competences, while recognising that some psychologists may need to further develop competences in this area where their practice specifically involves working with diverse cultural communities.

## Revised Summary Model – Atlanta 2-2014

	<b>Competence</b> [Underlining indicates change or addition from Stockholm version]		<b>Provisional Descriptions</b>	<b>Comment</b>
	<b>KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</b>			
KS	Possesses the necessary knowledge <u>and skills</u>	KS1	Has the necessary foundation knowledge of psychological concepts, constructs, methods, theory and practice to underpin competence	Revise KS to include reference to skills. KS1 revised : Group A
		KS2	Has the necessary basic skills to underpin competence in psychological practice	Revised KS2 : Group A
		KS3	Has the necessary specialised knowledge of psychological concepts, constructs, methods, theory and practice relating to own chosen area to underpin competence	Revised KS3: Group A
		KS4	Has the necessary specialised skills to operate in own chosen area of psychological practice to underpin competence	Added KS4: Group A
	<b>PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR</b>			
PE	Practices ethically	PE1	Applies relevant ethics codes in one's professional practice and conduct	PE1 separated into PE1 and 2 (e.g. see Group E)
		PE2	Adheres to relevant laws and rules in one's professional practice and conduct	

AP	Acts professionally	AP1	Follows accepted best practice	Work Group noted the need to explain what is meant by 'best practice'
		AP2	Knows the boundaries of one's own competence and does not operate outside them	
		AP3	Undertakes continuing professional development	
ER	Relates appropriately to <u>clients and others</u>	ER1	Establishes, maintains and develops working relationships with professional colleagues	Add 'to clients and' to ER (e.g. Group E). ER1 revised as suggested by Group D and Group E
		ER2	Establishes, maintains and develops appropriate working relationships with clients and others	Revised as suggested by Group D
WD	Works with <u>individual and cultural diversity</u>	WD1	Operates with sensitivity in a diverse cross-cultural work environment	Expand 'Works with diversity' to emphasise culture: Need noted by various Groups
		WD2	Works and communicates effectively and appropriately with diversity in professional teams, clients and others	Revised based on Group D and others
		WD3	Operates with sensitivity to all forms of diversity	From Group F
				Remove DP as is not core
EP	Operates as an <u>evidence-based practitioner</u>	EP1	Adopts an evidence based orientation to the design of assessments, interventions, service provision and other psychological activities	Change scientist to evidence-based in SP Delete 'scientific' from SP1 Change SP to EP
		EP2	Consults and reviews relevant research to inform practice	
				Delete SP3 as is not an aspect of a core competence

DM	Makes good decisions	DM1	Chooses professionally and ethically appropriate courses of action in response to unpredictable and complex events	
SR	<u>Reflects on</u> own work	SR1	Evaluates the efficacy of one's activities and service provision	Change EV to SR. E.g. Group D
		SR2	Reflects on and implements areas for improvement in one's practice	
		SR3	Reflects on one's cultural attributes and values and their impact on one's practice	Based on suggestion from Group F
	PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES			
SG	Sets relevant goals	SG1	Establishes clear requirements for professional contributions through relevant forms of needs analysis	Insert 'for' in SG1
PA	<u>Conducts psychological assessments and evaluations</u>	PA1	Assesses or evaluates individuals, groups, organizations or situations	Include 'evaluations' as well as 'assessments' - e.g. Group B
		PA2	Understands assessment or evaluation needs	
		PA3	Selects, designs or develops appropriate assessments or evaluations	
		PA4	Conducts assessments or evaluations, including administration, scoring, interpretation, feedback and application of results	
PI	Conducts psychological interventions	PI1	Designs, develops and validates the appropriateness of psychological	Revised as suggested by Group D

			interventions	
		P16	Integrates assessment and other information with psychological knowledge to guide and develop psychological interventions	Proposed by Group A and F
		P12	Plans and carries out psychological interventions that are person or situation centred, direct or indirect	
		P13	Evaluates the effectiveness of interventions	
		P14	Uses evaluation results to review and revise intervention as necessary	Proposed by Group B
		P15	Provides guidance and advice on psychological matters to relevant others	CO3 becomes P15
				PS is removed as not a core competence.
CO	Communicates effectively and appropriately <u>with clients and others</u>	CO1a	Communicates to diverse audiences as necessary for the effective conduct and completion of one's professional activities	
		CO1b	Communicates effectively, both orally and in writing, to diverse audiences as appropriate	Alternative CO1 suggested by Group A; similar to Group B
		CO2	Provides relevant and clear feedback, reporting and guidance to client(s) and relevant others	Delete 'their'; add reference to guidance (Group F)
		CO3	Provide information on psychological matters to relevant stakeholders	Old CO3 becomes P15 New CO3 proposed by Group B
				Delete CO4 as is not an aspect of a core competence