A. A NOTE TO THE READER

As from 1 January 2006 the requirements for registration as a psychometrist are as follows:

a. successful completion of an accredited 4-year bachelor's degree in psychology (B Psych) or a qualification which has been accredited by the Board as an equivalent to the B Psych degree, which included substantive modules in psychometrics, testing and assessment;

b. successful completion of an approved full-time practicum of 6 months duration, or alternatively a part-time practicum of 6 months duration to be completed within a period of 12 months in a psychological testing and assessment under the guidance and supervision of a registered psychologist or psychometrist registered in a category independent practice. A supervising psychologist or psychometrist should have 3 years of appropriate training and/or experience within the relevant scope of practice;

c. successful completion of the National Examination of the Professional Board for Psychology. The examination will be conducted on the 1st Wednesday of February, June and October of each year.

d. The pass mark for the examinations is 70% psychometrists are required to obtain a sub-minimum of 70% for the question on ethics, in order to pass the examination.

d. Psychometrists currently registered in the category “supervised practice” will be permitted to register in the category “independent practice/private practice”, provided that they pass the Board’s examination in this category.

TIMEFRAME FOR REGISTRATION

Candidates have to register as psychometrists within 5 years of completion of the academic and practical training. The 6 months practicum must be within 2 years in order to be accepted to write the Board Examination

Persons who exceed the timeframe for registration as psychometrists by 5 years or more will be required to complete an additional approved practicum of 3 month’s duration and the onus rests on individuals to ensure that they still have the required competencies to practice as psychometrists.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

A psychometrist is permitted to use certain psychological tests (i.e., select, administer, score, interpret, and report on) and bill clients for this service, provided that appropriate training has been obtained and the necessary practical competencies have been developed related to the tests used.

**Psychometrists are not permitted to use:**

* certain personality measures (e.g., TAT, CAT, Rorschach);
* specialist neuropsychological measures;
* measures that are used for the diagnosis of psychopathology (e.g., MMPI-2).

A psychometrist will not be permitted to undertake forensic assessments or any other form of specialist assessment (e.g., neuropsychological), as these forms of assessment require highly specialised and advanced knowledge and competencies which only psychologists can provide.
Psychometrists registered in the category independent practice may practice independently (privately) or work in organisations. They should have an awareness of when their expertise is insufficient to address the needs of clients and should then make a referral to a psychologist or another appropriately qualified and registered professional. As a normal course of good professional practice behaviour, psychometrists registered in the category “independent practice” should seek out appropriate mentoring and supervision from their peers and psychologists, where desired.

The registration of psychometrists with an academic honours degree was phased out on 31 December 2005.

The National Examination of the Professional Board for Psychology is conducted on the 1st Wednesday of February, June and October of each year. In order to write the examination in February a duly completed declaration form (form 225) by the university must be submitted to the Professional Board for Psychology by the end of December of the previous year, in order to write the examination in June, the application form must be submitted by the end of April and in order to write the examination in October the application form must be submitted by the end of August.

The pass mark for the examinations is 70% psychometrists are required to obtain a sub-minimum of 70% for the question on ethics, in order to pass the examination.

4 Competency-based Training

In keeping with the move towards an outcomes-based approach to education and training in South Africa, this document provides competency-based training guidelines for psychometry and assessment. It is hoped that these guidelines will contribute to more uniformity in psychometry and assessment training and the resultant competencies displayed in professional practice.

Candidates wishing to qualify as psychometrists need to inter alia have completed 4 years of degree studies in Psychology, this implies that over and above the knowledge and skill competencies spelt out in this document, psychometrists will be equipped with a broader spectrum of interpersonal skills, as well as knowledge about human behaviour, psychological constructs and disorders which will inform test selection, use and interpretation.

B. CORE COMPETENCIES: PSYCHOMETRISTS

Psychometrists need to demonstrate the following core and derived competencies -

1. Have adequate knowledge and understanding of psychometrics, testing and assessment, which informs and underpins the process of testing.

More specifically -

a. Be able to define what a psychological test is and what the characteristics of a good test are.

b. Know why psychological tests are used and who may use them.

c. Know why and how tests are classified and what the major categories of tests are.

d. Know the role that tests play in the assessment process.

e. Know the basic principles of measurement.

f. Know basic psychometric principles related to the technical requirements of tests, namely -

i. reliability (definition, different types, how they are established, reliability of speeded tests);

ii. validity (definition, different types, how they are established);

iii. standardisation (meaning and importance ); and

iv. standard error of measurement (definition and importance in test interpretation).

g. Know the different ways in which raw scores can be transformed, how and why norms are developed, the relativity of norms, and how to interpret test performance.
h. Have basic knowledge of the conceptual difference between test bias and fairness, and of factors impinging on test bias and fairness.

i. Have an understanding of how tests are developed.

j. Have knowledge and understanding of theories and models of ability, personality and other psychological constructs, and of psychopathology, as is necessary to conceptualise and inform the choice of tests and the understanding/interpretation of test results.

k. Know the range of tests and the test suppliers relevant to one’s area of focus.

2. **Use tests in a professional and ethical manner by following good testing practices.**

   More specifically -

   a. Know the aspects of the Act, related legislation, and the ethical code, which pertain to the control, and use of psychological tests generally and in specific settings.

   b. Act in a professional and ethical manner by promoting and maintaining high professional and ethical standards.

   c. Ensure that they know the limits of their own competence and do not operate outside those limits by only offering testing services and using tests for which they are qualified and trained.

   d. Keep abreast of relevant changes and advances relating to the tests they use, as well as changes in legislation which impact on tests and test use.

   e. Take responsibility for their use of tests by -

   i. providing clear and adequate information to participants in the testing process about the ethics governing psychological testing;

   ii. ensuring that the test-taker clearly understands the purpose of the test session, the procedures, as well as how and to whom the findings will be reported;

   iii. endeavouring to avoid doing harm or causing distress to those involved in the testing process; and

   iv. being alert to unintended consequences of test use and seeking to avoid negative consequences.

   f. Ensure that test materials are securely stored and that access to them is controlled and copyright law is respected.

   g. Ensure that test results are treated confidentially by -

   i. specifying who will have access to results;

   ii. explaining levels of confidentiality to clients before any results are reported;

   iii. obtaining the relevant consents before releasing results to others;

   iv. protecting data kept on file so that only those who have a right of access can get to it; and

   v. using secure password-protected systems for test data storage on computer.

3. **Have appropriate contextual knowledge and skills**

   a. Know how social, cultural, linguistic, educational, gender, age, etc. factors are likely to impact on test scores;

   b. Know how the above-mentioned factors could be identified in the assessment context and how they can be taken into account in the interpretation of test scores;

   c. Know how test bias and fairness can be empirically determined;

   d. Have a general understanding of the procedures to be followed when adapting tests for use in different cultures or with different language groups;
When tests are to be used with multi-cultural groups, competent test users will try to ensure that -

1. they display interpersonal sensitivity, as well as good cross-cultural understanding and communication skills in order to minimise potential bias in the administration of tests to various groups;
2. the tests are fair and appropriate for the various groups which will be tested;
3. the constructs being assessed are meaningful in the cultural group that the test-taker represents and there is validity evidence available to support the use of the test in different cultures;
4. evidence is available on cultural group differences in performance on the test; and
5. effects of cultural differences not relevant to the main purpose such as differences in motivation to answer are minimised.

When tests are to be used in more than one language, competent testers will try to ensure that -

1. each language version has been developed using an acceptable and rigorous methodology;
2. the developers have been sensitive to issues of content and language;
3. the tester can communicate clearly and competently in the language in which the test is to be administered; and
4. the test-taker's level of proficiency in the language in which the test will be administered is determined and the appropriate language version is administered or bilingual assessment is considered.

Have basic knowledge of appropriate protocols for administering tests to disabled people with a disability and consult a psychologist regarding whether and how tests are to be modified for use with disabled people so that the modifications are tailored to the nature of the disability and are designed to minimise the impact on score validity.

Be familiar with the tests that are usually used in particular work settings (e.g., educational, clinical, work-related).

Be aware of the existence of policies pertaining to test use and the use of test results (e.g., for decision-making, placement, counselling) in the organisation or setting where the testing is being done to ensure compatibility with ethical and professional standards of test use. Furthermore, psychometrists need to know how to establish their own assessment policy.

**4. Have instrumental knowledge and skills** that apply to all aspects of the process of testing (i.e., what testers need to be able to do in general as well as competency in using specific tests/measures).

Use technically sound tests appropriate for the situation and the characteristics of the test-taker.

Make the necessary preparations for the test session, namely -

1. inform test-taker of rights;
2. obtain informed consent;
3. find a suitable venue;
4. ensure that test materials are complete and that there are sufficient answer sheets; and
5. make appropriate arrangements for testing people with disabilities.

Administer the tests properly under appropriately standardised conditions, namely -

1. adhere strictly to the directions and instructions in the manual;
2. observe and record deviations from test procedures;
3. monitor and record response times accurately;
iv. record responses accurately;
v. do not leave the room unattended, talk on the phone, or engage in distracting activity during the session; and
vi. be alert to signs of tiredness, stress, anxiety, or distress in the test-taker.

d. Score and analyse test results accurately, namely -
i. follow standardised procedures for scoring;
ii. convert raw scores using appropriate norm tables; and
iii. screen results to identify impossible or unreasonable scores to investigate further.

e. Interpret results appropriately, i.e.:
i. use interpretation guidelines provided in the manual;
ii. be familiar with the scales used, the characteristics of the norm or comparison groups, and the limitations of the scores;
iii. interpret the results in the light of available information on the test-taker such as gender, schooling and culture; and
iv. avoid labelling or stereotyping people.

f. Communicate the results and test observations clearly and accurately and produce understandable written reports and/or oral feedback

g. Be proficient in administering, scoring and interpreting a range of psychological tests, which include -
i. group and individually administered tests;
ii. tests that tap general cognitive ability;
iii. tests that tap specific cognitive, perceptual, and psychomotor functions;
iv. tests that tap personality-related functioning (Please note: while psychometrists can be trained to administer personality measures, the scoring and interpretation of projective measures requires highly specialised knowledge and skills and thus needs to be done by a Psychologist. Psychometrists are not permitted to use projective personality measures in practice).

h. Be proficient in administering tests to children and adults.

5. Have appropriate communication and interpersonal skills which underpin test administration, reporting and the provision of feedback.

More specifically -
a. Be able to communicate effectively in order to appropriately prepare test-takers, interact with relevant others (e.g., parents, employers), administer tests, and report on the findings and provide feedback.
b. Have effective interpersonal skills sufficient to appropriately prepare test-takers, interact with relevant others (e.g., parents, employers), administer tests, and provide feedback.
6. **Have contingency management skills**

More specifically -

a. Know how to deal with problems, difficulties and breakdowns during routine test administration.

b. Know how to deal with a test-taker's questions during test administration.

c. Know how to deal with situations where there is the potential for test misuse or for misunderstanding the interpretation of test scores.

7. **Have basic practice management and referral skills**

More specifically -

a. Know the requirements regarding advertising professional services.

b. Know how to start and manage a practice and work out a business plan.

c. Know how to implement an accounting system and an appropriate fee structure.

d. Know about the need for indemnity insurance.

e. Be able to identify when the needs or symptoms with which a client presents fall outside your expertise and should be dealt with by another health care professional.

f. Be able to refer a client to an appropriate professional peer within the health care system (e.g., psychologist, general practitioner, social worker).

C  **DEVELOPING THEORETICAL AND APPLIED COMPETENCIES**

Academic programmes need to prepare aspirant psychometrists to develop core competencies 1 to 3, and 7, and their derived competencies. Academic staff should thus consult these competencies when they are developing curricula for psychometric testing and assessment modules. As the theoretical and applied competencies will be assessed in a national examination (see a later section in this regard), the onus is on academic institutions to provide sufficient learning experiences so that aspirant psychometrists can develop the stipulated theoretical and applied competencies.

D. **PRACTICUM**

The practicum must aim to particularly assist aspirant psychometrists to develop core competencies 4, 5 and 6 as well as 7 and their derived competencies, as outlined above. The practicum guidelines provided below apply to programmes offered by academic training institutions as well as programmes developed by individual psychologists or organisations that offer psychometry internships.

Guidelines for practical training programmes will now be provided. In essence, areas of competence that need to be focused on in practicums are highlighted for each of the critical core competency areas.

1. **Instrumental knowledge and skills**

a. **Range of tests and experience**

The supervising psychologist must prescribe and ensure that trainee psychometrists during their practicum use an appropriate range of tests. The range across which trainee psychometrists need to gain appropriate and sufficient practical experience must at least cover -

i. group and individually administered tests;

ii. tests that tap general cognitive ability;

iii. tests that tap specific cognitive, perceptual, and psychomotor functions; and

iv. tests that tap personality-related functioning (Please note: restrictions regarding the use of projective techniques have been pointed out elsewhere in this document); and
v. tests for children and adults.

b. **Test administration and scoring**

The supervising psychologist must decide which constructs need to be measured and the appropriate test(s), which need to be used. The reason for the choice must be clearly explained to the trainee psychometrist.

The supervising psychologist must ensure that the trainee psychometrist -

i. has adequate knowledge of the manual of each test that is used;
ii. is well prepared for the test session;
iii. adheres strictly to the instructions provided in the manual;
iv. gives clear, concise instructions;
v. completes the answer sheet correctly; and
vi. gets the necessary experience in using the tests that are included in the training programme so that he/she can become proficient in their use and no longer requires close supervision.

c. **Scoring and interpretation**

The supervising psychologist must ensure that the trainee Psychometrist -

i. has adequate knowledge of the scoring procedures/criteria for each test that is used;
ii. learns how to choose appropriate norm tables;
iii. becomes proficient at converting raw scores to scale scores and in using cut-points to interpret/classify test performance;
iv. understands the limits to the generalisability of norms provided;
v. is able to take contextual factors into account during test interpretation; and
vi. gets the necessary experience in using the tests that are included in the practicum so that he/she can become proficient in their use and no longer requires close supervision.

2. **Communication and interpersonal skills**

The supervising psychologist must observe the trainee Psychometrist in action so as to provide supportive and developmental feedback regarding the trainee's communication and interpersonal skills in –

a. being able to appropriately prepare test-takers,
b. establishing rapport;
c. interacting with relevant others (e.g., parents, employers);
d. administering tests;
e. being able to clearly and professionally report on the findings; and
f. providing verbal and written feedback on the findings.

3. **Contingency management skills**

The supervising psychologist must ensure that the trainee Psychometrist is equipped to handle -

a. routine problems that may arise during test administration;
b. a test-taker's questions during test administration; and
c. situations where there is the potential for test misuse or for misunderstanding the interpretation of test scores.

4. **Basic practice management and referral skills**

   The supervising psychologist must ensure that the psychometrist knows -
   
   a. the requirements regarding advertising professional services;
   b. how to start and manage a practice and work out a business plan;
   c. how to implement an accounting system and an appropriate fee structure;
   d. about the need for indemnity insurance;
   e. how to identify when the needs or symptoms with which a client presents fall outside his/her expertise and should be dealt with by another health care professional; and
   f. how to refer a client to an appropriate professional peer within the health care system (e.g., psychologist, general practitioner, social worker).

**EEXAMINATION**

Candidates who wish to register as psychometrists must sit for a 3-hour written examination set by the Professional Board for Psychology. –

The **National Examination of the Professional Board for Psychology** is conducted on the 1st Wednesday of February, June and October of each year. In order to write the examination in February a duly completed form 225 by the university must be submitted to the Professional Board for Psychology by the end of December of the previous year, in order to write the examination in June, the declaration must be submitted by the end of April of that year and in order to write the examination in October, the declaration must be submitted by the end of August of that year.

The examination -

b. is out of 100 marks;

c. will cover core competencies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 and their corresponding derived competencies as well as reporting skills (derived competency for core competency 4); and

d. contains two sections. Section A contains multiple-choice questions, which largely tap knowledge of basic testing and assessment concepts and constructs. Section B comprises of essay questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Competency</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| Core competency 1: knowledge and understanding of psychometrics, testing and assessment: | * definitions  
* validity  
* reliability  
* standardisation  
* norms  
* test development |
| Core competency 2: Use tests in a professional and ethical manner by following good testing practises | |
| Core competency 3: Have appropriate contextual knowledge and skills | |
| Core competency 4: Have instrumental knowledge and skills - reporting | |
| Core competency 7: Have basic practice management and referral skills | |

The pass mark for the examinations is 70% psychometrists are required to obtain a **sub-minimum** of 70% for the question on ethics, in order to pass the examination.

To prepare for the examination, psychometrists should –
* consult the reading list in Appendix A;
* ask their supervising psychologist for information and insights regarding practice management and professional conduct issues;
* ask their supervising psychologist to skill them in report writing;
* ask their supervising psychologist regarding when and how to refer; and
* seek out short courses on professional ethics, practice management, and report writing.

**F EVALUATION OF PRACTICAL SKILLS**

The practical skills as spelt out in core competencies 4, 5 and 6, as well as 7 and the derived competencies of trainee psychometrists are evaluated by the supervising psychologist.

Form 225 (application form for approval to write the Board examination) has to be duly completed by the Head of the Department of Psychology, school, or unit for each candidate, confirming that the academic as well as the practicum requirements have been **successfully** completed.

**G CLOSING REMARK**

Please address any queries regarding the training and examination of psychometrists to:

The Manager, Professional Board for Psychology, Health Professions Council of South Africa, P.O. Box 205, Pretoria 0001.
APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDED READING MATERIAL


OR
OR

Any introductory statistics text for psychology or social science students.


Code of Practice for Psychological Assessment for the Workplace. Available from the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology South Africa (SIOPSA). Email: siopsa@worldonline.co.za or www.siopsa.org.za

Guidelines for the validation of assessment measures. Available from the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology South Africa (SIOPSA). Email: siopsa@worldonline.co.za or www.siopsa.org.za

The Board's Policy on the classification of psychometric measuring devices, instruments, methods and techniques. Obtainable from the Professional Board for Psychology, Health Professions Council of South Africa, P.O. Box 205, Pretoria 0001 (Form 208) also obtainable from Council's website at www.hpcs.co.za (professional boards/psychology/examinations)

Ethical Code of Professional Conduct (Professional Board for Psychology). Obtainable from the Professional Board for Psychology, Health Professions Council of South Africa, P.O. Box 205, Pretoria 0001 (form 223) also obtainable from Council's website at www.hpcs.co.za (professional boards/psychology/examinations)


Update: February 2010