



## **Information for Applicants Applying for Registration Based on Substantial Equivalence**

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## Application for Registration Based on Substantial Equivalence

The *Health Professions Act (HPA)* and *Psychologists Profession Regulation (PPR)* outline the requirements and process for registration as a psychologist in the Province of Alberta.

### Section 28 of the *HPA*, states that:

**28(1)** An application for registration as a regulated member is complete for the purpose of consideration under section 29(3) if it is in the required form and given to the registrar by the applicant along with

- (a) evidence of meeting the requirements for competence in the practice of the profession as required by subsection (2),
- (b) the application fee provided for in the bylaws,
- (c) evidence of having the amount and type of professional liability insurance, if required by the regulations,
- (d) evidence of being a Canadian citizen or a person lawfully permitted to work in Canada, if required by the regulations,
- (e) evidence of having good character and reputation, if required by the regulations,
- (f) evidence of meeting standards of language proficiency, if required by the regulations, and
- (g) information required by the registrar under section 33(4)(b).

**(2)** An applicant may provide evidence of competence in the practice of the profession

- (a) by fulfilling one or more of the following as required by the regulations:
  - (i) education requirements, that may include being enrolled in a program of studies,
  - (ii) experience requirements,
  - (iii) successful completion of examinations, or
  - (iv) holding certificates or diplomas,
- (b) by being registered with a profession in another jurisdiction recognized by the regulations or the council as having substantially equivalent competence and practice requirements and meeting the requirements for persons to be registered with that profession in that jurisdiction, OR
- (c) **by satisfying the registrar, the registration committee or competence committee, of having as determined in accordance with the regulations, a combination of education, experience, practice or other qualifications, that demonstrates the competence required for registration as a regulated member.**

## **Requirements for Registration as a Psychologist in Alberta**

The minimum academic qualification for registration as a psychologist is an earned graduate degree with a major in psychology or an earned graduate degree with content substantially equivalent to a degree with a major in psychology from:

- A government-approved or government-authorized degree-granting institution of higher education in Canada, or
- A regionally accredited institution of higher education in the United States, or
- A university in another country that has been recognized or authorized by an appropriate authority of that jurisdiction.

An accredited or recognized post-secondary institution in Canada is one that:

- a) Has been given degree-granting powers through an act of provincial / territorial legislation or powers to award certificates or diplomas through provincial / territorial legislation or regulation AND
- b) Is reviewed periodically by provincial / territorial government authorities or by an assessment body appointed by the provincial / territorial government

An institution that is regionally accredited in the United States must be part of one of the following Regional Institutional Accrediting Agencies:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

The College's Credentials Evaluations Sub-Committee will evaluate a candidate's academic credentials on the basis of the established criteria, which are included with the application and are available on the CAP website.

An applicant for registration as a psychologist must further provide evidence of:

- a) Having completed a minimum of 1600 hours of evaluated supervised experience that meets the College's "Standards for Supervision";
- b) Successful completion of the Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology (EPPP) (an examination in psychological theory, research and practice acceptable to the College);
- c) Successful completion of an oral examination in ethics and jurisprudence administered by the College;
- d) Having good character and reputation, through the following means:
  - Criminal Record Check
  - Fitness to practice declaration
  - Declaration whether there are any current unprofessional conduct processes ongoing or previous disciplinary action by a regulatory authority;
  - Three professional references;

- e) Proof of liability insurance in an amount of no less than \$1,000,000.00; and
- f) Having paid the application and registration fees set by the College.

**Substantial Equivalence Assessment**

The College recognizes that there may be applicants who have completed experience and practice within the scope of practice of psychology that could be considered as meeting some or all of the requirements for registration as a psychologist in Alberta.

The following means of evaluating an applicant’s competency are used by the College in assessing the qualifications of applicants for registration as psychologists. Further detail is provided in appendix A.

**Assessment of Foundational Knowledge and Core Competencies of Applicants for Registration as Psychologists**

<b>Foundational Knowledge</b>	<b>Means of Evaluation</b>
Foundational Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate degree</li> <li>• Psychology courses</li> <li>• EPPP exam</li> </ul>
<b>Core Competencies</b>	<b>Means of Evaluation</b>
Interpersonal Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• References</li> </ul>
Assessment and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course requirement</li> <li>• EPPP</li> <li>• References</li> <li>• Supervision</li> </ul>
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course requirement</li> <li>• EPPP</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• References</li> </ul>
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course requirement</li> <li>• EPPP</li> <li>• References</li> </ul>
Ethics and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course requirement</li> <li>• EPPP</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• References</li> <li>• Oral exam</li> </ul>

The *Psychologists Profession Regulation* states that:

**Substantial equivalence**

- 5(1) An applicant who is not eligible to be registered under section 3 or 4 but whose qualifications have been determined by the Registration Committee under section 28(2)(c) of the Act to be substantially equivalent to the registration requirements under section 3 or 4 may be registered on the appropriate register.
- (2) For the purposes of assessing substantial equivalency, the College may require applicants to undergo any examinations, testing, assessment, training or education it considers advisable.

Therefore, an applicant who feels they possess requisite education, experience, training and practice that may be substantially equivalent to those required for registration in Alberta as a psychologist, may request an assessment under substantial equivalence.

A flowchart of the process that will be undertaken in reviewing an applicant for registration on the basis of substantial equivalence is attached as appendix B.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide documentary evidence that supports a claim that his/her education, experience, training or practice should be deemed to be substantially equivalent to the qualifications required by the College.

When preparing documentation, an applicant should consider whether:

- 1. his/her program of education is equivalent to a graduate degree in psychology, or substantially equivalent to a graduate degree in psychology;
- 2. it was the stated purpose of his/her program of study to educate and train psychologists;
- 3. the applicant's practice was regulated by an authority that assessed his/her competence to practice;
- 4. the applicant's practice was subject to the review and censure of an authority responsible for investigating and adjudicating complaints of unprofessional conduct or unskilled practice from the public and given authority to determine the ethical and practice standards for practice in that jurisdiction;
- 5. the applicant completed an examination to assess foundational knowledge in the practice of psychology that would be considered substantially equivalent to the EPPP; and
- 6. the applicant completed a period of evaluated supervised practice that would have assessed him/her on the core competencies required for practice as a psychologist in Alberta.

***All information related to the requirements for registration as a Psychologist in Alberta can be accessed through the College of Alberta Psychologist's website at [www.cap.ab.ca](http://www.cap.ab.ca).***

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Assessment of Competencies**

**The definitions of foundational knowledge and each of the five core competencies are provided below, along with the general definition of competence.**

### **Foundational Knowledge**

Definition:

Foundational knowledge in psychology forms the underpinning of all professional training in psychology and includes:

Knowledge of the Biological Bases of Behaviour, for example:

- Physiological psychology
- Comparative psychology
- Neuropsychology
- Sensation and perception
- Psychopharmacology

Knowledge of the Social Bases of Behaviour, for example:

- Social psychology
- Group processes
- Community psychology
- Environmental psychology
- Organizational and systems theory
- Cultural issues

Knowledge of the Cognitive-Affective Bases of Behaviour, for example:

- Learning
- Cognition
- Motivation
- Emotion

Knowledge of Psychology of the Individual, for example:

- Personality theory
- Human development
- Psychopathology
- Individual differences

### **Core Competencies**

The following core competencies are required of all applicants and reflect the competencies outlined in the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). Each competency is expanded by identify the knowledge and skills required.

#### **Interpersonal Relationships:**

Definition:

This basic competency forms part of all the other competencies. Psychologists normally do their work in the context of interpersonal relationships (parent-child, spouses, boss-employee, etc.). They must therefore be able to establish and maintain a constructive working alliance with their clients, and possess adequate cultural competency.

#### Knowledge:

- Knowledge of theories and empirical data on the professional relationship, such as:
- Interpersonal relationships
- Power relationships
- Therapeutic alliance
- Interface with social psychology
- More specific knowledge of the fluctuations of the therapeutic/professional relationship as a function of intervention setting
- Knowledge of self, such as:
- Motivation
- Resources
- Values
- Personal biases
- Factors that may influence the professional relationship (e.g., boundary issues)
- Knowledge of others, such as:
- Macro-environment in which the person functions (work, national norms, etc.)
- Micro-environment (personal differences, family, gender differences, etc.)

#### Skills:

- Effective communication
- Establishment and maintenance of rapport
- Establishment and maintenance of trust and respect in the professional relationship

### **Assessment and Evaluation:**

#### Definition:

A competent professional psychologist draws on diverse methods of evaluation, determining which methods are best suited to the task at hand, rather than relying solely or primarily on formalized testing as an automatic response to situations requiring assessment.

The appropriate subject of evaluation in many instances is not an individual person but a couple, family, organization, or system at some other level of organization.

The skills required for assessment can and should be applied to many situations other than initial evaluation, including, for example, treatment outcome, program evaluation, and problems occurring in a broad spectrum of non-clinical settings.

The primary purpose of psychological assessment is to provide an understanding that informs a practical plan of action. It may result in a diagnostic classification or in the identification of strengths or competencies.

#### Knowledge:

- Assessment methods
- Knowledge of populations served
- Human development
- Diagnosis

#### Skills:

- Formulation of a referral question
- Selection of methods
- Information collection and processing
- Psychometric methods
- Formulation of hypotheses and making a diagnosis when appropriate
- Report writing
- Formulation of an action plan

### **Intervention:**

#### Definition:

The intervention competency is conceptualized as activities that promote, restore, sustain, and/or enhance positive functioning and a sense of well-being in clients through preventive, developmental and/or remedial services. A broad, comprehensive vision of the intervention competency should include explicitly theory as well as the following knowledge and skills:

#### Knowledge:

- The learning of an array of varied interventions with individuals and systems (e.g., couples, families, groups and organizations).
- A respect for the positive aspects of all major approaches, which should reflect an openness to
- varied viewpoints and methods.
- Awareness of when to make appropriate referrals and consult.
- Awareness of context and diversity.
- Knowledge of interventions that promote health and wellness.

#### Skills:

- Establish and maintain professional relationships with clients from all populations served.
- Establish and maintain appropriate interdisciplinary relationships with colleagues.
- Gather information about the nature and severity of problems and formulate hypotheses about the factors that are contributing to the problem through qualitative and quantitative means.
- Select appropriate intervention methods.
- Analyze the information, develop a conceptual framework, and communicate this to the client.

### **Research**

#### Definition:

Professional psychology programs should include research training such that it will enable students to develop:

- A basic understanding of and respect for the scientific underpinnings of the discipline.
- Knowledge of methods so as to be good consumers of the products of scientific knowledge.
- Sufficient skills in the conduct of research to be able to develop and carry out projects in a professional context and, in certain cases, in an academic context with the aid of specialized consultants (e.g. statisticians).

#### Knowledge:

- Basic knowledge of research methods and of the applications of scientific research, including:
- Applied statistics and measurement theory;
- The logic of different models of scientific research (from laboratory experimentation to quasi-experimental and field research);
- Qualitative research methods (including observation and interviewing), etc., particularly with respect to the nature of reliability and validity in the gathering and interpretation of qualitative data

#### Skills:

- Critical reasoning skills.
- Applications of various research approaches to social systems.
- Ability to write professional reports.

### **Ethics and Standards:**

#### Definition:

Professionals accept their obligations, are sensitive to others, and conduct themselves in an ethical manner. They establish professional relationships within the applicable constraints and standards.

#### Knowledge:

- Ethical principles.
- Standards of professional conduct.
- Responsibilities to clients, society, the profession, and colleagues.
- Awareness of potentially conflicting principles.
- Standards for psychological tests and measurements.
- Standards for conducting psychological research.
- Jurisprudence and local knowledge.

#### Skills:

- Ethical decision-making process.
- Proactive identification of potential ethical dilemmas.
- Resolution of ethical dilemmas.

### **Defining Competence**

**Competence** is a multidimensional construct that is comprised of four major components: *knowledge, skills, judgment, and diligence.*

**Knowledge** involves having absorbed and understood a body of information sufficient to understand and conceptualize the range of professional issues that we can reasonably expect to encounter. Knowledge is a necessary but not sufficient foundation for competence. In Alberta basic knowledge is initially demonstrated by completing a graduate-degree program in psychology, with a certain set of required courses, and by passing the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology. Knowledge can be understood as covering a continuum

from basic information that all psychologists should know such as ethics, to specific knowledge necessary for specialized areas of practice such as Neuropsychology.

**Skill** is the ability to effectively apply knowledge in actual practice. As with knowledge, skills cover a continuum from basic practice skills of listening and interviewing, to technical proficiency for specific psychotherapeutic, assessment or other professional procedures. It is generally accepted that supervised field experience such as practica and internships are necessary to acquire the required skills for the practice of psychology.

**Judgment** involves knowing when to apply which skills under what circumstances. It also involves self-reflection regarding how our own values, attitudes, experiences, and social context influence our actions, interpretations, choices, and recommendations. Good judgment incorporates the intent of increasing the probability that our activities will benefit and not harm the individuals, families, groups, and communities to whom we relate in our role as psychologists. Judgment is much harder to assess and is usually indirectly addressed during supervised experience. The CPA Code of Ethics encourages psychologists to:

II.8 Take immediate steps to obtain consultation or to refer a client to a colleague or other appropriate professional, whichever is more likely to result in providing the client with competent service, if it becomes apparent that a client's problems are beyond their competence.

II.10 Evaluate how their own experiences, attitudes, culture, beliefs, values, social context, individual differences, specific training, and stresses influence their interactions with others, and integrate this awareness into all efforts to benefit and not harm others.

**Diligence** involves consistently attending to our knowledge, skills and judgment as they are applied in our professional activities and being careful to give priority to our clients' needs over any other concerns. Diligence involves a willingness to work hard to provide the best service possible for each and every client, and in honestly evaluating our own skills and seeking additional training when appropriate. A diligent psychologist seeks out professional standards and guidelines that identify the knowledge, skills, and judgment essential to practice. Being diligent also incorporates self-awareness of any personal or situational circumstances that might diminish our competence. The CPA Code of Ethics encourages psychologists to:

II.11 Seek appropriate help and/or discontinue scientific or professional activity for an appropriate period of time, if a physical or psychological condition reduces their ability to benefit and not harm others.

II.12 Engage in self-care activities that help to avoid conditions (e.g., burnout, addictions) that could result in impaired judgment and interfere with their ability to benefit and not harm others.

**The Examination for Professional Practice of Psychology (EPPP) tests an applicant's foundation knowledge in the following content areas:**

- Statistics/research design
- Test construction
- Ethics

- Abnormal psychology
- Clinical psychology
- Learning theory and behavior/cognitive therapies
- Industrial/organizational psychology
- Physiological psychology
- Psychopharmacology
- Life span development
- Social psychology
- Psychological assessment
- Counseling specific populations/diversity

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Flowchart of Registration**

**REGISTRATION PROCESS**  
(considering a request for assessment of Substantial Equivalence)

**Application for Review of Academic Credentials**  
(Credentials Evaluation Sub-Committee)

**Referred to Substantial Equivalence Process**

The Applicant's documentation related to education, experience, practice or other qualification is submitted under substantial equivalence provisions for consideration.

Applicant may provide any additional documentary evidence relevant to registration requirements in addition to information already submitted.

Substantial Equivalence Sub-Committee assesses the documentary evidence submitted to determine if the applicant's qualifications may be "substantially equivalent."

Approved to undertake Oral Examination

Applicant determined NOT to be substantially equivalent and application for registration denied (applicant must be notified within 120 days of submitting their application).

**PASS**

**FAIL**

Substantial Equivalence Sub-Committee undertakes final review of application for registration

**Practice Permit Issued**

**Application for Registration Denied**

**Without condition**

**With conditions**

Applicant may appeal the denial or conditions to the Council of the College within 30 days of receiving notice