



**The British
Psychological Society**
Promoting excellence in psychology

British Psychological Society response to the Psychology Board of Australia

Guidelines on area of practice endorsements

About the Society

The British Psychological Society, incorporated by Royal Charter, is the learned and professional body for psychologists in the United Kingdom. We are a registered charity with a total membership of just over 50,000.

Under its Royal Charter, the objective of the British Psychological Society is "to promote the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of members by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge". We are committed to providing and disseminating evidence-based expertise and advice, engaging with policy and decision makers, and promoting the highest standards in learning and teaching, professional practice and research.

The British Psychological Society is an examining body granting certificates and diplomas in specialist areas of professional applied psychology.

Publication and Queries

We are content for our response, as well as our name and address, to be made public. We are also content for you to contact us in the future in relation to this inquiry.

Please direct all queries to:-

Joe Liardet, Policy Advice Administrator (Consultations)
The British Psychological Society, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR
Email: consult@bps.org.uk Tel: 0116 252 9936

About this Response

The response was led on behalf of the Society by:

Dr Helen Nicholas CPsychol AFBPsS, Chair of Society's Division of Counselling Psychology

We hope you find our comments useful.

Dr Ian J Gargan CPsychol AFBPsS
Chair, Professional Practice Board

Dr Mark Forshaw CPsychol FBPsS
Chair, Membership & Standards Board

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	Introduction
1.	<p>Comments:</p> <p>The Society wishes to give our support for the revised competency statements provided to you by Curtin University, Western Australia; the Association of Counselling Psychologists, and the APS College of Counselling Psychologists.</p> <p>We have discussed the situation with the chair of the Australian Psychological Society and taken the matter to the Executive Committee of the British Psychological Society Division of Counselling Psychology, we strongly believe that the amendments they have put forward in the updated description and list of competency statements is a more accurate reflection of the nature of counselling psychology training, research, and practice in the specialised domain of counselling psychology. We consider that it is appropriate that there is benchmarking against and commonality with the Health and Care Professions Council ¹ UK Standards of Proficiency and British Psychological Society Standards for the accreditation of Doctoral programmes in counselling psychology ² for a profession that is international in its scope. The areas they have put forward for inclusion (and some others) are core to UK counselling psychology practice.</p> <p>We believe that the definition of Counselling Psychology should include all the competencies that Counselling Psychologists are trained in. This includes assessment, formulation and should also acknowledge that counselling psychologists work in a variety of settings across the spectrum of complexity and severity in mental health, and with a diverse range of individuals, couples, and groups. Furthermore, the Society would like to highlight the omission of skills that many UK counselling psychologists have. These are in areas of psychosis, bipolar disorder, the developmental disorders, pain management in the areas of work, court / legal work, and skills in behaviour change, and behaviour management. We strongly encourage you to consider including these omissions into the competency statement.</p> <p>In support of our Counselling Psychology colleagues practising in Australia, we would like to contribute our opinion as expressed in this letter to the consultation and review.</p>
	The Society's Replacement Definition for Counselling Psychology - <i>Introductory Paragraph of Description</i>
2.	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Counselling psychologists use their knowledge and understanding of psychology, psychotherapy, and mental health to treat a wide range of psychological issues, problems, and mental health disorders. They provide assessment, diagnosis and psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families, and groups. They use evidence-based therapies and evidence-based therapy relationships to assist clients to resolve mental health disorders or psychological problems and move toward greater psychological health. They research, evaluate, and develop new methods for improving psychological health and therapeutic</p>

¹ Available at http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002963SOP_Practitioner_psychologists.pdf

² Available at http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/PaCT/counselling_accreditation_2015_web.pdf

interventions for psychological problems and disorders. Counselling psychologists have a distinct philosophical stance, recognising the strengths and resources of people at all levels of psychological functioning, working collaboratively with people in a therapeutic relationship to bring about meaningful change.

Consumers of the services of counselling psychologists are persons, groups, and organisations, including:

- Members of the public, couples, families, and carers
- Medical, specialists and health practitioners
- Health departments, hospitals and community practices
- Community groups
- National, state or local government or non-government organisations and
- Welfare agencies, educational institutions, justice services, victims of crime, and community services

Specific services of counselling psychologists include assessment and provision of psychological therapy for a wide range of issues and disorders including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, grief and loss, relationship difficulties, domestic violence, sexual abuse and trauma, career development, substance use disorders, eating disorders, and personality disorders.

Required Adjustments to Competencies

3. **Comments:**

Psychological Assessment

“Competence in the assessment and diagnosis of mental disorders using structured clinical approaches”

Additional statements:

“Knowledge of psychological assessment, with a critical approach to theory, practice, and research”

“Competence in the application of psychological assessment and diagnosis”

“Competence in the assessment of symptom severity using empirically valid and reliable measures”

Psychological Interventions

“Competence in individual, couple, family and group interventions”

“Knowledge of the theory and scientific evidence base for psychotherapy and counselling”

Additional statement:

“Competence in applying psychotherapy and counselling for mental health disorders and optimal human functioning”

End.