
**APA's Role in International Quality Assurance:
*APA as a Learning Partner***

Report of the Board of Education Affairs (BEA)/ Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP) Task Force on APA's Role in International Quality Assurance

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Executive Summary

APA's Role in International Quality Assurance: *APA as a Learning Partner*

In response to international trends in the development of psychology, the development of quality assurance mechanisms for education generally, and increased calls for reciprocity in recognition of education and training across country borders, the APA council of representatives approved a Task Force to advise APA on international issues in quality assurance and on possible roles that APA might play in this arena. The charge of the Task Force was as follows:

The BEA/CIRP Task Force on APA's Role in International Quality Assurance shall survey existent quality assurance mechanisms in place internationally. It shall consider the range of roles that an organization like APA might play in the development or implementation of mechanisms for quality assurance in the international arena (these roles may range from serving as a catalyst for the development of a global, umbrella quality assurance program with representation from many countries, to developing international standards, to providing consultation or training to national associations developing quality assurance programs, to providing certification of education and training programs at different levels of education and training).

The Task Force shall develop a report to advise APA on:

- *Whether APA should play a role in international quality assurance procedures / agreements / policies at different levels of educational attainment and areas of psychology.*
- *If yes, describe the possible roles, and discuss the merits and issues related to each role for the specific level of education and areas of psychology.*

The Task Force met in December 2007 to review the status of quality assurance internationally and to develop a framework for APA actions in this arena. The Task Force acknowledged the diversity in the scope of psychology and in psychology education and training world wide, and affirmed a set of operating principles to position APA as a “learning partner” that works in an inter-organizational context to seek opportunities for mutual learning and mutual capacity building in sustained collaborations that respect cultural differences and local histories, and that are focused sustained, stable collaborations that promote quality assurance processes, not products or outcomes.

The Task Force report provides an overview of the status of quality assurance in the United States and internationally, discusses international issues in quality assurance in general, and for professional psychology in particular, and outlines several models for quality assurance that are currently in place around the world. The report reviews international trends in higher education and in the discipline, including changes in psychology's scope, demographics, internationalization and technological infrastructure. In addition, the report discusses the opportunities for APA engagement in quality assurance activities worldwide, as well as the challenges in doing so.

The Task Force considered a variety of possibilities for APA action in the quality assurance arena and suggested that APA serve in learning collaboration with others as a source of information and expertise; as a convenor; and as an agent of capacity building. The Task Force recommended that APA refrain from serving as an international accreditor, although it did recommend that APA work with others toward developing a multicultural framework for quality assurance in psychology.

The Task Force recommended a set of 8 broad initiatives for moving forward in compiling and disseminating information and developing opportunities for discourse and cross-nation collaboration on quality assurance. The recommendations were as follows:

1. APA should develop activities focused on fostering knowledge among its members on international issues in quality assurance. One vehicle for this would be development of materials on US education and training, materials on systems elsewhere, and materials on international issues.
2. APA should develop informational resources on psychology education and training in the US, including model curricula, model assessment procedures, standards and guidelines, and model quality assurance procedures in place in the US for use by others as examples in the development of their own systems for quality assurance of psychology education and training.
3. APA could work with partner organizations at the international level (such as the International Union of Psychological Science, IUPsyS, the International Association of Applied Psychology, IAAP, the International Association of Cross Cultural Psychology;) and regional level (such as the European Federation of Psychology Associations, EFPA; InterAmerican Society of Psychology, SIP; Asian Union of Psychological Societies, ARUPS) to develop a collaborative role in discussing mechanisms that may lead to international quality assurance.
4. APA should develop mechanisms to provide expertise on quality assurance, when invited to do so, in consulting and collaborative roles. This expertise might include developing opportunities for demonstration projects on the development of quality assurance programs through fellow national psychology organizations.
5. APA should collaborate with others on creating opportunities for the development of psychology leadership in quality assurance worldwide through establishment of a Psychology Leadership Academy for colleagues internationally.
6. APA should work toward and participate in international opportunities to develop competency-based quality assurance models.
7. APA should continue ongoing activities in internationalizing the US psychology curriculum.
8. APA should develop mechanisms to stay informed of current trends on higher education and quality assurance around the world.

The Task Force developed a resolution to articulate a broad framework for APA's actions in international quality assurance issues. The policy (presented to the APA Council for adoption in February 2009) is as follows:

Resolution on APA's role in international quality assurance

Quality assurance in international education and training : APA as a learning partner

Based upon the considerations outlined in the *Report of the BEA/CIRP Task Force on APA's Role in International Quality Assurance: APA as a Learning Partner*, BEA and CIRP recommend that APA adopt as its policy an approach articulated in that report to engage internationally in a spirit of sustained learning and collaboration, and to promote the development of international discussions to set the framework for policy on quality assurance in psychology education and training. Thus, in all international endeavors regarding quality assurance, APA and its representative members should strive to: (1) Develop a consistent and trusted presence in the international arena; (2) Share knowledge and expertise of quality assurance mechanisms when and where it is invited and learn from those examples as they exist elsewhere; (3) Where invited, collaborate with local colleagues in other countries to share information and expertise; and (4) Seek to work as a learning partner in the development of a framework for international policy for psychology education and training.

Whereas psychology as a discipline in the United States has a formal system of quality assurance in professional psychology in its accreditation and licensure standards,

Whereas international colleagues in countries that may not have formal systems of quality assurance for psychology education and training have expressed an interest and desire to develop such systems,

Whereas APA desires to learn from others,

Whereas APA desires to serve as a useful source of information about its own systems,

Whereas international discussions of quality assurance may inform future directions in mobility across national boundaries,

Therefore,

APA will not engage in quality assurance reviews of psychology education and training programs at the international level.

In international education and training arenas APA will strive to be:

- 1. A source of information and expertise to work and learn with and from others in the international arena*
- 2. A collaborator in convening with others around shared goals for policy in quality assurance for psychology*
- 3. An agent of capacity building about quality assurance in education and training internationally among its own members and with other psychologists around the world*
- 4. A collaborating organization in developing policies to promote international mechanisms for review of professional credentials.*

And APA will strive to:

- 5. Use the knowledge gained from collaborations with others to evaluate, enhance and refine its own efforts in this area.*

Report: APA's Role in International Quality Assurance: *APA as a Learning Partner*

Introduction

The American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives approved a Task Force to advise APA on issues and possible roles it might play in international quality assurance for psychology education and training. The charge to the Task Force follows:

The BEA/CIRP Task Force on APA's Role in International Quality Assurance shall survey existent quality assurance mechanisms in place internationally. It shall consider the range of roles that an organization like APA might play in the development or implementation of mechanisms for quality assurance in the international arena (these roles may range from serving as a catalyst for the development of a global, umbrella quality assurance program with representation from many countries, to developing international standards, to providing consultation or training to national associations developing quality assurance programs, to providing certification of education and training programs at different levels of education and training).

The Task Force shall develop a report to advise APA on:

- *Whether APA should play a role in international quality assurance procedures / agreements / policies at different levels of educational attainment and areas of psychology.*
- *If yes, describe the possible roles, and discuss the merits and issues related to each role for the specific level of education and areas of psychology.*

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In addition, the Task Force (TF) requested input from an *ad hoc* international advisory group to help inform the TF of approaches to quality assurance for psychology in different countries around the world. Advisory group participants were recruited through contacts from BEA, CIRP, and Task Force members. This group was not intended to be representative or exhaustive of international perspectives. These individuals received an invitation to provide information to the Task Force and a questionnaire concerning psychology education and training, professional development, and quality assurance in their country. Fourteen colleagues accepted the invitation and returned completed questionnaires, with information from a broad range of countries, including: Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Scotland, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Yemen. Additional colleagues from Australia and the United Kingdom provided information after the Task Force meeting. A summary of their responses is provided in Appendix 1. Information obtained from these colleagues informed the Task Force of the variety of quality assurance mechanisms in place.

Framing Statements, Values, and Operating Principles

The scope of this report is to review the status of quality assurance in psychology education and training and to help formulate APA policy regarding its role internationally in this arena. In reviewing the current state of quality assurance mechanisms and activities around the world, the Task Force defined quality assurance as a planned and systematic review process of an institution, program or individual to determine that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being maintained and enhanced, per the definition of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (2001). This review may occur at the institutional, program or individual levels. For purposes of this report, the Task Force focused on those quality assurance mechanisms used in the formal discipline of psychology.

Three convergent trends have led to the need for APA to begin discussion of an articulated policy on quality assurance in psychology in the international arena: the development of the discipline and profession internationally, changes in quality assurance mechanisms in education internationally, and increased calls for reciprocity in recognition of education and training across country borders.

Although the subject matter of psychology has had an international purview and perspective, psychology as a discipline and a profession has experienced different rates and sequences of development in countries around the world. Although precise figures are not easy to find, there is general agreement that the number of psychologists worldwide has increased many-fold just in the last two decades.

Psychology as a field is influenced by a variety of social, cultural, economic and historic factors that have led to differences in how the profession has developed in the different regions of the world. In some countries, the scope of psychology includes basic science, applied science, and professional applications including service delivery, with many

specialized areas in each. In other countries, psychology is almost exclusively an academic discipline with a focus on basic and applied science. In yet other countries, psychology is primarily an applied profession, with a focus on school or business applications or it is primarily a health profession. It is therefore not surprising to find that the definition of “psychologist” and the scope, sequence, and degree level of education and training of psychologists vary from country to country.

In those countries where psychology has developed as a health and service profession, there continues to be a concern with achieving formal and legal recognition of psychology as an autonomous profession that is grounded in science and professional expertise. This is reflected in a recent policy statement by the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS, 2006), an organization whose national members (national organizations, coalitions of psychologists, or national academies) represent the broad range of organized psychology. The statement, adopted in 2006, reads as follows:

The International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) supports legislative recognition, or the equivalent, of Psychology as an autonomous profession, based on established standards of education and training anchored in scientific psychology.

This statement is also consistent with APA’s mission statement to:

advance psychology as a science and profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare by... the improvement of the qualifications and usefulness of psychologists through high standards of ethics, conduct, education, and achievement ...[and] the increase and diffusion of psychological knowledge through meetings, professional contacts, reports, papers, discussions, and publications thereby to advance scientific interests and inquiry, and the application of

research findings to the promotion of health, education, and the public welfare.

Both groups encourage the development of Psychology as an autonomous profession with standards for education and training. The similarities and differences of these standards across countries and their evolution will set the pace for a more unified international discipline.

Recent years have brought on increased discussions of quality assurance in education and training leading to professional practice, as well as growing attention to international issues in this area. Further, there is increased interest in both the US and other countries in facilitating mobility across borders, potentially through existing or developing quality assurance mechanisms. APA is also currently engaged in a process of strategic planning, which includes a review of its Mission Statement as related to strategic goals. The convergence of these forces points to the timeliness of an APA policy discussion concerning its role in quality assurance in the international arena.

The establishment of education, training, and quality assurance standards is part of the developmental process in the growth of any profession (Greenwood, 1957). As summarized by Shullman (2003) there are five attributes of an independent profession: (1) Having a systematic body of theory; (2) Professional authority such that a member of the profession brings a certain level of judgment or expertise to work and assumes that clients rely on such professional judgment; (3) Sanction of the community in the form of self-regulation or recognition; (4) A Code of Ethics; and (5) A professional culture. Creating the conditions for our discipline to develop as a unified international discipline will involve development of these five attributes on a broader stage. (Carr-Saunders, 1933; Cogan, 1953; Whitehead, 1935)

Within the US, as in many other countries, psychology has developed both as a science and as an autonomous profession, and it has developed the infrastructure to guide, sanction, and regulate professional

development and practice. Psychology education and training programs in those countries that do not have well developed infrastructures have increasingly looked to APA and others for guidance on these issues. Building on its experience, APA has the opportunity to play an important collaborative role in international capacity building for the profession of psychology. Such activities are consistent with a number of reports over the last years reiterating APA's commitment to fostering an international perspective (Board of Directors Subcommittee on APA's International Activities, 2004; APA Policy and Planning Board, 2005) and with APA's current strategic planning. Working to strengthen the profession of psychology in the international arena will help APA to flourish, establish structures for international collaboration, and be prepared to meet new challenges. An international profession of psychology with appropriate global frameworks for education and training standards will support the public understanding of psychology as an autonomous profession. This is also a critical step in assuring quality education, fostering the development of the profession, and protecting the public. As one of the countries that have more elaborated infrastructures to monitor education and the credentialing of individuals, the US may provide models for such systems that can be used or adapted internationally.

There are still a number of challenges that accompany any APA role in international activities within psychology. These challenges include: balancing APA's size, experience and resources with a desire to interact as a collaborative and learning partner; balancing the interests of APA and US systems with a desire for a more unified global system where every country has a voice; and balancing the preservation of indigenous psychologies and perspectives with a desire for consensually derived standards and benchmarks for professional psychology.

The Task Force reviewed the opportunities, challenges, and issues in hopes of determining how to contribute to the enhancement of psychology in an internationally collegial manner. In determining how to best advise APA, the Task Force was mindful that quality

assurance systems for psychology education and training that work well in the US may not be suitable for other countries

Values and Operating Principles in APA's Role in International Quality Assurance

In addressing how to balance APA's interests with those of the global community, the Task Force believes that APA should explicitly endorse a number of values to frame its actions. These include: Collaboration; Inclusion; Mutual Learning; Respect; Focus on enabling mechanisms; Commitment to enhancing capacity; Sensitivity and Respect for multiple contexts within which psychology functions; and Multiple Approaches to quality assurance and education and training standards.

These values led the Task Force to articulate an overall approach and a set of operating principles that will guide its recommendations:

The overall approach is one of sustained collaboration. In all international endeavors, APA and its representative members should strive to: (1) Develop a consistent and trusted presence in the international arena; (2) Share knowledge and expertise of quality assurance mechanisms when and where it is invited; (3) Seek opportunities to learn about and to learn from systems and processes of education and quality assurance in other countries; and (4) When consultation and assistance are invited, APA's response should be relevant to the profession and the educational system in that country or region.

The following set of operating principles specifies how, when, and with whom APA might interact:

- APA will work in an inter-organizational context, collaborating with relevant international, regional, and local organizations in the development and implementation of activities.
- APA will seek to enhance opportunities for mutual learning and mutual capacity building.

- APA will seek to integrate multiple diverse cultural contexts and environments into its approaches.
- APA will seek to learn about educational systems and build upon existing structures, mechanisms and frameworks rather than supplant them.
- APA will focus on local capacity building in collaboration with multiple stakeholders contributing to local expertise.
- APA will invest its resources in strategies to foster a positive climate for the development of the discipline in its local milieu, rather than in exporting control mechanisms and systems.
- APA will encourage professionals to develop quality assurance mechanisms in their own countries to meet the educational and cultural needs of the community and to implement these mechanisms in ways that are consistent with their culture.
- APA will focus on promoting quality assurance processes and not specific products in other countries. As an accrediting body, APA's Commission on Accreditation (CoA, see description next page) is recognized by the US Secretary of Education and must adhere to US standards. As such, APA is not the arbiter of standards for psychology education and training outside the US, as APA accreditation guidelines were developed in the cultural context of the United States.

Criteria for consideration of various models for APA

In considering what role APA may play in international quality assurance of psychology, the Task Force developed three criteria for judging each potential course of action, based on the overall approach and operating principles:

- **Stability:** Efforts made in collaboration with other countries would have long-lasting effects.
- **Cultural Awareness:** APA's actions will consider and respect the educational/functional structures and interests of the countries involved.
- **Leverage of Available Resources:** APA will seek to maximize the use of existing

resources and expertise in collaborating

with other countries.

Current Status of Psychology and International Quality Assurance

For purposes of discussion, the Task Force took as their purview those areas in which quality assurance mechanisms regarding psychology education and training exist within APA. APA has developed US-focused model curricula for high school and undergraduate education in psychology. APA's quality assurance mechanisms include accreditation of doctoral programs in professional psychology and approving sponsors of continuing education in psychology. Given the visibility of accreditation as the quality assurance mechanism in the US for professional programs, the Task Force paid particular attention to accreditation. It also addressed licensing or credentialing at the doctoral level as a link to quality assurance of an individual's capacity to serve as a practitioner.

Quality Assurance in the United States

There are numerous mechanisms currently in place in the United States that influence the review of psychology education and training. At the institutional level, colleges, universities, and professional schools undergo review by one of the six regional accrediting bodies that review doctoral degree-granting institutions. Each regional accrediting body reviews institutions periodically for the appropriateness of their curriculum, goals and outcomes, resources, faculty credentials, and institutional policies. The entire current educational system of undergraduate and graduate psychology, whether in basic or applied science or professional psychology, undergoes the quality assurance process that occurs when an institution is reviewed for regional accreditation.

At the programmatic level, specialized and professional accrediting bodies review specific programs within the institution to determine whether those programs are meeting standards that have been set by the

profession. Such reviews are often more specific in terms of curriculum, goals, and expected outcomes than overall institutional reviews. The review body for professional psychology in the US is the APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA). The CoA is recognized by both CHEA and the US Department of Education. In particular, to be recognized by the Department of Education, accreditation by the recognized agency must be linked to federal US funds and to the provision of services via licensure. Thus, the scope of accreditation by the APA CoA is for the practice of psychology. Currently the CoA is the only recognized accreditor in professional psychology in the US. The scope of accreditation by the CoA is training in preparation for the practice of psychology. The CoA reviews doctoral graduate programs, doctoral internships, and postdoctoral residencies to ensure that they have the faculty, resources, policies, and procedures in place to provide the appropriate education and training for promoting the desired academic and professional competencies in their students or trainees. There appear to be two other psychology accrediting bodies that are in early stages of their development, but the Task Force did not review these bodies.

In the field of professional psychology, quality assurance is also undertaken at the level of the individual practitioner. Each US state licensure board sets its own standards for being licensed or credentialed to practice psychology within that state. The Task Force operated using CHEA's definition of licensure: "[Licensure] refers to approval of an individual to practice a profession once minimum requirements are met. Licensure usually is obtained through examination or graduation from an accredited institution. In some countries, a period of practical experience also may be required" (2001). The Task Force also reviewed CHEA's definition of certification: "[Certification is the] acknowledgement that quality standards required for approval have

been achieved. [It] usually accords privileges” (2001).

In professional psychology in the US, licensure requirements include completion of certain academic degrees (in most states the doctoral degree), and a set number of hours of supervised professional experience to obtain professional skills and competencies, passing of a national exam (EPPP), and any additional requirements as set by the state or province. In addition, in many states, licensed professional psychologists must obtain a certain number of continuing education credits each year in order to demonstrate that they stay abreast of evolving knowledge in the field. Through this mechanism, the public can be reasonably assured that a licensed professional psychologist has the appropriate skills and knowledge to provide psychological treatment.

Certification is also common in the US at levels that are non-doctoral. Particular areas of professional psychology may set their own standards for practice of that area. For example, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has set its own standards for training in school psychology, both for programs and for individuals at the specialist level. The individual credentialing standards provide guidelines for states in determining what standards one must meet in order to identify oneself as a school psychologist. This serves as yet another mechanism in assuring the public that school psychologists have met a minimum standard for practice.

A number of countries around the world are placing a greater emphasis on the attainment of competencies. The discussion of competencies and outcomes in US higher education accreditation were first reflected in the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) principles in 1983. COPA as a recognition body was the predecessor of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Within professional psychology, the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP) in 1986 (Peterson, Peterson, Abrams, & Stricker, 1997) provided a set of competencies expected

of its graduates that have served as the basis for some of the major competencies that became part of the revised Accreditation Guidelines and Principles of the Commission on Accreditation in 1996. The need for outcomes accountability has increased both in the US and in other countries. This need for accountability has taken root within other professions within the United States such as medicine and has taken root in professions in other countries.

At the present time, there are several mechanisms in the US that jointly operate to provide quality assurance for professions. The federal government, through the US Department of Education, recognizes the accrediting bodies that in turn accredit academic programs that are eligible to receive federal funding. State licensure boards also serve as quality assurance mechanisms for a number of professions. Professions also provide quality assurance for themselves through professional associations, and accrediting bodies for academic and training programs. Academic institutions assess themselves and provide quality assurance to the public by undergoing voluntary accreditation, reporting to their governing boards, and reporting to the state, which provides degree-granting authority. For psychology, the primary mechanisms for quality assurance are accreditation of schools and programs, as well as licensing and credentialing of individuals.

Quality Assurance Around the World

The Task Force reviewed and attempted to map the landscape of models of quality assurance currently in place around the world to inform discussion of mechanisms for psychology education and training. Because quality assurance for psychology education and training generally occurs within the context of the higher education sector¹ at the national level, this review covers quality assurance mechanisms for higher education as well as for professional activities.

¹ In some countries there is impending action to move quality assurance for psychology to the health sector, e.g., ministry of health. Many local psychologists believe this is unfortunate because it limits the scope of recognized psychology.

Quality assurance in higher education is a relatively recent development globally. Although quality assessment began in the US in the last part of the 19th century for most higher education and somewhat later in the United Kingdom for technical (but not university) education, it was not until the 1990s, close to a century later, that quality assurance was assumed as the norm for evaluating higher education systems and for providing governments, students, employers and the public with information at the national level. This occurred with the advent of mass higher education around the world and the associated need for mechanisms to recognize and transfer academic credit, degrees, and professional status.

Quality assurance systems vary across countries in terms of their origins (government, universities or consortia); their independence from the government (e.g., as governmental bodies within ministries, quasi-independent bodies, or independent entities); how they are funded (by the government, by universities); and their modes of operation. A World Bank report (Lenn, 2004) cited three primary modes for quality assurance, including assessment (description and evaluation of programs, faculty, infrastructure and outputs), audit (a check to assure that an institution does what it claims to do) and accreditation (evaluation by an external body of whether an institution qualifies for a certain status based on adherence to standards or guidelines covering both structure and content). It noted that accreditation is the primary choice for national systems of quality assurance; is the mode most likely to lead to development and capacity building because it addresses a more comprehensive set of quality issues in an institution, and generally also involves assessment, audit or benchmark statements. According to the World Bank report, the general trend in quality assurance is toward accreditation, rather than assessment or audit alone.

Within the professions, including psychology, there is variability worldwide in the nature of the national body that performs quality

assurance. Examples are quality evaluation by a governmentally sanctioned accreditor (US, Canada), by psychologist councils, by universities, by governmental ministries, or by commercial, often foreign organizations (China).

1. International Issues in Quality Assurance for Education

In various regions of the world, trade and harmonization agreements have been working to bring countries into greater economic (and social) contact. For example, the World Trade Organization's (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) asks member countries to liberalize trade of services as well as goods. One of these services is education. Some effects of this trade agreement are to increase degrees to foreign students and to increase collaborations among institutions to offer degrees cross-nationally through partnerships with foreign providers. One effect of these agreements, which foster inter-country or regional trade, is a push for mechanisms of mutual recognition for higher education degrees as well as for professional education and practice, as education and professional practice are treated as services that are subject to international trade. Thus, the promulgation of quality assurance mechanisms and regional or global standards for education in general and for professional education and training in particular are increasingly seen as necessary to support national competitiveness and to support international mobility.

One central issue for higher education is the recognition of academic degrees across countries to foster mobility. The need for recognition applies both to the credentials of individuals (e.g., the academic degree of a person educated in country x is recognized in country y) and to academic programs (e.g., an academic program offered by university x in country y confers degrees recognized in countries y and z). Global bodies have been addressing this within geographic regions and on an international level. For example, UNESCO instituted a section in its Division of Higher Education on "Access, Mobility and Quality Assurance" whose purview it is to "provide a platform for information exchange on higher education quality assurance,

accreditation and the recognition of qualifications". The effort includes a web site (URL_ID=12516&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html), reports of meetings and conferences, and the development of programs to support mobility and quality assurance.

The greatest development in mutual recognition of higher education is demonstrated within some geographic regions in several areas of the world that have attempted to enhance the mobility of students across borders under the framework of regional trade agreements (see for example the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); European Union (EU), Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) groupings).²

As a World Bank report on quality assurance in Asia notes:

Trade agreements are both driving and responding to the global market place, the rise of regionalism and the determination of countries to assure that they are not left behind. A decade ago, few in higher education ... would have mentioned any trade agreement as having an impact on higher education ... In the 21st century, countries that ignore internalizing these powerful external dynamics do so at their own risk. National accrediting bodies are no longer limited to knowledge of their own system. Regionalisation as a powerful means to globalization is a current reality, which will only grow in strength. It is foreseeable that quality assurance will become regionalized. Were this author to guess the progression of regionalization in quality assurance, it will begin with bilateral mutual recognition agreements for academic credentials, followed by regional accrediting functions for those professions with the most mobility (e.g.,

engineering), evolving over time into a region-wide process for assuring quality in higher education regardless of physical location. The basis for this has already begun... (Lenn, 2004, p. 28).

2. International Issues in Quality Assurance for Professional Psychology

Across countries there is considerable variability in quality assurance for psychology education and training. As countries increase in their overall quality assurance efforts for higher education, professional psychology programs are increasingly looking for ways to increase quality assurance through review and assessment (often with external international reviewers) or accreditation. Several of the respondents in the international advisory group stated that psychologists in their country were working to have determination of the content of quality assurance standards for psychology programs in their country stem from professional bodies or in collaboration with government ministries.

Important roles of quality assurance mechanisms nationally are to support recognition of psychology as an autonomous profession, and to develop quality assurance as a means for supporting common standards and mobility within a country (e.g. across state, province or territorial lines), assuring that standards of professional competence are met.

International challenges in quality assurance include supporting mobility regionally or internationally. This mobility may take different forms: assuring mobility of professional education so that students educated in one country can study further in another or can enter the profession in another; assuring mobility of professionals so that individuals licensed in one country can practice in another, or developing mechanisms for mobility that take the needs for cultural and linguistic competence into account. Although psychology does not currently have international quality assurance mechanisms outside of a small number of bilateral agreements (e.g., Australia – New Zealand), there are models for mutual recognition of quality assurance mechanisms in place for

² In this context, regionalization refers to agreements among several countries in a particular region of the world, which differs from regional accreditation in the US (page 6 of this report).

other professions. Presently, psychology associations in Europe are working on developing a regional quality assurance mechanism. Several quality assurance mechanisms currently in practice are reviewed in the following section.

Quality assurance issues with psychology education for practice are especially complex because, unlike some disciplines in which expertise is less influenced by the cultural context, interventions depend on personal interactions. Thus, issues of culture and language are central to definitions and assessment of competence. Any discussion of mobility must address how quality assurance mechanisms will address cultural competence in its broadest frame.

Models of Quality Assurance

This Task Force found that current quality assurance mechanisms use different principles to ensure quality. Some quality assurance mechanisms have as principles a universal process or set of standards. Others are more specific to the content under review such as quality assurance in an educational system. Within the types of quality assurance in higher education, there are also models that differ in terms of educational standards adopted by a geographical region, by a discipline, or within a cultural framework.

1. Standards Specific to one Country

In some countries the system of quality assurance reflects specific national standards of education, training and professional development. For some, the quality assurance system includes components that include different levels of quality assurance for different educational levels and different geographical regions within that system. In the US, for example, different governmental and professional bodies with their own standards, guidelines, practices, ethics codes, and so on oversee quality, institutions, consumers, and the welfare of the general public. Such within-country quality assurance makes cross-border mobility for students and professionals challenging (see Bullock & Hall for an overview).

2. Development of a Common Standard for Education and Training within a Region

Several efforts at setting common educational standards, mutual recognition, and facilitating mobility for students are occurring in different regions of countries around the world. The 1997 Lisbon Convention, signed by most countries in Europe, set the conditions for mutual recognition of educational qualifications. The subsequent 1999 Bologna Agreement to create a European Higher Education Area, currently signed by 46 countries, is the basis for developing a common educational system in Europe. Its goal is to promote convergence in quality assurance standards and comparable degrees at the undergraduate level of education to allow for student mobility within the EU. In South America, educational initiatives within MERCOSUR, a regional trade agreement to develop a common economic area, are working to establish equivalence of academic degrees in member nations.

In Europe, psychology is in the process of developing a mechanism for professional recognition and quality assurance called EuroPsy (the European Certificate for Psychology). As stated in its publication "EuroPsy", "The *EuroPsy* European Certificate in Psychology (henceforth *EuroPsy*) is intended to provide a standard of academic education and professional training which informs clients, employers and colleagues that a psychologist can be considered to have gained the necessary competences for the provision of psychological services. *EuroPsy* aims to set a common standard of competence in all the countries where it is issued. It promotes the free movement of psychologists across the countries of the European Union."

This credential depends on a cross-national agreement on a set of standards and procedures for professional education and training in psychology that are approved at the regional (EU) level by national psychology organizations. Administration of the EuroPsy will be carried out by "National Awarding Committees." The relationship between these committees and national universities and university accreditation systems is still under negotiation.

The model attempts to take into account national differences in culture and orientation by specifying minimum courses of study, curricula, competencies and experiences necessary for a common credential, but it does not mandate specific content. It does, however, set the minimum level for entry into psychological practice as 6 years university level study and supervised practice.

The EuroPsy credential relies on standards for the profession developed from earlier efforts to specify a common curriculum and define competencies for psychology. As noted in the EuroPsy preamble:

The framework drew substantially on work carried out by the British Psychological Society (BPS) in developing its own occupational standards for psychologists which has resulted in Draft Standards of Proficiency for Applied Psychology. A major contribution of this work is the development of competences which can be evaluated as outcomes of education and training, rather than reliance only on academic curricula. The European Commission is also in favour of a 'competence' approach, which emphasizes transparency and which enables competence evaluation across a range of contexts...It is hoped that the combination of curriculum specification with a specification of competences of professional psychologists will enable more transparent evaluation of equivalence (2006).

3. Cross-Border Quality Assurance Agreements on Education

One model of international cooperation involves the mutual recognition of quality assurance mechanisms. The Washington Accord is one such agreement in which member countries agree to a set of principles and procedures for quality assurance of educational programs in engineering. In the Washington Accord, each member country expresses confidence in the quality assurance processes of the other member countries and provides mutual recognition of accredited bachelor level engineering degree courses/programs, and, generally, to

exemption from the education requirement for practice in other member countries.

4. Cross-Border Recognition of Individual Credentials

One method of international cooperation is the recognition of equivalence at the professional practitioner level. When countries make such an agreement, individuals, not programs, are deemed to meet a benchmark standard. Individuals recognized in one country as reaching an agreed to international standard of competence are considered qualified to practice (perhaps with only minimal assessment primarily for local knowledge) in another country that is party to the agreement. Examples of this method include (for engineering) the 1999 APEC Engineer Agreement and subsequent 2001 Engineers Mobility Forum Agreement. In these models representative organizations in each participating country create a "register" of those deemed as meeting the generic international standard that is used when such an individual seeks to have his or her competence recognized in another country. In general, this model requires collaboration with licensing or regulatory bodies.

At present there is no equivalent mechanism for psychology internationally, although endorsement of credentials is the most successful mobility model in North America (Hall & Lunt, 2005; Bullock & Hall, 2008). Some countries (e.g., the UK, the Netherlands) do use such registries as the basis for professional activities, and voluntary registries are available in other countries (e.g., the National Register in the US; Canada). There is some bilateral use of such registries internationally (e.g., US and Canada; Australia and New Zealand).

5. Competency-Based Recognition

One model that has been discussed for addressing the global variability in psychology programs and incommensurability of educational systems is to focus on developing international competency evaluation procedures for graduates. Professionals meeting an agreed-upon set of competencies would be

eligible to practice in countries that have signed onto such an agreement. Efforts to develop competency benchmarks for the sequence of psychology education and training leading to licensure are underway in the US (APA Competency Benchmarks Work Group, 2007) and Europe (EuroPsy).

6. Quality Assurance Based on Standardized Procedures

A model applied to manufacturing and technology sectors that is increasingly being applied to education is quality assurance through certification that a program follows internationally standardized procedures. The International Standards Organization (ISO) is a consortium across national standards organizations of 157 countries that has developed over 16,500 standards (guidelines of best practices and standardized assessment, classification, terminology, production and provision of services). These standards are applied across most sectors of manufacturing,

technology and, increasingly, services such as education. The focus of the standards is on standardization of procedures, and not specific content. The two relevant standards for professional education are the ISO 9000 series, which serve as quality assurance by providing detailed procedures for all aspects of the technological educational process, including curriculum development, implementation, and student assessment, and ISO 10015, which provides quality measurement criteria.

To date ISO standards are used more for self assessment, often in conjunction with Total Quality Management (TQM) procedures and are more often used as an institutional assessment tool in coordination with other quality assessment measures. However, in other service sectors ISO standards serve quality assurance functions by the acquisition of the relevant ISO certificate, specifying that the institution follows standardized procedures.

Current Status of Quality Assurance Internationally: Variable

At the present time, quality assurance mechanisms around the world vary a great deal in numerous ways. They vary in terms of who sets standards, who evaluates adherence to the standards, and the depth and breadth of those standards. Consequences for not meeting set standards also differ across professions, cultures, and countries. Institutions and programs that have not instituted any formal quality assurance mechanisms may be putting their students at risk for job placement and mobility in some countries, while this may pose no problems in other countries. Similar issues may arise when quality assurance mechanisms are not administered with proper fidelity, and the public may be at risk/// if this is the case. Such concerns have brought an increased emphasis on transparency through the broad dissemination of standards and procedures.

In addition, each country differs in the amount of control professions have over their

own regulation. In many countries, government bodies are solely responsible for monitoring the quality of education and for regulating professions. In other countries, professions are more autonomous or even have total control over their own standards. Psychology is not necessarily an independent profession in some countries. In some places, other professions such as medicine may continue to monitor psychology as a part of psychiatry. Different countries also vary in the strength of their professional psychology association, and as a consequence they vary in their ability to set educational standards. A strong professional association may contribute to the recognition of psychology as an independent profession and to the strength of a peer review system of quality assurance.

Countries around the world also show great variability of terms of the degree level required for practicing psychology. Surveys of psychologists in other countries showed that the

degree level required for entry into practice varies in terms of years of training and degree required. In addition, the higher education systems themselves differ across countries, so that a particular degree in one place may not mean that the same level of professional competency has been obtained as does a degree with the same name in another place. The international psychology community may need to focus on how professional competencies are reflected in the education sequence and degrees provided across different countries, including years of schooling, degree level, degree name, and supervised service delivery. These discussions will, in turn, affect criteria used in quality assurance.

The Task Force also determined that fostering discussion on international mechanisms for quality assurance is important to the development of the discipline and that APA had a role to play in this development and in encouraging the development of strong psychology associations nationally. As noted in a World Bank report (Lenn, 2004) when addressing disciplinary and professional development:

.... there is a tendency to postpone the need to pay attention to professional education. Often, there is not a strong professional body advocating a certain level of practice in the country. When this is the case, it should be the responsibility of the national accrediting body to form a specialized committee for that profession (best composed of practitioners and academics) and nurture the development of professional standards and/or develop a national qualifications framework (as discussed earlier). Where strong professional bodies exist, they should be co-opted by the national accrediting body to help it review professional education programs. In more mature stages, the national accrediting body can "recognize" the "professional accreditors" which will, in turn, carry out their specialized processes on relevant programs.

International Trends

The Task Force adopted a broad view in considering current trends and directions in the development of psychology around the world. These included the impact of globalization and internationalization on psychology, demographic changes in the discipline, and changes in curriculum development, assessment, and training. A number of trends are taking place for quality assurance in general and for the discipline of psychology in particular.

1. Trends in Higher Education

Higher education, like other goods, services, and processes is becoming more internationalized. The increase in internationalization is taking several forms. US educational programs and institutions are increasing their opportunities for study abroad, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In some cases US institutions are establishing campuses in other countries, primarily for residents of that country or region. In other cases, satellite campuses of US institutions have been developed for US students to become more international in their educational endeavors. Finally, US higher educational programs continue to attract large numbers of international students.

The desire for professional mobility is increasing with the increase in internationalization of education both home and abroad. When professionals are educated and trained in a country other than the country in which they intend to practice, there is a need to determine that appropriate standards for the practice of psychology have been put in place at regional, institutional, programmatic, and individual levels of the country in which the individual's training occurred. The growth of regional mutual trade and exchange agreements is reflected in increased discussion within psychology to expand regional cooperation and exchange and, in some cases, mechanisms to support professional mobility. The most developed example of these agreements are movements within Europe to create a common professional framework (mirroring a common educational framework) that will allow the recognition of expertise, training and professional competence across

borders. Another such example includes Australia and New Zealand, which have mutual recognition agreements.

2. Trends in the Discipline

Like many other disciplines psychology faces both increasing specialization and decreasing identity as a uniquely defined discipline. Increased specialization within psychology and within professional psychology means that education and training and professional identities are becoming increasingly differentiated, such that no psychologist can be expected to be trained in all fields of application. At the same time that specialization is occurring in psychology, the discipline is also moving toward interdisciplinary collaboration with other providers. One consequence of this trend is that psychology and psychological interventions are increasingly absorbed into other disciplines, further confusing the core identity of a psychologist.

Consumers of psychological services are facing increasingly complex issues, thus calling for increased interdisciplinary collaboration. Such collaboration leads to an overlap of quality assurance standards and a need for interdisciplinary training. These increasingly complex issues are also bringing more need for recognition of professional psychology as an independent and necessary discipline. In the US the media has defined psychologists only in terms of those involved in health care provision and not to the roles psychologists may play in terms of their research and the applications of psychology to education, business, or other human endeavors. Although this report is focused on quality assurance within professional psychology, broader international dialogue that considers all areas of psychology also is important.

The face of psychology is changing in a number of ways. One is the increasing feminization of psychology in the US and around the world, as more women than ever before have opportunities for higher education. In some countries it has always been a more female-dominated field, as other healing and helping professions have also

been dominated by women. In addition, the advent of prescription privileges in some jurisdictions alters the scope and training of practice.

At the same time, recognition of psychology's contributions to the health arena have been increasing as behavioral and medical approaches become integrated into an increasingly more coherent bio-psychosocial approach to a variety of interventions at the global level, including the prevention and treatment of disease. For example, the World Health Organization has engaged with psychology in its longstanding work on the International Classification of Functions (ICF), a system to provide a common language to describe behaviorally based health classifications. Current activities by WHO to begin the revision process for the International Classification of Disease (ICD) also reflect psychology's increasingly active role in global health initiatives. Another parallel trend is that research and practice in professional psychology are increasingly addressing the effectiveness of interventions and efficacy concerns, and promoting evidence-based practice. Such activities may provide important input into efforts to develop a common international language for professional competencies and training.

Research and practice in professional psychology in the US has become increasingly focused on the effectiveness of interventions and on the link to models that include biological and neurological components as well as psychological ones. The focus on efficacy in interventions can be found in the APA Report of the 2005 Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice (2005). Research funding for psychology in the US has focused on brain science for most of the last decade. For example, psychology has engaged with the World Healthy Organization in its work on the international Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), a classification system to provide a common language to describe the functional consequences of health conditions. The biosocial model is reflected in the ICF International Classification of Functions, the classification by the World Health Organization, as available at

<http://www.who.int/classifications/en/>. As compared with the DSM this classification system includes a broader rubric of areas of function. As compared with the DSM, this classification system focuses on functioning, distinct from diagnostic classification.

Programs and institutions in the US are increasing their opportunities for study abroad, and students continue to show interest in learning more about other cultures. The US federal government is providing more financial support for these activities. Psychologists are traveling abroad professionally by teaching, presenting, and attending international conferences. Students and professionals have more opportunities to travel abroad and interact with more people than ever before.

The internet has significantly affected psychology around the world enormously. People have the ability to obtain information more quickly than ever and engage with people around the world online regularly. Many more people than ever before are able to obtain an education in psychology through online programs. Many psychology journals

are available through online mechanisms and can be easily accessed around the world. There are also increases in teaching materials online, evidenced by the open access provided by institutions such as MIT and the more costly online educational services provided by online institutions. It is not clear what the impact of online learning and online communications will have on the field of psychology as a whole, or how quality assurance mechanisms will need to adapt. The broader impact of online services on professional psychology is also unclear. At the present time, the provision of services has been attempted in rural communities using web-based systems, although it is too early to assess the efficacy of those interventions. Should web-based interventions be shown to be effective one can ponder how the use of internet-based protocols that translate communication could be used to allow for international interventions via the web. Given the current immaturity and lack of evidence of the efficacy of such interventions and the current lack of programs that can accurately translate the nuances of language necessary for the conduct of psychological interventions, that is not something this current report can address.

Opportunities and Barriers for APA

Opportunities

Discussions of quality assurance in professional psychology are increasing around the world. Within different regions of countries there is increased interest in mobility and development of common standards and mechanisms for accreditation or other forms of quality assurance. As these discussions continue, a challenge to the profession will be to balance national and regional developments with the integrity of psychology as a global discipline. APA has the membership and recognition to play a major role in such discussions.

To date, APA has been in discussion with partner psychology associations about quality assurance only in its own regional area

(NAFTA) and primarily at a level of information sharing. Mechanisms for mutual recognition or harmonizing education and training are not yet in place within North America; comments on concurrent accreditation with Canada follow below. Opportunities for APA involvement are increasing. APA receives numerous requests from institutions in other countries to perform quality assurance on their psychology programs, and it receives requests from psychology programs, departments, universities and psychology associations for assistance in developing their own quality assurance, accreditation, or licensing policies or mechanisms. To date, lacking a policy on its role in international quality assurance, APA has declined requests to participate in these activities.

APA has a number of opportunities before it as the international psychology community places an increasing emphasis on quality assurance. The association can educate itself more on how other countries are currently engaging in quality assurance so as to improve its own systems and provide this information for the benefit of its members and the international community. It can collaborate with fellow national and international psychology associations to convene discussions on issues in quality assurance for education and training in psychology. APA can also work with other countries to enhance strong leadership in the field, and can organize demonstration projects to build on its own current work on the development of competency assessment in professional psychology.

Such engagement in international collaboration will provide APA an opportunity to stimulate discussion on new issues, such as quality assurance in review of continuing education providers, and analogous mechanisms for undergraduate and high school education. It will also provide an opportunity for APA and its members to learn about and from systems of quality assurance elsewhere. In addition, APA can increase its collaboration with other US organizations in fostering a broader perspective and involvement in the international ventures (APS, AERA, etc.).

Barriers and Challenges

There are barriers to active APA involvement. At the most general level, because of its size, history, and resources, APA, like American Psychology, is perceived as dominating the profession and discipline in ways that some may believe are harmful to the future development of the discipline. Thus any APA action to provide models, advice or input on quality assurance issues need to be carefully crafted. It needs to recognize and be sensitive to national, cultural, historical, economic and political differences among countries that may limit the relevance of APA models. As noted in the operating principles, any APA action needs to be one of collaboration, not export of models, approaches or assumptions, and needs

to be one of bi-directional learning. These are difficult goals to achieve and require considerable education of staff and members about both other education and training systems and ways to achieve inter-cultural dialog and collaboration.

In discussing any new involvement in the international arena, APA will have to address how such efforts will affect initiatives underway to improve the discipline more locally and how the current world view of the US will affect any international initiatives by a US-based organization. Becoming more involved internationally may be viewed by some APA members as diverting attention from issues in the US. APA accreditation and other US quality assurance mechanisms continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the profession, and some may feel that the US system needs considerable changes.

At a more specific level, APA's present status as the primary accreditor for psychology in the US does not equip it to serve that role internationally. Currently, there are multiple overlapping arbiters of quality assurance in the US, including the US Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the relationship between institutional and professional accreditation. As a body recognized by the US Department of Education for the purposes of accreditation, the APA's Commission must adhere to the provisions of the Higher Education Act which are revised according to the perceived best interests of higher education in the United States. If APA wished to increase its scope to include international accreditation of programs outside of the US it would not be able to use its present Commission on Accreditation, as the current guidelines under which this group operates are not appropriate for such action.

As previously stated, the US Department of Education has been increasing its oversight of quality assurance mechanisms in the US, both at K-12 and higher education levels. As many US accrediting bodies are recognized by the Department, US federal standards trickle down to educational institutions and programs themselves. These standards could potentially be imposed on international institutions and

programs when these accrediting bodies accredit programs outside the US, an outcome that may not be appropriate in the context of cultural differences. In addition, it could be difficult to apply standards that work well in the US to programs in countries with different economic, political, and social environments.

The APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA) is currently phasing out accreditation of programs in Canada after many years of concurrent accreditation with the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). CPA initially requested this partnership in 1989 to assist in its development of its own accreditation system; that system has matured and better reflects the issues faced by doctoral level practitioners in Canada. The APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA) is currently phasing out accreditation of programs in Canada after many years of concurrent accreditation with the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). Although the system of concurrent accreditation served a useful purpose, CoA and APA surveyed constituent groups in the US and Canada and concluded that based upon the maturity of the Canadian accreditation system and the existence of other mechanisms to support mobility, CoA would cease its accreditation activity in Canada.

The definition of psychologist in the US is also not immediately appropriate internationally. In the US psychology has been careful to label individuals as being trained and having expertise in clinical, counseling, school, or another area of psychology, and generally to

hold the doctoral degree as the entry level of qualification required. These differentiations may pose additional barriers. In most of the world the entry level into the profession is the master's degree. The general public does not necessarily understand the distinctions between the different areas of psychology or the distinction between psychologists and other types of therapists, counselors, or mental health care providers.

APA has been very active in supporting the use of evidence-based practices in the delivery of services and in its education and training programs. It is not clear whether these evidence-based practices will generalize to other countries and populations. Further, the culture of the US is oriented towards the individual, and many interventions may be culture-bound. It is not clear how the orientation to individual needs and goals translates to other countries with different cultural beliefs about society. Also, the US has developed its own taxonomy of specialties, educational levels, and practice settings that works within this country. It is not clear how those structures map with structures in place in other countries.

Since most interventions in professional psychology occur through interpersonal communication, the lack of understanding of the nuances of language and culture may make communication and efficacy in other countries difficult. Further, the mechanisms for assessing the efficacy of interventions may also be culture-bound.

Models of APA Action and Recommendations

Models of APA action

APA's role in international quality assurance for professional psychology could take on a number of forms. The Task Force brainstormed a number of options for APA action. The models below reflect options considered by the task force, including their relative strengths and weaknesses.

1. APA as a Source of Information and Expertise

Given its experience with accreditation of professional education and training and approval for sponsors of continuing education and the wealth of information at hand, APA can collaborate in providing examples of quality assurance mechanisms in professional psychology. This information can be available to APA members, as a means of becoming better equipped to enter the international arena as

international collaborators or partners with international colleagues in the US, and to international colleagues as a means of providing models for the establishment and development of their own education and training, quality assurance, and regulatory systems.

APA can develop a good deal of information, such as:

- An overview of educational systems worldwide, including entry level for professional activities;
- Specific information for the US regarding where psychology education fits in the sequence of the US educational system and the expectations for competency at each educational level;
- Models of formal regulation of psychology and listing of the requirements for the professional practice of psychology on a country by country basis;
- Models of procedures for the review of psychology education and training programs;
- Models of accreditation processes;
- Bibliographic information about international principles for quality assurance from organizations such as CHEA (http://www.chea.org/pdf/internatl_principles_01.pdf), INQAAHE, OECD, and the World Bank;
- Model curricula for psychology programs;
- Compendia of standards and guidelines for education and training; and
- Benchmarking and competency descriptions.

A good deal of information is already available or under development through APA's Education Directorate and the Office of International Affairs. As available, it will be included in the Psychologists' Map of the World (under development), a web-based portal to information about psychology worldwide.

2. APA as a Convener

APA can collaborate and partner in convening with national associations in other countries to develop a comprehensive disciplinary

approach to education, training and quality assurance in psychology. For example, APA might partner with national psychology organizations or international organizations on an international summit on quality assurance in psychology or on developing universal standards or benchmarks for psychology education and training. At such an event, participants could share their knowledge and expertise and identify ways that the discipline might promote mobility, professional education and quality assurance.

APA might also collaborate on a forum for international discussion of the feasibility of common standards for promoting quality assurance that address (1) content, scope and level of education and training; (2) determination of equivalence of education and training; (3) accreditation/designation of programs for education and training; and (4) national credentials. Achieving universal standards for education and training or its equivalence is a significant challenge because education and training, practice norms, and national regulatory structures are neither universal nor equivalent and are frequently not easily compared within the profession of psychology (Hall and Bullock 2008). A presence in the international arena as these issues are discussed could serve as a positive first step.

3. APA as Agent of Capacity Building

The rapid expansion of psychology in many parts of the world has meant that the infrastructure for curriculum development, quality assurance, and professional development have not had time to develop to levels commensurate with the activities of psychologists. APA might develop programs of capacity building specific to quality assurance or to the assessment of programs and competencies, when it is invited to do so in other countries. These programs could take different forms, such as workshops, consultations, or collaboration on demonstration projects, with the content and focus driven by the particular context and needs of the hosting country or region.

Another way in which APA might engage in capacity building is to collaborate with others to strengthen leadership in psychology worldwide.

Documents on the development of quality assurance, professional regulation and professional autonomy consistently stress the importance of strong professional associations in the process. APA has expertise and experience in developing leadership in its own organization and could serve in a capacity building role more generally, for example, by collaborating with others to develop “leadership academies” for psychology globally.

APA can also engage in capacity building for its own members who often are largely unaware of psychology education and training issues outside the US and Canada. APA might prepare “tool kits” for members with information on the US educational system, accreditation and licensure systems, and how psychology training fits into these mechanisms.

4. APA as an International Accreditor

Although another possibility would involve the APA Commission on Accreditation operating outside the US, the Task Force extensively discussed this option and determined that it would not be appropriate for APA to apply its present accreditation activities internationally. This issue is further articulated in this report’s section on barriers.

APA might choose to work with other associations around the world to develop a structure for providing international accreditation services, but it is unclear how such a mechanism would operate or be acknowledged. It is also unclear that APA would have the expertise to take on such an extensive project without cooperation from international organizations, given broad cultural, historical, political, and socioeconomic differences in education and training, as well as a lack of requisite language and culture skills. Therefore, the Task Force recommended that APA not serve as an international accreditor, but provide its expertise in international efforts in learning collaboration with others toward developing multi-culturally created mechanisms toward quality assurance.

Policy Implications

1. General Principles

The Task Force focused on its general principles (see page 5) when considering policy implications, needs, and recommendations in this area:

- **Stability:** Efforts made in collaboration with other countries would have long-lasting effects.
- **Cultural Awareness:** APA’s actions will consider and respect the educational/functional structures and interests of the countries involved.
- **Leverage of Available Resources:** APA will seek to maximize the use of existing resources and expertise in collaborating with other countries.

2. Identified Needs

After reviewing information on the current status of quality assurance mechanisms around the world for higher education in general and for professional psychology in particular, the Task Force recognized a number of needs. These include:

- Development of information on quality assurance procedures for psychology education and training in place around the world to serve as models for countries developing their own systems.
- Information on regulatory (e.g., licensing) systems in place around the world to serve as models for countries developing their own systems.
- A forum for international discussion of issues, models and mechanisms for national, regional and international quality assurance in psychology.
- Collaboration in capacity building activities to assist those countries in the process of developing quality assurance mechanisms. These might take on different forms, such as consultation or demonstration projects.
- Collaboration in capacity building activities to strengthen psychology leaders around the world to enable psychology as a discipline to

be an effective advocate in the policy arena nationally, regionally and internationally.

- Development of an international framework for quality assurance.

3. Recommendations for Moving Forward

In making recommendations, the Task Force recommends a broad set of initiatives in a variety of arenas. These include initiatives to compile and disseminate information and expertise, to develop opportunities for discourse and cross-nation collaboration on quality assurance, capacity building for organizations and individuals, and the development of international demonstration projects. Recommendations are as follows:

1. APA should develop activities focused on fostering knowledge among its members on international issues in quality assurance. One vehicle for this would be development of materials on US education and training, materials on systems elsewhere, and materials on international issues.
2. APA should develop informational resources on psychology education and training in the US, including model curricula, model assessment procedures, standards and guidelines, and model quality assurance procedures in place in the US for use by others as examples in the development of their own systems for quality assurance of psychology education and training.
3. APA could work with partner organizations at the international level

(such as the International Union of Psychological Science, IUPsyS, the International Association of Applied Psychology, IAAP, the International Association of Cross Cultural Psychology;) and regional level (such as the European Federation of Psychology Associations, EFPA; InterAmerican Society of Psychology, SIP; Asian Union of Psychological Societies, ARUPS) to develop a collaborative role in discussing mechanisms that may lead to international quality assurance.

4. APA should develop mechanisms to provide expertise on quality assurance, when invited to do so, in consulting and collaborative roles. This expertise might include developing opportunities for demonstration projects on the development of quality assurance programs through fellow national psychology organizations.
5. APA should collaborate with others on creating opportunities for the development of psychology leadership in quality assurance worldwide through establishment of a Psychology Leadership Academy for colleagues internationally.
6. APA should work toward and participate in international opportunities to develop competency-based quality assurance models.
7. APA should continue ongoing activities in internationalizing the US psychology curriculum.
8. APA should develop mechanisms to stay informed of current trends on higher education and quality assurance around the world.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire for APA Task Force
International Perspectives on Education and Quality Assurance in Psychology
Summary

General Psychology Education

Wide range of psychology degrees offered :

Bachelor's	3-5 years plus practica
Licenciatura	5 years
Masters (Applied)	BA + 2 years
Masters (Science)	BA + 2 years
Masters (Practicing)	BA + 2 years
PsyD	BA + 2 years
PhD	BA + 4-5 years
Specialist Degrees	Not Academic

Education for practice:

Minimum level: Generally 5-6 years plus practica

Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Higher Education in general:

Institutional level – Self-Study, Assessment
Individual University level
Governmental body (Council, Ministry)
University Consortium (Council of University Chancellors)
National Accreditation System

Psychology

Board of Professional Psychologists
Psychologist Councils
National Psychology Association
Ministries

Recognition / Licensure

State Councils/Boards
Federal Council of Psychologists
National Association

International Mechanisms for Quality Assurance

Suggested Role of Own Country

Collect More Information
Develop/Adjust norms for accreditation at local and regional level
Pilot and Demonstration Projects
Regional Collaboration of Groups of Countries
Information on Local Work Force Demographics

Suggested Role of APA

- Reach out to Other Countries
- Share Experiences
- Catalyst for linking national associations
- Promote Need for International Quality Assurance
- Provide Training in Regulations and Content
- Development of International Standards
- Training in Quality Assurance/Control
- Regional Chapters of APA
- Curriculum Advice/Training
- Collaborative Training
- Capacity Building where psychology is not well developed
- Technical Support

Appendix 2

Glossary of Acronyms

ACP: African, Caribbean and Pacific

AERA: American Educational Research Association

APS: Association for Psychological Science

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CHEA: Council for Higher Education Accreditation

CoA: APA Commission on Accreditation

COPA: Council of Postsecondary Accreditation

CPA: Canadian Psychological Association

EFPA: European Federation of Psychological Associations

EU: European Union

INQAAHE: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

ISO: International Standards Organization

MERCOSUR: Southern Common Market

NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement

NCSPP: National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization