NOTE: Complete responses to all questions posed in each of the criteria are required. Appendix materials should not be considered as substitutes for the completion of responses to questions in the criteria.

Title of proficiency: Personality Assessment

Definition: A proficiency is a circumscribed activity in the general practice of professional psychology or one or more of its specialties that is represented by a distinct procedure, technique, or applied skill set used in psychological assessment, treatment and/or intervention within which one develops competence.

In order to educate and protect the public, the profession has the responsibility to exercise authority over the process of proficiency recognition. Organization (s) responsible for the proficiency will define how the proficiency meets public need and how practitioners acquire the psychological knowledge and skills that represent the bases for its practice. In addition, organization (s) that are responsible for the organized development of the proficiency are responsible for collaborating with other organizations to ensure that appropriate education and training is provided in a sequential and integrated nature. When education and training in a proficiency can be achieved through interdisciplinary study, organization (s) responsible for the proficiency will describe how the proficiency meets the criteria within the context of interdisciplinary education and training.
Petition Sponsor

Criterion I. Administrative Organizations. The proposed proficiency is represented by one or more organizations that provide systems and structures that are sufficient to support the organized development of the proficiency, in terms of effectiveness, quality improvement, and provider identification and evaluation.

Commentary: In order to ensure the management of the proficiency, having the resources of national organization(s) willing to assume responsibility is important, so that psychology's scientific and professional integrity can be preserved. These organizations meet regularly to review and describe the proficiency and appropriate policies for education and training in the proficiency.

1. Please provide the following information for the organization submitting the petition:

   Name: Society for Personality Assessment (SPA)
   Address: 6109H Arlington Blvd.
   Falls Church, VA 22044
   Office phone: (703) 534-4772
   FAX (703) 534-6905
   Email: manager@spaonline.org
   Website: www.personality.org

2. Please provide the following information for the President or Chair of the organization:

   Name: Robert Archer PhD
   520 West 21st Street, Suite G2
   Norfolk, VA 23517
   (757) 407-1566 (office)
   757-395-4223 (fax)
   rarcher@bayforensicpsychology.com

3. Please provide the following information for the organization submitting the petition:

   Year organization founded 1938
   Organization incorporated Yes
   In what state is the organization incorporated New Jersey

   Describe the purpose and objectives of the administrative organization.
Purpose and objectives: The overarching purpose of the Society for Personality Assessment is to further the development of methods of personality assessment, the advancement of research on their effectiveness, and the enhancement of applied practice in personality assessment. The Society embraces the following objectives:

a. Development of methods of Personality Assessment.
b. The advancement of research on the effectiveness of Personality Assessment methods.
c. The exchange of ideas about theory, research, and practice of Personality Assessment.
d. Training in Personality Assessment.
e. Public education on Personality Assessment.
f. Formal recognition of contributors to the study and practice of Personality Assessment.

Please append the bylaws for the petitioning organization if bylaws are not provided on the website.


Please provide the following information for all officials in the organization, including the Executive Officer or responsible petitioning staff person.

**PAST PRESIDENT**
Robert F. Bornstein, Ph.D.
September 2015 - August 2017
516-877-4736 (office)
516-877-4754 (fax)
bornstein@adelphi.edu

APA Status: Fellow
Adelphi University
Department of Psychology
212 Blodgett Hall
Garden City, NY 11530

**PRESIDENT**
Robert Archer, Ph.D.
September 2015 - August 2017
(757) 407-1566 (office)
757-395-4223 (fax)
rarcher@bayforensicpsychology.com

APA Status: Fellow
520 West 21st Street,
Suite G2
Norfolk, VA 23517

**PRESIDENT-ELECT**
John McNulty, Ph.D.
September 2015 - August 2017
918-631-2835
john-mcnulty@utulsa.edu

APA Status: None
Psychology Department
University of Tulsa
Tulsa, OK

**SECRETARY**
Giselle Hass, Psy.D.
September 2016 - August 2019
301-571-7217 (home)
301-571-7250 (fax)
Giselle.Hass@gmail.com

APA Status: Member
9309 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814
TREASURER
Paul Arbisi, Ph.D.
September 2016 - August 2019
612-725-2074 (office)
Arbis001@umn.edu
APA Status: Member
University of Minnesota

REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE
Amanda Jill Clemence, Ph.D.
September 2016 - August 2018
518-626-5339 (office)
ajjillclem@gmail.com
APA Status: None
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center
113 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208

REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE
Chris Hopwood, Ph.D.
September 2015 - August 2017
979-571-0925 (home)
hopwood2@msu.edu
APA Status: None
Department of Psychology
University of California, Davis
135 Young Hall
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616

REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE
Jan Kamphuis, PhD
September 2015 - August 2017
j.h.kamphuis@uva.nl
APA Status: None
Universiteit van Amsterdam
Amsterdam, Netherlands

REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE
Piero Porcelli, Ph.D.
September 2016 - August 2018
Porcellip@media.it
APA Status: None
Bari Italy

JPA EDITOR
Steven K. Huprich, Ph.D.
313-993-1440 (office)
hupricst@udmercy.edu
APA Status: Member
Department of Psychology
University of Detroit Mercy
4001 W. McNichols Road
Detroit, MI 48221
SPA EXCHANGE EDITOR
David L. Streiner, Ph.D.
905-522-1155, ext. 36809 (office)
905-575-6085 (fax)
streiner@mcmaster.ca
APA Status: Fellow
64 Flatt Avenue
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4N3
Canada

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR
Bruce L. Smith, Ph.D.
510-549-0909 (office)
510-649-1133 (fax)
brsmith@socrates.berkeley.edu
APA Status: Life Member
2041 Bancroft Way
Suite 310
Berkeley, CA 94704

PROFICIENCY COORDINATOR
Hadas Pade, Psy.D.
408-460-9662 (cell)
hpade2@alliant.edu
proficiency@spaonline.org
(Pertaining to Proficiency)
APA Status: Member
CSPP PsyD Program
Alliant International University
San Francisco, CA 94133-CSPP

WEB SITE EDITOR
J.D. Smith, Ph.D.
jd.smith@northwestern.edu
APA Status: None
1250 S Michigan Ave
Unit 510
Chicago, IL 60605

LIAISON TO APA BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL AFFAIRS
A. Jordan Wright, Ph.D.
347-391-5104 (work)
ajordanwright@gmail.com
APA Status: Member
19 West 34th Street, Penthouse
New York, NY 10001

STUDENT ASSOCIATION (SPAGS) PRESIDENT
Crista Maracic, MA
March 2017 - March 2018
cristamaracic@mail.adelphi.edu
APA Status: Student Member
Adelphi University, Brooklyn, NY
### Administrative Director

**Monica Tune**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>703-534-4772 (office)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:manager@spaonline.org">manager@spaonline.org</a></td>
<td>6109H Arlington Blvd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>866-849-3725 (toll-free)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Falls Church, VA 22044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>703-534-6905 (fax)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Administrative Assistant

**Saad Malik**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>703-534-4772 (office)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:assistant@spaonline.org">assistant@spaonline.org</a></td>
<td>6109H Arlington Blvd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>866-849-3725 (toll-free)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Falls Church, VA 22044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>703-534-6905 (fax)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outline the structure and functions of the administrative organization (frequency of meetings, number of meetings per year, membership size, functions performed, how decisions are made, types of committees, dues structure, publications, etc.). Provide samples of newsletters, journals, and other publications, etc.

The Board of Trustees, the governing entity of the Society for Personality Assessment, meets twice a year, once at the annual convention for a daylong period, and a second time in early fall. The fall meeting extends over a two-and-a-half-day period. Members are invited to attend the Board of Trustees meeting held at the annual conference.

Current SPA membership size is approximately 1,200 members. The Society’s governance is accomplished by the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee of the Board (consisting of the President, Past-President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer), and a number of standing committees. The Board of Trustees is the primary entity that engages in decision-making, with ongoing input from the membership. The Executive Committee is empowered to engage in decision-making between meetings. The Committees provide suggestions and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

SPA committees: Executive Committee, Nominations Committee, Ad Hoc Finance Advisory Committee Student Matters/Dissertation Grants Committee, Continuing Education Committee, Membership Committee, Publications Oversight Committee, **Proficiency Committee**, Fellows Committee, International Section Committee, Awards Committee, Website Editorial Board, Student Association (SPAGS) Board. Appointments to the Standing Committees are of two-year duration. These committees work throughout the year and report on their progress twice a year at the board meetings.
SPA Publications: *The Journal for Personality Assessment (JPA)*
[http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hjpa20/current](http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hjpa20/current)

The SPA *Exchange Newsletter*  

SPA Dues Structure:  
- Member/Fellow/Associate - $120.00  
- Undergraduate and Graduate Student Affiliate - $32.00  
- New Doctoral and Second-Year Doctoral Graduate - $70.00  
- Third-Year Doctoral Graduate - $70.00

4. Present a rationale that describes how your organization provides systems and structures which make a significant contribution to the organized development of the proficiency. Describe the role of your organization in collaborating with other organization/s to ensure the organized development of the proficiency. Describe the role of your organization in providing oversight to ensure a core of psychological knowledge and training is offered in a sequential and integrated nature. Describe the role of your organization in providing oversight if the proficiency is obtained in the context of interdisciplinary education and training.

For nearly 80 years, the Society has been making significant contributions to the proficiency of Personality Assessment including three major areas: a) publications; b) education—formative and continuing; and c) sponsored research.

a) **Publications** - The *Journal of Personality Assessment (JPA)* which includes articles describing rigorous empirical investigations in the area of Personality Assessment, case studies, theoretical papers, and reviews on texts and software covering topics in Personality Assessment. The Journal is a tool for educating practitioners on assessment findings and their applications and for enabling communication within the scientific community. The Journal, which has a very favorable impact factor, includes most major universities and colleges among its subscribers. The Society also offers a semi-annual newsletter, the *SPA Exchange*, to the membership and the professional community. The *Exchange* focuses primarily on applied issues in Personality Assessment. It includes regular features on ethics and legal issues, consultation and supervision, and the teaching of Personality Assessment.

b) **Education** – The Society for Personality Assessment provides training at all levels, from basic, graduate-level training to training of the advanced practitioner of Personality Assessment. The Society offers workshops at its annual meeting. All of these workshops are CE credit bearing except for those that are designed specifically for graduate students and postdoctoral individuals. The Society also offers workshops outside of the annual meeting to increase the accessibility of educational offerings to personality assessors and other mental health professionals. Affiliate groups associated with the Society offer workshops on a local level.
The Society also develops and promulgates educational standards. For example, the Board of Trustees created a document titled “Standards for Education and Training in Psychological Assessment: Position of the Society for Personality Assessment,” which was published in the *Journal of Personality Assessment, 47*(3), 355-357 (see Appendix I).

c) Research – In addition to providing an outlet for researchers, the Society for Personality Assessment sponsors research on critical questions in Personality Assessment. For example, a past sponsored study focuses on the utility for Personality Assessment consultation for improving ongoing psychotherapies in which significant treatment difficulties have arisen. A more recent sponsored study focused on assessment supervision. The Board of Trustees, which invariably includes major contributors to the Personality Assessment literature, identifies key questions, the answers to which may significantly advance the profession. The Society has a fund-raising arm that includes, within its scope, raising funds for sponsored research.

Collaborations with additional organizations: The American Board of Assessment Psychology (ABAP), founded in 1993, is an international certification board for psychological assessors. ABAP provides credentialing of specialists and has rigorous requirements including 5 years of assessment experience, one of which may be pre-licensure. ABAP has an active ongoing relationship with the Society of Personality Assessment and regularly offers sessions at the Society’s annual meeting on preparing for the ABAP examination. SPA and ABAP have a number of common members, some of whom have held leadership positions in one or both organizations.

Section IX, Assessment, of Division 12, Society of Clinical Psychology, is dedicated to the promotion of both the science and practice of assessment. Its scope includes Personality Assessment in addition to a number of other areas (e.g., neuropsychological assessment). Section IX has an active collaborative relationship with SPA including the posting of each group’s information on one another’s web page. A number of SPA members are active in both the leadership and membership of Section IX. The President of APA Division 12 Section IX has written a letter in support of this application.

Oversight of the proficiency: Many administrative aspects of the oversight of proficiency recognition, training, and evaluation of providers are undertaken by the Central Office of the Society for Personality Assessment. The Central Office is managed by the Society’s Administrative Director. The Director has worked closely with the Executive Committee, the Proficiency Coordinator, and the Proficiency Committee to develop the processes, policies, and procedures for the proficiency. These processes, policies, and procedures, including SPA’s credentialing criteria are described in detail in the *Proficiency of Personality Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual* (submitted with original petition for renewal in December 2016). The Proficiency Coordinator, with support of the Committee and the Board of Trustees, recruited proficiency reviewers including psychologists who have been recognized as Proficient and are either SPA Fellows or ABAP Diplomates.

To ensure proper monitoring of the proficiency process, the Society has bolstered its Central Office
Staff. To help cover this expense, applicants for the proficiency are asked to pay an initial fee to apply for the proficiency ($150). After being granted proficiency status they may pay a modest processing fee to have the proficiency re-affirmed at regular intervals. Further, SPA has utilized such fees toward establishing an online database to allow for convenient and user-friendly application, review, and recognition process and clear maintenance of all proficiency related data. The Society has also created short webinars and written handouts available on the website describing the application and recognition process. The Treasurer in conjunction with Proficiency Coordinator developed a budget that will be remanded for audit annually by the Board of Trustees.

5. List other organizations that are associated with, that promote, or that certify practitioners in this psychological proficiency. Please provide letters of support from these other organizations supporting your petition.

The two organizations that could provide information on the utility for the recognition of the proficiency are Section IX (Assessment) of Division 12 (Society of Clinical Psychology) of the American Psychological Association and the American Board of Psychological Assessment. Letters in support of the proficiency are provided by Section IX President and ABAP President (see Appendix II).

6. Signature of official(s) representing the organization submitting the petition:

   name     title    date

   Robert Archer, PhD  SPA President  12/28/2017

Need and Distinctiveness

Criterion II. Public Need for Proficiency Practice. The services of a proficiency are responsive to identifiable public needs

Commentary: Proficiencies may evolve from the profession’s recognition that there is a particular public need. Proficiencies may also develop from advances in scientific psychology from which applications to serve the public may be derived.

1. Describe with relevant references the public needs the proficiency fulfills and how the proficiency meets those needs.

Personality Assessment provides a comprehensive picture of individual differences in personality traits and functioning that serves as a foundation for effective counseling and decision-making in health care (psychological and medical), legal, educational, rehabilitation, and employment settings. The public is served by decision makers having accurate, individualized and meaningful information about those with whom they are working. For example, Personality Assessment is helpful in:
a) Facilitating the alleviation of psychological distress and impairment: the development of a personality profile enables the planning of a useful and efficient course of therapy (Bram & Peebles, 2014), and prevents false therapeutic starts based on misdiagnosis or missed diagnosis. For example, personality assessment can enable a differentiation between those therapeutic goals that are likely to be achieved in a relatively brief period versus those that may require a longer course of treatment (Hunsley & Mash, 2007; Tharinger et al., 2013; Weiner & Exner, 1991).

b) Identification of psychological strengths and resources to determine what stressors the individual is likely able to withstand. For example, Personality Assessment frequently is required prior to surgeries that place psychological demands upon the patient, such as gastric bypass surgery or sex reassignment surgery.

c) Better management of risk through identification of risk factors for illness or injury.

d) Identification of functional status and rehabilitation potential for people with injuries or disabilities, or age-related impairments.

e) Health-related assessment of factors such as coping and adjustment to physical illness.

f) Assessment of the impact of alleged injuries on plaintiff's personality functioning in personal injury cases.

g) Identification of the personality resources and vulnerabilities of parents and children, and assessment of the fit between parental characteristics and capacities and children's needs in child custody cases.

h) Identification of the personality resources and vulnerabilities of older adults and, as appropriate, their family caregivers (Loeckenhoff et al., 2011), and assessment of the fit between frail older adults’ physical and emotional needs and the environment of care (Kolanowski et al., 2011).

i) Assessment of personality characteristics that assist prediction of violent behavior or reoffending and suitability for various case dispositions in pre-sentencing evaluations.

j) Identification of special needs of students in educational settings and formulation of appropriate remedial plans.

k) Selection of employees who possess the personality features congruent with the demands of various positions.
1) Developing information for coaching individuals who want to maximize their career potential.

These goals and many others are served through the availability of Personality Assessments by proficient practitioners (Baum et al., 2001; Evans & Finn, 2016; Frank & Elliott, 2000; Gacono, Jumes, & Gray, 2008; Maruish, 1999; Ryan & Sackett, 1998). In essence, the public need served by Personality Assessment is for an accurate understanding of individuals' characteristic ways of understanding, feeling, coping, and adapting in particular types of circumstances in order to frame effective and personalized decisions best suited to each individual. Because consequential decisions about individuals' lives are often based upon the results of Personality Assessment, it is important that those conducting such assessments are deemed proficient to do so.

In addition, the education and training of competent professionals serves a public need, and in recent years there has been increased discussion about the importance of competencies in professional and health psychology (Hatcher, et al., 2013; Larkin & Klonoff, 2014). The Proficiency in Personality Assessment is closely aligned with the goal and aspiration of developing competent psychologists to serve the public and throughout this petition information is presented to support this.

2. Describe any regulatory, professional privileging, and/or educational statute or regulation of this proficiency of which you are aware.

The APA Council currently recognizes this proficiency. Given the impact of Personality Assessment upon individual lives, a broad array of standards, guidelines, privileging criteria, and rules that address best practices in a variety of settings with different populations have been developed. The practice of Personality Assessment, based on psychological theories, research, and instruments in mental health and counseling settings typically requires state licensure. Most states require a doctoral degree from an approved program, along with internships, supervised pre- and post-doctoral experience, and a passing score on the national licensing examination. The practice of Personality Assessment in employment and school settings requires a license in some states.

The APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (APA, 2002, 2010) provides the essential standards for all psychological practice in psychology. The Ethics Code includes a number of standards that are relevant to the practice of Personality Assessment, including those governing the selection of psychological tests, the boundaries of competence, and the necessity of feedback. Apart from the Ethics Code, the most broadly applicable standards for Personality Assessment are found in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014).

One further set of standards of mostly historical importance are the Ethical Standards for the Distribution of Psychological Tests and Diagnostic Aids (APA, 1950). These standards had significant historical importance because they set forth a tripartite scheme wherein the qualification of test users was connected to the demands of the instruments. Most of the instruments used in Personality
Assessment would be designated as Level C tools and thereby demand that the assessor have at least a master's degree in psychology and one year of supervised experience under a psychologist. Although in the subsequent standards (referenced above), the tripartite system was not maintained, it continues to be used by most publishers of cognitive tests and Personality Assessment tools. Their widespread adoption demonstrates the recognition by not only the profession but also the test publishers supporting Personality Assessment of the need for careful regulation of this professional activity.

APA has also promulgated many sets of guidelines that provide greater specificity and define best practices in the various types of psychological assessment. These guidelines, designed to be congruent with the Ethics Code, were created to specify both substantive and procedural issues distinguishing one kind of assessment from another, as well as to recommend particular modes of comportment for those practicing different types of assessment. They aim to "...inform psychologists, the public, and other interested parties regarding desirable professional practices" (APA, 2002, Criteria Section 2.5). Among many examples, are the following:

a) Guidelines for Test User Qualification (Turner, DeMers, Fox, & Reed, 2001). The effort of this APA task force, designed specifically to serve the needs of the public, underscores the need for the establishment of Personality Assessment as a proficiency because it focuses specifically on the test user and argues that "...most of the problems associated with test use are related to the competence of individual test users" (DeMers et al., 2000; italics added).

b) The Rights and Responsibilities of Test Takers: Guidelines and Expectations (Test Taker Rights and Responsibilities Working Group of the Joint Committee on Testing Practices, 1998). This document, created by an interdisciplinary task force that included representatives from APA, was intended to serve as a supplement to existing standards, such as those promulgated in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Its focus is on the interaction between test takers and testing professionals from the consumer's point of view.

c) Guidelines for Computer-based Tests and Interpretations (Committee on Professional Standards and Committee on Tests and Assessments, 1986). These guidelines were developed to ensure the responsible use of computerized narrative reports, primarily in personality testing.

Further guidelines that address professional practice, including Personality Assessment with special populations, include the following:


Additional guidelines have been necessitated by the fact that Personality Assessment is increasingly used in a range of venues beyond traditional mental health settings. Specifically, Personality Assessment is frequently used in personnel settings, general medical settings, Older Adults and rehabilitation settings, and in forensic practice. For example, one influential analysis of test use in child custody evaluations revealed that out of 43,195 evaluations examined 84% used the MMPI (Hagen & Castagna, 2001). In the field of forensic assessment Borum and Grisso (1995) found that 100% of forensic psychologists in their survey reported using psychological tests in criminal responsibility evaluations. Of those, 68% rated them as essential or recommended. Here is a representative sampling of relevant guidelines:

a) *Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures* (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2003). These guidelines, which have been adopted by American Psychological Association Division 14, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, offer assessment professionals guidelines for the evaluation, development, and employment of assessment.

b) *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Older Adults* (APA, 2014). These guidelines apply not only to the work of specialists in geriatric assessment but to all clinical (including assessment) services with older adults. Guidelines 10-12 specifically address areas of knowledge and competency that are particularly important in conducting assessments with members of this population.

c) *Guidelines for Child Custody Evaluations in Family Law Proceedings* (APA, 2009). According to these guidelines, "Psychologists render a valuable service when they provide competent and impartial opinions with direct relevance to the 'psychological best interests’ of the child" (p. 4). In order to offer such opinions, psychologists must have sufficient proficiency to interpret their assessment data, as these data are affected by a variety of contextual factors. They must also know the strengths and limitations of their instruments: "For example, psychologists may choose to acknowledge, when reporting personality test results, how research on validity scale interpretation demonstrates that child custody litigations often display increased elevations" (p.10). Accordingly, these guidelines focus on best practices in the preparation for and conduct of an evaluation.

d) *Guidelines for Psychological Evaluations in Child Protection Matters* (2011). These guidelines acknowledge that special competence is needed in carrying out psychological assessments that the assessor provides to the relevant parties (e.g., the court or a state agency).

e) *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual clients* (APA 2012). These guidelines aim to provide a frame of reference for working with treatment of lesbian, gay, and
bisexual clients. This covers the areas of assessment, intervention, identity, relationships, diversity, education, training, and research.

\textit{f) Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology} (APA 2013). The goals of these Guidelines are to improve the quality of forensic psychological services, enhance the practice and development of forensic psychology, encourage a high level of quality in professional practice, and encourage forensic psychologists to acknowledge and respect the rights of those they serve. Guideline 10 specifically addresses assessment issues from selecting measures to providing feedback.

Although personality assessment in employment settings is quite common, in the areas of pre-employment screening and promotion decisions by employers, the Americans with Disabilities Act's (1990; as amended in 2008) prohibition on the use of medical examinations as a condition of employment or promotion restricts the use of clinical personality testing that is designed to reveal a mental impairment (e.g., the MMPI-2) that may be considered overly "invasive," or that is designed to measure an applicant's "psychological response to performing a task." Clinical personality testing in employment settings is generally limited by federal law to administration on behalf of employers only after a conditional offer of employment has been made and then only if it is required of all entering employees in a similar job (see \textit{Karaka v. Rent A Center}, 2005). Some personality tests which are not designed to reveal a disability or to diagnose a psychiatric condition (e.g., honesty or integrity tests) may be permissible in pre-employment screening (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2005).

These sets of guidelines and statutory rules are a sample of those that regulate the professional activity of psychological assessment in general, and Personality Assessment specifically. To provide competent services, the personality assessor must be familiar with all generally applicable laws, standards, and guidelines, as well as those specific to a given psychologist's circumstances of practice. Furthermore, the changing landscape of practice periodically leads to the development of new and revised guidelines. Consequently, a practitioner who does not commit to continuing education in Personality Assessment generally and with respect to particular applications of interest will be greatly disadvantaged in his or her efforts to provide services that meet evolving standards of practice.

3. Describe how the recognition of this proficiency will increase the availability and quality of services that professional psychologists provide without reducing access to needed services.

Availability of Services

According to Krishnamurthy et al. (2004), training in Personality Assessment requires both coursework and fieldwork in eight different competencies, among which are a background in psychometric theory, knowledge of the "scientific, theoretical, empirical, and contextual bases of psychological assessment" (p. 732), the capability of each client's multiple contexts of operation, the ability to establish and sustain a collaborative relationship, a deep grasp of the relationship between
assessment and intervention, and a plentitude of specific technical skills (identifying a problem, developing a set of tools to address the assessment problem, gathering data systematically, and so on). Doctoral training in Personality Assessment, as several surveys show, is highly variable, with many programs failing to provide the rudiments of Personality Assessment expected by internship training directors (Belter & Piotrowski, 2001; Clemence & Handler, 2001; Stedman, Hatch, & Schoenfeld, 2000, 2001; Childs & Eyde, 2002; Matthews & Matthews, 2006; Ready & Veague, 2014). According to Stedman, Hatch, and Schoenfeld (2001), only 25% of internship candidates are perceived by internship directors as having sufficient report writing experience. Furthermore, evidence suggests that today’s doctoral programs are emphasizing Personality Assessment less in course offerings than in the past (Belter & Piotrowski, 2001; Ready & Veague, 2014).

The inadequacies of contemporary doctoral training might not be of such concern if internships compensated for elements missing from pre-internship training. Yet, internship sites frequently fail to offer adequate training in Personality Assessment (Clemence & Handler, 2001; Krishnamurthy et al., 2004). In most surveys a majority of internship directors indicate that didactic work with interns needs to be at a very introductory level given the backgrounds trainees typically bring to the internship (e.g., Clemence & Handler, 2001; Ready & Veague, 2014). Finally, no demands are placed on the postdoctoral year for the provision of supervised experiences in Personality Assessment. This situation is no better in training in other applied areas (e.g., industrial-organizational, educational), where the specific standards concerning Personality Assessment are negligible.

As a result of the de-emphasis on training in the foundational skills of Personality Assessment in many APA-accredited doctoral programs and internships, as well as postdoctoral settings, there is an undersupply of professional psychologists who are justly confident in their skills in providing this service. Continued recognition of a proficiency in this area will encourage doctoral programs in professional psychology, internship sites, post-doctoral programs, and providers of continuing education that strive to be recognized as providing training at the level of proficiency to increase the availability and quality of their training in Personality Assessment. The end result would be to increase the supply of competent providers of related services.

Further, the practices and economics of managed care have had a direct and negative impact on the practice of Personality Assessment in clinical settings. Utilization Review (UR) for personality assessment tends to be stricter than for psychotherapy generally, and payment for assessment services in managed care trends toward lower compensation than the equivalent amount of time spent providing psychotherapy. Managed care routinely operates to limit the frequency of testing and to direct psychologists to use brief symptom-focused inventories in lieu of a multi-method approach, the latter of which is the gold standard in Personality Assessment. Such a multi-method approach typically involves the use of instruments that are more time-intensive than symptom inventories and require extensive interaction between the assessor and the client (Hopwood & Bornstein, 2014; Huprich, 2011; Piotrowski, 1999; Stedman et al., 2001).
As a result, essential clinical assessment services designed to assist in diagnosis and treatment planning or the resolution of therapeutic impasses tend to be underutilized in managed care settings, and the supply of qualified professional psychologists to perform these services has diminished. Continued recognition of a proficiency in Personality Assessment can be expected to increase the availability of qualified professional psychologists who offer these services by increasing access to high quality training and mentorship and enhancing psychologists' motivation to practice in this underserved area of clinical practice that psychologists are uniquely qualified to provide. It will also facilitate the identification of competent practitioners who practice in this area.

A continuation of the Proficiency in Personality Assessment can help to ameliorate the situation with regard to managed care. As proficient practitioners are identified and clinicians encouraged to attain proficiency, the quality of assessments that are conducted under managed care can be expected to improve. As has been shown, competent assessment can shorten the course of treatment by ensuring that correct decisions about the kind and course of treatment are made at the outset (Bram & Peebles, 2014, Hunsley & Mash, 2007; Tharinger et al., 2013; Weiner & Exner, 1991) and by improving the initial therapeutic relationship (Poston & Hanson, 2010). Second, clinicians who can document their proficiency in Personality Assessment will be in a stronger position when interacting with Utilization Review (UR) managers (who in the area of assessment authorizations are usually themselves psychologists) in managed care companies. Many UR managers have used their experience with poorly planned and poorly executed assessments to justify their conservative approach to the authorization of assessment services. Psychologists who can provide evidence of their proficiency are likely to have more credibility in this process. Third, managed care companies and third party payers can be encouraged to employ UR managers in the area of authorizing Personality Assessment who are themselves proficient in this area, thereby leading to better informed and more clinically appropriate authorizations.

As might be expected, restrictive treatment authorizations and reduced payments for both clinical personality assessment and therapy services have resulted in an influx of psychologists into other applications of Personality Assessment such as forensic evaluations, general medical consultation and liaison services, and employment and disability evaluations, which are usually outside the reach of managed care. Income from such assessment activities can compensate for the diminished revenue from traditional clinical personality assessment and psychotherapy. In particular, Personality Assessment has been practiced in forensic and employment settings where the decisions are often highly consequential (e.g., prison v. mental hospital, hire v. not hire). In the case of public safety occupations such as police, firefighters, or air traffic controllers, the safety of the general public is at stake in the hiring decision. It is, therefore, imperative that the assessments conducted be competent and based upon the latest scientific evidence. Proficiency in Personality Assessment can help to ensure that those conducting these assessments possess the requisite skill and knowledge to do so competently.

At the same time, and in part for the same reasons, non-psychologist provider groups have been moving aggressively in state legislatures and licensing boards for authorization to perform mental
health evaluations (Dattilio et al., 2007). The increased attractiveness of Personality Assessment to non-psychologist practitioners also provides a basis for granting proficiency status to psychologists practicing Personality Assessment. Such a status will help the public differentiate between proficient professional psychologists and those counselors, social workers, and others who may be offering less comprehensive and less sophisticated services under the banner of Personality Assessment. It will also make it easy for referral sources to identify efficiently who are appropriate psychologists to provide such services, which will increase the frequency of such referrals.

In this context it is important to note that although it is anticipated that recognition of the proficiency will discourage some poorly trained or unqualified practitioners from offering inadequate and incompetent services, it is likely that the net impact of the proficiency will be an overall increase in access to services. First, those professional psychologists who do not seek recognition of their proficiency in Personality Assessment will of course still be permitted to continue to practice as provided by their licensure or other applicable credentials (albeit their market share vis-a-vis psychologists with documented proficiency may suffer). Second, continued recognition of the proficiency will ultimately make it easier for psychologists at all stages of training and career development who wish to enhance their competence in Personality Assessment to identify those programs and training opportunities that will most efficiently bring them up to current practice standards and to maintain their skills. It will also revitalize and strengthen the practice culture of Personality Assessment, making it more attractive and available to greater numbers of practitioners.

Quality of Services

Currently, no mechanism exists to ensure that those who practice Personality Assessment have a set of fundamental skills, knowledge, and professional attitudes. Consequently, a credential in Personality Assessment is manifestly necessary. As noted previously, the goal of having competent psychologists provide services to the public, including personality assessment services, is a central one (Hatcher et al., 2013). Such a credential in this particular area of practice will increase the likelihood that individuals who practice assessment have appropriate training, and that individuals who have achieved proficiency maintain it through the pursuit of lifelong learning in the area.

Certification by the American Board of Assessment Psychology does identify psychologists with high levels of expertise in personality testing by granting them the ABAP Diplomate. However, the diplomate is geared for an advanced level of practice and consequently, is available only to a small percentage of assessing psychologists. Another important certifying body, the American Board of Professional Psychologists, offers no formal certification to those who are expert in Personality Assessment. The basic gap within the profession is the absence of any recognition system for those practitioners who, while not yet being expert, are nonetheless fully competent in Personality Assessment. Proficiency status would enable members of the public to identify psychologists specializing in this form of assessment, and to do so with greater confidence.
Proficiency is necessary to ensure adequate quality of services based on the following factors: a) training trends; b) research trends; and c) professional identity factors.

Training Trends

As noted earlier, training in Personality Assessment requires both course and fieldwork in eight different competencies among which are training in psychometric theory, knowledge of the theoretical, empirical, and contextual bases of psychological assessment, understanding of each client's multiple contexts of operation, the ability to establish and sustain a collaborative relationship, a firm grasp of the relationship between assessment and intervention, and an array of specific technical skills (identifying a problem, developing a set of tools to address the assessment problem, gathering data systematically, and so on; see Krishnamurthy et al., 2004). Surveys indicate that doctoral training in Personality Assessment is highly variable in this regard, with many programs failing to provide the rudiments of Personality Assessment expected by internship training directors (Stedman et al., 2001, 2002). According to Stedman et al. (2001), only 25% of internship candidates are perceived by internship directors as having sufficient report writing experience.

Furthermore, evidence exists suggesting that doctoral programs are emphasizing Personality Assessment less in course offerings (Belter & Piotrowski, 2001; Ready & Veague, 2014). Evans and Finn (2016) discuss the increased difficulty for graduate psychology students to be prepared in personality assessment. Blais and Hopwood (2015) further describe the complexity of psychological assessment as a professional skill, thus making it a challenge to teach and learn. They note how the investment of resources and time in teaching assessment has decreased in psychological training programs over the last few decades. Finally, Mihura et al. (2016) reported that even though doctoral programs include many assessment topics and measures via course work, there seems to be a shortage in opportunities for applied assessment training. Mihura et al. (2016) recommend that programs increase familiarity with internships' assessment expectations as well as professional guidelines for assessment training, and APA’s requirements for assessment competencies.

The inadequacies of doctoral training might not be of such concern if the internship compensated for elements missing from pre-internship training, but internship sites often fail to offer intensive training in Personality Assessment (Clemence & Handler, 2001; Krishnamurthy et al., 2004) so that earlier deficits are not fully corrected. As noted, 56% of internship directors indicated that didactic work with interns needs to be at a very introductory level given the backgrounds trainees typically bring to the internship (Clemence & Handler, 2001). Finally, no demands are placed on the postdoctoral year for the provision of supervised experiences in Personality Assessment.

As noted above, doctoral and internship training in clinical and applied psychology do not by any means guarantee a high level of competence in Personality Assessment. Such general training is usually inadequate in preparing for professional practice in applications of Personality Assessment outside of traditional mental health practice (see Society of Consulting Psychology, 2004; Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1998, Vodanovich & Piotrowski, 1999). Practitioners who
are unaware of deficiencies in their training may practice without the requisite knowledge skills and professional attitudes. Recognition of a proficiency in Personality Assessment would increase professional awareness of what elements are necessary for competent practice and provide a pathway to proficiency. The existence of a credentialing mechanism would increase the number of proficient personality assessors. This credentialing system would also provide counsel to doctoral programs who wish to equip their students to practice proficiently upon achievement of the license.

Finally, the Proficiency in Personality Assessment provides clarity that has not existed before regarding the standards and expectations of competency within this area of practice (SPA website & Policies and Procedures Manual). This can help further education and training curriculum goals and skills taught in order to gain competency. In fact, the Proficiency Report Review Form (SPA website & Policies and Procedures Manual) is now included in the most current edition of the *Handbook of Psychological Assessment* (Groth-Marnat & Wright, 2016), one the most widely used texts in psychological assessment graduate courses.

**Research Trends**

Continued recognition of this proficiency would enhance the quality of Personality Assessment because psychologists would be motivated to pursue continuing education in Personality Assessment to obtain the credential and, even more important to maintain it. This commitment to continued education is especially important because the field of Personality Assessment is highly research-based and research is rapidly accumulating, resulting in changes in the kinds of data collected in a Personality Assessment, as well as in how these data are interpreted and applied. The following are examples of major developments vis-a-vis three of the most commonly used Personality Assessment tools:

a) *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory*- This test is the most commonly used clinical Personality Assessment tool. It was developed by Hathaway and McKinley and released to the assessment community in 1940. Throughout the decades, it spawned a great deal of research but in 1989, it was restandardized and underwent a major revision (Butcher, Dahlstrom, Graham, Tellegen, & Kaemmer, 1989), in which some of the concerns associated with the original instrument were addressed. The MMPI-2 generated a great deal of research to determine whether the psychological correlates of the MMPI code types also applied to the revised instrument. Then, only 14 years later, continuing concern about problems such as scale heterogeneity and overlap of items among the scales, led to the development of the Restructured (RC) scales (Tellegen et al., 2003). Following the publication of the RC scales, a literature base of studies (e.g., Handel & Archer, 2008) addressing their internal psychometric properties and their predictive and concurrent validity (e.g., Castro, Gordon, Brown, Anestis, & Joiner, 2008) has been rapidly emerging and accumulating. The publisher of the MMPI-2 has released a shortened and substantially revised version of this instrument based on the RC scales. Known as the MMPI-2-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF), the new version is leading to still more research and new applications for practitioners. One objective of the MMPI-2RF was to further link this widely-used measure with
contemporary concepts and models of personality and psychopathology (Ben-Porath, 2012).

b) **Rorschach Inkblot Method** - Another widely used Personality Assessment instrument is the Rorschach Inkblot Method. Originally published by Herman Rorschach in 1921 this instrument fell into disfavor several decades ago in part because the ways in which it was administered, scored, and interpreted were so various. In 1974, John E. Exner, Jr. introduced a methodology for administering, scoring, and interpreting the Rorschach Inkblot Method that was based on extant well-designed research, including Exner's own data collection efforts. Exner's Comprehensive System (CS) revitalized the Rorschach and ultimately became the standard method used for training, research, and clinical practice. The CS has been the object of a prodigious research effort leading to major ongoing modifications in the system, which helped increase its psychometric soundness and clinical usefulness. Beginning in 1974, Exner, now deceased, published three revisions of his initial text with each revision introducing modifications and improvements in the CS. In the most recent edition, Exner addressed problems with the initial standardization sample. More recently, other investigators have been providing additional normative information (Mihura et al., 2012) and great attention has been given to the development of international norms, an important effort given that the original standardization sample was developed within the United States. Building upon the strengths of the CS, the Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS) has led such efforts. "The R-PAS is an evidenced-focused internationally oriented approach to using the inkblot test based on the latest available research" (Meyer et al., 2011, p. 2).

c) **Wechsler Intelligence Tests** - Personality assessors commonly use intelligence tests to investigate the interplay between cognitive and affective features characterizing an individual. The intervals between publications of new editions of Wechsler tests has progressively diminished, necessitating increasing time and energy on the part of the practitioner to keep abreast of emerging developments in this area. For example, the interval between the WAIS and the WAIS-R was 26 years, between the WAIS-R and WAIS III, 16 years, and the WAIS-III and WAIS-IV, only 9 years. Each time a revision has occurred, the changes have been substantive and require an immersion for the assessor in an ongoing and thorough continuing education experience.

Many other examples exist of research-based changes in Personality Assessment. The rapidity of change places great burden upon the personality assessor to update him or herself continuously regarding new developments. With Personality Assessment recognized as a proficiency, the availability of continuing education courses, the course of studies we recommend for proficiency, the availability of supervisors, and the availability of our journal will provide avenues through which personality assessors may update and strengthen their skills.

**Practice Trends**

The economics of managed care have had particularly direct and negative effects on the practice of Personality Assessment. The advent of managed care has seen an influx of psychologists into the area
of Personality Assessment because assessment activities can compensate for the diminished revenue from psychotherapy. Furthermore, Personality Assessment provides access to areas of practice such as forensic work that are outside of the scope of managed care. At the same time and in part for the same reasons, other professions have been moving aggressively in state legislatures and licensing boards for authorization to perform mental health evaluations (Dattilio et al., 2007). The increased attractiveness of Personality Assessment to a wide range of practitioners also provides a basis for granting proficiency status to Personality Assessment. Such a status will highlight for the public who is a competent practitioner and helps the public to delineate the differences between Personality Assessment and other types of assessment.

Managed care also has affected the practice of Personality Assessment in ways that are at odds with good practice. Managed care routinely operates to limit the frequency of testing and to direct psychologists to use brief symptom-focused inventories over a multi-method approach, the latter of which is the gold standard in Personality Assessment (Bornstein, 2017; Hopwood & Bornstein, 2014). Such a multi-method approach typically involves instruments that are more time-intensive than symptom checklists and require extensive interaction between the assessor and the client (Piotrowski, 1999; Stedman et al., 2001). Renewal of the recognition of the proficiency would be helpful to assessing psychologists in their conversations with managed care entities by establishing in conjunction with managed care entities the necessity of expertise of personality assessors. Clients would be empowered to obtain the services of individuals with appropriate credentials. A power shift would be effected in consumers' and psychologists' interactions with managed care.

A recently published survey (Wright et al., 2016) supported the common perception that, in general, assessment represents a smaller part of the practices of professional psychologists than was true before the advent of managed care. However, the survey showed that for psychologists in certain settings or specialty areas such as forensics or inpatient, assessment represents a significant portion of their work. Regardless of setting or direct work, the large majority of psychologists believed that psychological assessment is valuable in making diagnostic decisions and treatment recommendations.

**Professional Identity Factors**

A proficiency in Personality Assessment will encourage practitioners in this area to identify themselves as having a special interest and competence in this area of practice. Being recognized as proficient in Personality Assessment and holding oneself out to colleagues and the public provides powerful motivation to practice at high standards of ethics and competence and to maintain one's knowledge and skills. Many professional psychologists continue to practice personality assessment based on knowledge they have retained from their graduate studies and based on testing skills that have failed to incorporate recent developments in the area. Continued recognition of this proficiency would encourage assessors to think of their Personality Assessment practice as an important component of their professional identity. The standards promulgated for the proficiency will help
them to increase their awareness and gauge their levels of competence. It is likely to motivate them to identify gaps in training and pursue continuing education in the area of Personality Assessment.

**Implications of training, research, and practice trends and professional identity factors**

These three factors, the unevenness of doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral training; the rapid accumulation of research on all aspects of Personality Assessment; and the enhancement of practice by further integrating it with professional identity, all speak to the need for Personality Assessment to be continued as a proficiency requiring formal recognition. A practitioner who performs assessment based on inadequate training or outdated knowledge or skills is likely to be challenged in observing the core ethical principle of non-maleficence—the responsibility to do no harm to the consumers of Personality Assessment. This concept is re-affirmed in the Society for Personality Assessment's Standards for Education and Training (SPA Board of Trustees, 2006): "Inappropriate or untrained use of psychological assessment instruments exposes patients to harm. Unreliable or invalid conclusions drawn from psychology assessment can be more dangerous than ineffective psychotherapy..." (p. 356).

Assessors who are either inadequately trained or out of date with respect to knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes are at great risk for making errors that injure consumers.

The potential for harm is increased by the fact that psychological assessments become a permanent part of the evaluatee’s record. Relative to psychotherapy notes, they are more likely to follow the evaluatee throughout his or her life, influencing later important decisions—medical, employment, or otherwise—about that person. Additionally, assessment reports are used as the basis for high stakes decisions such as culpability for criminal behavior, disability determinations, release from inpatient care, parenting time for children in divorced homes, removal of children in termination of parental right and placement of children in foster care versus extended family systems. Evans and Finn (2016) further note concerns expressed about the quality of personality assessment reports and related services. This includes generally ethical and responsible psychologists who may know little about recent assessment research, or write ineffective and non-individualized reports that lack in meaning. Evans and Finn (2016) explain that even when such assessments may not cause harm, consumers of personality assessment services, including clients and other providers, who know little about what constitutes high-quality assessment might conclude after a less than positive experience that it is not useful. Such an inaccurate and negative appraisal reflects poorly on the profession of psychology as a whole. The proficiency in personality assessment takes steps to directly address this risk by reviewing psychologists’ reports and providing feedback, regardless of proficiency recognition, to enhance practice standards.

**References**


Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.


International Association of Police Chiefs, Police Psychological Services Section (2004). Psychological Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations. Los Angeles, CA.


*Karraker v. Rent-A-Center* 411 F.3d 831 (7th Cir. 2005)


Criterion III. Diversity. The organization(s) responsible for the proficiency demonstrates recognition of the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in education and training in the proficiency.

Commentary: The proficiency provides trainees with relevant knowledge and experiences about the role of cultural and individual differences and diversity in psychological phenomena as it relates to the science and practice of the proficiency in each of the following areas: i) development of a proficiency-specific scientific and theoretical knowledge; ii) preparation for practice; iii) education and training; iv) continuing education and professional development; and v) evaluation of effectiveness.

1. Describe how education and training of cultural and individual differences and diversity are integrated into the curriculum. Include information on coursework and training experiences.

Training for this proficiency builds upon what typical doctoral level clinical training provides. This includes formal classroom instruction and supervised clinical experience with a diverse clientele across training levels. Psychologists proficient in Personality Assessment gain familiarity with the strengths and limitations of various assessment techniques and instruments in working with a particular population of interest. Thus, when working with child or Older Adults populations; with criminal populations or with civil litigants; with cultural, ethnic, or linguistic minorities; with persons with disabilities; with candidates for sensitive employment positions; or with medically ill patients, they must maintain familiarity with specific tests for specific subjects, the theoretical, empirical, and normative literature concerning Personality Assessment in general, and the use and interpretation of
particular tests and techniques specific to members of that population. The proficiency review form includes several items that specifically address understanding and application of information related to diversity, both in terms of individual test interpretation and its use of and/or limitation because of limited normative information available for specific measures (i.e., “Test interpretations are consistent with the empirical literature and accepted clinical practice,” and “Test interpretations are sensitive to issues of culture and diversity, including ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, age, religion, ability, etc.”). Thus, those deemed proficient through the proficiency review process must demonstrate the ability to understand and apply knowledge related to diversity and culture in personality assessment.

Particular needs for didactic experience and supervised practice will vary according to the specialized practice interest of a given assessment professional, but all those proficient in Personality Assessment must have foundational training in the field of human diversity and multicultural competence. Such competence is achieved not only through didactic work but through supervised experience with different populations. Those proficient in Personality Assessment must be familiar with both the normative bases and limitations of the instruments and techniques they use and the particular requirements for sensitive and effective administration of their instruments in diverse population settings. Proficiency in personality assessment requires familiarity with applicable guidelines (e.g., AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014; APA, 1990, 1994, 1999, 2003) and the scientific literature on the impact of a particular minority status on the meaning of assessment data (e.g., Clark, 2000; Constantine, 1998; Dana, 1986, 1998; Ridley, Hill, & Li, 1998; Pope-Davis & Coleman, 1998; Samuda, 1998; Sandoval, Frisby, Geisinger, Scheuneman, & Grenier, 1998; Suzuki & Ponterotto, 2008). Recently, the Journal of Personality Assessment devoted a special section on cultural considerations in therapeutic models of assessment (e.g., B.L. Smith, 2016; J.D. Smith, 2016), and recent texts have highlighted gender and sexuality factors (Brabender & Mihura, 2016) and diversity factors more broadly (Smith & Krisnamurthy, in press). Specific methods of teaching and supervising multicultural-sensitive Personality Assessment are also addressed in the literature (e.g., Dana, Aguilar-Kibutri, Diaz-Vivar, & Vetter, 2002; Yalof, in press). The Society for Personality Assessment provides frequent continuing education opportunities in the form of an annual conference and other events in the areas of multicultural assessment and assessment with specific populations (see below). Further, the Proficiency Committee of SPA has recently convened a Diversity Subcommittee, which will work on making recommendations for doctoral programs, internships, postdoctoral programs, and continuing professional development opportunities related to diversity in personality assessment. Once recommendations have been developed for the sequential and systematic training regarding diversity issues in personality assessment, the Proficiency Committee will work with other organizations (such as APA’s Board of Educational Affairs, ASPPB, NCSPP, and others) to disseminate that information to the relevant training programs. Several initiatives have already been undertaken, including a CE workshop at next year’s SPA meeting specifically on culture and diversity in proficiency in personality assessment.

One source that provides clear input regarding competency in diversity as it relates to training in psychology are the Competency Developmental Achievement Levels (DALs) by the National Council
of Schools and Programs in Professional Psychology (NCSPP, 2007). The DALs describe the need to identify and understand issues of individual and cultural difference as well as power, privilege and oppression. Such abilities clearly inform all professional interactions and decisions including within the context of personality assessment. SPA’s Diversity Subcommittee of the Proficiency Committee will work to align recommendations for each level of training in diversity in personality assessment with these principles.

2. Describe how knowledge of cultural and individual differences and diversity are applied in practice.

Culturally competent services are also discussed the DALs (NCSPP, 2007) and entail conceptualization and integration of information in an individualized manner. The Proficiency in Personality Assessment specifically addresses such integration and individualization of information. Psychologists proficient in this area of practice apply their general knowledge of diverse and individual differences similarly to their colleagues in general practice. In addition, they consider diversity factors and the individual context of each client when accepting referrals, developing assessment goals, choosing measures to administer, analyzing test scores and related norms, making interpretations, writing reports including diagnosis, when applicable, and recommendations and finally, when communicating assessment feedback to clients and/or third parties involved. Personality assessment psychologists must be aware of individual diversity factors that may hinder or enhance the likelihood of individuals following through with assessment recommendations. They also have to keep up to date with developments in the field regarding specific measures, updated norms, and other relevant issues.

Specifically, those proficient in Personality Assessment must apply their knowledge of cultural and individual differences and diversity in two primary ways. First, they must use appropriate test norms as related to the individual client being assessed, whenever possible. That is, proficient practitioners must understand and utilize knowledge that different cultural groups may have different cut-off thresholds on specific tests, subtests, or indices on tests. Many tests (such as the MMPI-2) have specific norms for different cultural groups. In the absence of such norms, proficient practitioners must understand the limitations of comparing an individual’s test scores to “general” population norms for any given test, and adapt their interpretation of those test scores accordingly. Second, in addition to culturally-relevant interpretation of individual test scores, those proficient in personality assessment must situate all interpretations and findings from data sources within a cultural context. While the former task deals with individual test scores from different measures, this latter task relates to integrating the test data into a conceptualization of the individual being assessed that is sensitive to culture and diversity.

3. Describe the opportunities for continuing professional development and education related to cultural and individual differences in diversity.
SPA regularly and consistently includes diversity related information via their publications and annual convention sessions. The latter include continuing education workshops, symposia, master lectures, case presentations, and round table sessions as well as poster presentations to facilitate continued professional development and education on cultural and individual issues in diversity, particularly as it pertains to personality assessment. Because SPA is an APA-approved Continuing Education provider, diversity issues are addressed explicitly in all SPA-sponsored CE offerings. The SPA website includes the convention book for the upcoming convention and last year’s sessions as an example; a selection of sessions from recent conventions which illustrate the breadth of SPA’s diversity offerings are also noted below. Currently, SPA is committed to increasing collaborations with other psychology organizations and societies as well as close disciplines outside the field of psychology (e.g. neuroscience) to further explore and enhance the understanding of diversity issues and personality assessment. The Diversity Subcommittee of SPA’s Proficiency Committee will work to increase offerings (through workshops at SPA and APA, webinars that are accessible to those who do not attend SPA and APA conferences, and potentially home study opportunities) for CE related to diversity in Personality Assessment.

Several sessions will be offered at the upcoming SPA convention (March 2018) specifically targeting cultural and diversity issues within personality assessment, graduate level training, and clinical practice:
Roundtable Discussion: Fostering Cultural Competency in Graduate Students Conducting Assessments
Roundtable Session: Diversity-Minded Personality Assessment as a Tool to Make the World More Inclusive and Just?
Integrated Paper Session: Advanced in the Assessment of Personality and Identity across Diverse Populations
Roundtable Discussion: Personality Assessment Practice in Diverse Settings

Select session examples from the SPA Annual Convention 2013-2017
Paper Session: Clinical, Cultural, and Physiological Research with Implications for the R-PAS
Paper Session: Cross-Cultural Validity of the Affect in Play Scale: Is Play the Same in US and Italian Children?
Paper Session: Current Topics in Personality Assessment and Diversity: Tips, Insights, and Guidelines for Graduate Students (sponsored by SPAGS, our student association)
Workshop: Making Meaning from Assessment Findings Writing Therapeutic Stories for Children, Adolescents, and Adults
Symposium: Therapeutic Assessment around the World
Symposium: An International Perspective: Assessment’s Role in Uncovering and Coping with Client Trauma
Paper Session: Assessing Children and Adolescents; Symposium: Hidden Social and Cultural Influences to Assessor’s Practices in Therapeutic Assessment
Symposium: Diversity at the Crossroads: Intersectionality and Personality Assessment
Workshop: Multicultural Evidence-based Assessment of Child, Adult and Family Psychopathology
Paper Session: Self-Report Inventories in Varied Populations
Roundtable Discussion: Women in Personality Assessment
Paper Session: Adolescent Assessment: Issues and Methods
Symposium: Diversity Training in Personality Assessment: Teaching and Supervising Cultural Awareness and Competence
Symposium: Case Studies in Forensic Assessment in Immigration Court
Workshop: Applying R-PAS to Children
Workshop: Multicultural Tasks of Emotional Development
Symposium: Collaborative/Therapeutic Assessment Approaches with Transgender Individuals and Their Families.

4. Describe how students are evaluated. How is competency measured? Please include samples of evaluation tools related to an understanding of cultural and individual differences and diversity.

Pre- and post-doctoral students receive formalized didactic and field based training in this area. Standard and ongoing evaluation of diversity based skills is similar to that in other areas of professional skills including therapy and assessment as well as professional conduct. Students may be evaluated using common tools such as exams; observed and rated, self-evaluations; standardized tests (EPPP for general knowledge); and practical exams. Initial and ongoing competency is continuously evaluated, first within the classroom setting, typically via exams and submitting practice assessment cases with peers or volunteers with grading considering diversity factors considered and incorporated appropriately. Next, students are evaluated via supervised experiences under the supervision of a licensed psychologist who has demonstrated a certain level of knowledge and skill in this area of work. Field experience including supervision and evaluation would identify work with clients needing specialized practice approaches based on their individual differences or diversity status as well as diversity factors of the student and relevance to the relationship and interactions with clients. Thus, during such training, trainees are encouraged to recognize and be mindful of their own individual differences, limitations, and preferences as these may also affect their scope of practice and are relevant to this section of questions.

The recognition process for this proficiency includes a work sample (assessment report) for most applicants (with exception of those who have already demonstrated a higher skills level), and the tool used to evaluate reports submitted (Proficiency Report Review Form, see SPA website) covers various aspects pertaining to demonstrating an understanding of the individual assessed, and the consideration of relevant diversity factors. This evaluation tool includes 5 categories: Comprehensiveness, Validity,
Integration, Client-Centered, and Overall Writing; multiple items are included under each category that need to meet proficiency level. All categories reviewed and evaluated via this tool consider diversity factors and a specific item is also included to ensure diversity is addressed properly in the assessment process and resulting report, reflecting one’s level of competency. Specifically, those applying for proficiency have their reports and test data evaluated for cultural competence by explicit evaluation (by proficiency reviewers) of test data being interpreted with diversity and culture-related information attended to. Test results must be sensitive to diversity issues, including relevant normative information and situating of data in a cultural context.

As mentioned above, ongoing maintenance of state licensure as a psychologist and related continuing education requirements further support familiarity and awareness of diversity issues. Training related to multicultural and diversity issues is required for basic competence in any area of practice as a licensed psychologist. Such competence is usually acquired via coursework, practica, internships, and postdoctoral training. Oversight for such training and evaluation occurs at the university program level and APA accreditation and approval. APPIC has oversight of internship experiences. For postdoctoral training, such as continuing education, the vast majority of course work offered would be reviewed by APA or APA affiliated organizations granting APA approved CE credit. SPA also provides approved continuing education credits that are more directly related to this proficiency and incorporating diversity issues. For renewal of proficiency recognition, applicants are asked to state explicitly that at least 6 hours of continuing professional development activities have been dedicated to issues related to diversity in personality assessment.

References


Criterion IV. Distinctiveness. A proficiency is represented by a distinct procedure, technique, or applied skill set used in psychological assessment and/or treatment within which one develops competence.

Commentary: A proficiency typically reflects the development of a competence in a circumscribed activity beyond broad and general doctoral training. While it is recognized that there may be overlap among the knowledge and skill bases of various psychological applications (i.e. procedure, technique, or applied skill set), the proficiency does not overlap completely with any other psychological applications.

1. Provide a brief description of the proficiency by responding to the questions below (limit 400 words total; reading level should be approximately 8th grade). This provides the foundation for what will appear on the APA website upon recognition of the proficiency and should be understandable to the general public. Descriptions will be edited for consistency to conform to the CRSPPP website standards.

   a. Provide a brief (2-3 sentences) definition of the proficiency.

Personality Assessment involves the administration, scoring, interpretation, and integration of empirically supported (i.e., with evidence of reliability, validity, and utility) measures of personality traits and styles in order to: a) refine clinical diagnoses when relevant; b) structure and inform psychological interventions; c) heighten understanding of the personality of the individual being assessed; and d) increase the accuracy of behavioral prediction in a variety of contexts and settings (e.g., clinical, forensic, organizational, educational). Integration in Personality Assessment takes place at three levels: across scales in a multi-scale measure (e.g., integration across MMPI-2-RF scales); across test methods in a multimethod evaluation, which include self-reports, observer ratings, and performance tasks (e.g., integration of MMPI-2 results with Rorschach Performance Assessment System results); and across life domains, as test-based inferences are integrated with contextualizing information from interview, history, observed behavior, and collateral sources.

   b. What specialized knowledge is key to the proficiency?
In addition to conducting an effective clinical interview and establishing rapport, Personality Assessment requires expertise in the use of empirically supported measures of personality traits and styles in several applied settings. The empirical support for these measures is based on evidence of reliability and validity, including available data on incremental validity and utility. Proper administration, scoring, and interpretation of personality tests and measures require specialized training and experience. Because Personality Assessment involves appraisal, clarification, and integration of often conflicting and ambiguous evidence and evaluation of multiple hypotheses, it requires considerable clinical expertise, knowledge of research regarding assessment instruments, and an attitude of scientific inquiry as well (see Bornstein, 2017; Cates, 1999; Handler & Meyer, 1998; Meyer, 1997).

Personality Assessment draws upon a distinctive set of skills not characteristic of existing proficiencies. Psychologists proficient in Personality Assessment must be well versed in:

a) evaluating evidence for the reliability, construct validity, incremental validity, and applied utility of a broad array of psychological assessment tools;

b) constructing an appropriate assessment battery to address a specific referral question;

c) administering and scoring these measures so they yield valid and useful information;

d) interpreting the results of individual Personality Assessment instruments; and

e) integrating data from different instruments and methods in the broader context of the referral question, additional psychological data (e.g., intellectual test results), and other relevant information about the person being tested (e.g., life history data).

Personality Assessment also addresses goals not addressed by existing proficiencies: It is distinctive in its use of psychological test data to increase the accuracy of behavioral predictions in a variety of contexts and settings (e.g., clinical, forensic, organizational, educational; see, e.g., Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, & Gardner, 2011; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Roberts, Kuncel, Shiner, Caspi, & Goldberg, 2007), and in its use of psychological test data to enhance the effectiveness of psychological treatments (e.g., psychotherapy) and other behavioral interventions (e.g., learning disability accommodations, coaching). Testing, a significant aspect of personality assessment, can help identify aspects of the client that are relevant to his or her distress and difficulties, but that he or she may be unaware of or unable to articulate. Such information may be critical to effective therapy or other future interventions (Bram & Peebles, 2014). It is uncommon for research to comparatively evaluate the reliability and descriptive validity of psychological test instruments relative to the ubiquitous informal assessment procedures used in applied contexts and settings (e.g., clinical, forensic, organizational, educational), such as impressions of the client based on unstructured encounters or unstructured interviews. This is because the ubiquitous informal assessment procedures
lack quantified information that could be used in comparative research. Thus, there is nothing that can be compared. However, unlike unstructured or informal interviews, which lack evidence of reliability or validity, Personality Assessment relies on instruments that have documented evidence of reliability and validity (e.g., Meyer, 2004; Meyer et al., 2001), including evidence for incremental validity (e.g., Mihura, Meyer, Dumitrascu, & Bombel, 2013). Although historically understudied (Meyer et al., 2001), positive evidence from single-case time-series analyses and contrasted groups research is increasingly accumulating about the applied utility of Personality Assessment (Aschieri & Smith, 2012; De Saeger, Bartak, Eder & Kamphuis, 2016; De Saeger et al., 2014; Durosini, Tarocchi, & Aschieri, 2017; Fantini & Smith, 2018; Hanson & Poston, 2011; Hansson, Hansson, Danielsson, & Domellöf, 2016; Poston & Hanson, 2010; Smith, Eichler, Norman & Smith, 2015; Smith & George, 2012; Smith, Handler, & Nash, 2010; Smith, Nicholas, Handler, & Nash, 2011; Tarocchi, Aschieri, Fantini, & Smith, 2013; Tharinger et al., 2009).

Finally, Personality Assessment draws upon a distinctive body of knowledge. This body of knowledge includes research on the construct validity of individual Personality Assessment tools, the ways in which data from individual Personality Assessment instruments can be combined to increase their utility and heuristic value, and the effective use of norms--including norms from members of different ethnic and racial groups--in interpreting test results.

c. What are the essential skills and procedures associated with the proficiency?

The major procedures and techniques used by psychologists proficient in Personality Assessment are those involved in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of personality tests (see Bornstein, 2017; Butcher, 2002; Groth-Marnat & Wright, 2016; Handler & Meyer, 1998; Weiner & Greene, 2008). Personality Assessment typically proceeds in three phases:

- **Testing**, which involves administering a battery of measures using standardized procedures to obtain a set of scores that can be compared to established norms.

- **Interpretation and integration of test results**, a process whereby separate test-derived pieces of information obtained from multiple methods of assessment are analyzed in the context of historical information, referral information, and behavioral observations to generate a cohesive and comprehensive understanding of the person being evaluated.

- **Report writing and feedback**, which consists of providing to the test taker and referent a summary of test results and their implications; typically, the feedback provided to a test taker is framed in easily understood language whereas feedback to a referent may be more detailed and use more technical language and specialized professional terminology

2. Provide a detailed description of how this proposed proficiency differs from and is similar to existing proficiency practices. Provide a detailed description of how one develops and is evaluated for
competency to practice the proficiency. The comparison and differentiation must address the distinct procedure, technique or skill set used in the practice of the proficiency. In addition, the comparison and differentiation must address how a knowledge base and competency in the proficiency is gained beyond broad and general doctoral training.

Personality Assessment is distinct from the proficiencies currently recognized by the American Psychological Association in that it requires expertise in the use of empirically supported measures of personality traits and styles in several applied settings. Proper administration, scoring, and interpretation of personality tests and measures require specialized training and experience. Because Personality Assessment involves appraisal, clarification, and integration of often conflicting and ambiguous evidence and evaluation of multiple hypotheses, it requires considerable clinical expertise, knowledge of research regarding assessment instruments, and an attitude of scientific inquiry as well (see Bornstein, 2017; Cates, 1999; Handler & Meyer, 1998).

As noted earlier, Personality Assessment draws upon a distinctive set of skills not characteristic of existing proficiencies. Thus, psychologists proficient in Personality Assessment must be well versed in:

a) evaluating the reliability and construct validity of a broad array of psychological assessment tools;

b) constructing an appropriate assessment battery to address a specific referral question;

c) administering and scoring these measures so they yield valid and useful information;

d) interpreting the results of individual cognitive and Personality Assessment instruments; and

e) integrating data from different instruments in the broader context of the referral question, additional psychological data (e.g., intellectual test results), and other relevant information about the person being tested (e.g., life history data).

Personality Assessment also addresses goals not addressed by existing proficiencies: It is distinctive in its use of structured and normed psychological test data with evidence of reliability and validity to increase the accuracy of behavioral predictions in a variety of contexts and settings (e.g., clinical, forensic, organizational, educational), and in its use of psychological test data to increase the effectiveness of psychological treatments (e.g., psychotherapy) and other behavioral interventions (e.g., learning disability accommodations, coaching).

Finally, Personality Assessment draws upon a distinctive body of knowledge. This body of knowledge

---

1 The proficiency for Addiction Psychology (AKA Treatment of Alcohol and Other Psychoactive Substance Use Disorders) also relies on assessment measures with evidence for reliability, validity, and clinical utility. However, those measures are focused on screening for and assessment of substance use problems, as opposed to personality traits and styles.
includes research on the reliability and construct validity of individual Personality Assessment tools, the ways in which data from individual Personality Assessment instruments can be combined to increase their utility and heuristic value, and the effective use of norms--including norms from members of different ethnic and racial groups--in interpreting test results.

Overlap with Existing Proficiencies

Personality Assessment’s goals, body of knowledge, and the skills required to be proficient in this area overlap modestly with two recognized proficiencies: Assessment and Treatment of Serious Mental Illness and Addiction Psychology (AKA Treatment of Alcohol and other Substance Use Disorders). In these two areas Personality Assessment data may be used to obtain information regarding individuals’ current psychological functioning that can then be used to guide and structure interventions. In addition, in both areas, Personality Assessment may be used to help measure intervention effectiveness; by contrasting pre- and post-intervention assessment data, salient outcomes as well as narrower domains/components of outcome may be quantified. However, both of these other proficiencies have a narrower focus than Personality Assessment. The proficiency in Assessment and Treatment of Serious Mental Illness is focused on serious mental illness and thus emphasizes the quantification of functional capacities, including neuropsychological strengths and deficits that may relate to them. The proficiency in Addiction Psychology utilizes measures that are focused on screening for and assessment of substance use problems, as opposed to personality traits and styles.

Personality Assessment’s goals, body of knowledge, and the skills required to be proficient in this area do not overlap with those of Psychopharmacology and Sport Psychology, although Personality Assessment may sometimes be appropriate in determining suitability for some applications in these areas, and in assessing the effectiveness of their interventions.

General clinical knowledge and skills including interviewing and establishing rapport, and in some cases psychopathology and diagnosis, as well as knowledge of relevant diversity factors and potential impact on services, along with ethical considerations are additional factors that overlap across proficiencies including Personality Assessment.

Evidence of Distinctiveness

a) Specific Populations

Because Personality Assessment is useful in addressing a wide range of questions regarding individuals’ psychological functioning, its use is not limited to specific populations. Personality Assessment is applicable to a wide range of ages, ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds, medical and psychological problems, and groupings of individuals. Thus, evidence of distinctiveness is to be found not in its limited use with particular populations, but rather in the unique contributions of Personality Assessment to psychological and social problems, and in the procedures and techniques used to address these problems.
b) Psychological, Biological, or Social Problems

Personality Assessment is commonly used in clinical (i.e., inpatient and outpatient) settings and is increasingly used in medical settings as well. Personality Assessment is also applied in long-term care settings. Personality Assessment is widely used in forensic settings (e.g., to render custody evaluations, to help determine the mental state of criminal defendants or civil litigants, to assess claimed emotional injuries in civil suits), in organizational settings (e.g., to prescreen job applicants and aid in placement of newly hired employees), and in educational settings (e.g., as part of learning disability assessments and formulation of accommodation plans).

Personality Assessment data can enhance the accuracy of behavioral prediction in a broad array of contexts by documenting salient domains of psychological functioning, thereby providing unique information which complements that obtained in interviews and archival records (Meyer et al., 2001; Shedler & Westen, 2007). Personality Assessment data can also be used to refine diagnoses insofar as understanding a patient’s underlying personality structure may help the clinician differentiate between two syndromes with similar or overlapping surface characteristics (Bornstein, 2007; Widiger & Samuel, 2005). Finally, Personality Assessment data can help inform and structure psychological treatment and other forms of intervention in ways that other types of information (including diagnostic data) cannot (Bram & Peebles, 2014; De Saeger et al., 2014; Hanson & Poston, 2011; Hansson et al., 2016; Millon & Grossman, 2007; Smith et al., 2015; Tharinger et al., 2009; Weiner & Greene, 2008). Among the kinds of assessment data useful in this regard are those bearing on self-concept, underlying and expressed motives, impulse control, defense and coping style, perceptual style, and cognitive complexity (Butcher, 2002; Livesley, 2002; Huprich & Ganellen, 2006). In addition, Personality Assessment data are used to evaluate progress during psychological treatment (Porcerelli et al., 2006), and studies confirm that a thorough assessment coupled with feedback to the patient prior to the start of psychotherapy can enhance the likelihood of positive treatment outcome and diminish the likelihood of premature termination (Hilsenroth & Cromer, 2007).

c) Procedures and Techniques

The major procedures and techniques used by psychologists proficient in Personality Assessment are those involved in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of personality tests (see Butcher, 2002; Groth-Marnat & Wright, 2016; Handler & Meyer, 1998; Weiner & Greene, 2008). Personality Assessment typically proceeds in three phases:

- **Testing**, which involves administering a battery of measures using standardized procedures to obtain a set of scores that can be compared to established norms.

- **Interpretation and integration of test results**, a process whereby separate test-derived pieces of information obtained from multiple methods of assessment are analyzed in the context of historical information, referral information, and behavioral observations to generate a cohesive and comprehensive understanding of the person being evaluated.
• Report writing and feedback, which consists of providing to the test taker and referent a summary of test results and their implications; typically, the feedback provided to a test taker is framed in easily understood language whereas feedback to a referent may be more detailed and use more technical language and specialized professional terminology

References


**Criterion V. Parameters of practice. A proficiency may be described by a circumscribed set of activities that may be applied to specific populations, settings, and biopsychosocial problems.**

Commentary: This parameter consists of the descriptions of specific procedures and techniques utilized in the proficiency and to the populations to which they apply. This includes assessment techniques, intervention strategies, consultative methods, diagnostic procedures, ecological strategies, and applications from the psychological laboratory to serve a public need for psychological assistance.

1. Provide a description of the procedures and techniques utilized in the practice of the proficiency. The narrative should include a description of the assessment techniques, intervention strategies, consultative methods, diagnostic procedures and ecological strategies used in the practice of the proficiency. In addition, the description should describe the settings in which the techniques and strategies are applied, the specific populations served by those practicing in the proficiency, and the biopsychosocial problems the proficiency addresses.
a) Specific Populations

Personality Assessment serves a diverse range of populations across a wide variety of settings (Harwood, Beutler, & Groth-Marnat, 2011; Groth-Marnat & Wright, 2016). Instruments commonly used in Personality Assessment are often available in translation for use in several languages (see Butcher, 2004; Weiner & Greene, 2008), and their norms are frequently checked for applicability to minority populations and across a range of settings (e.g., with traditional mental health patient groups, medically ill populations, criminal populations, civil forensic populations) and age groups (e.g. older as well as younger adults). Personality Assessment of adults is used in treatment and career planning and also in providing expert opinions to courts in both civil and criminal matters. Special instruments or adaptations of adult instruments have been designed specifically for children, adolescents, and older adults. Personality Assessment of children and youth is helpful in planning clinical and educational services and placements for those with significant emotional, educational, or interpersonal problems. Special instruments or specially normed or adapted adult instruments are often used in the assessment of Older Adults populations. With couples and families, Personality Assessment can be useful in identifying conflicts and dynamics within the family system that should become a central focus for marital or family therapy (e.g., Hiembo & Butcher, 1991).

Psychologists who are proficient in Personality Assessment are familiar with the theoretical, empirical, and normative literature concerning using psychological tests with members of diverse populations and across a variety of settings. This knowledge base has special applicability for older adults, many of whom are also members of ethnic or racial minority groups and who may live in special settings. Psychologists adapt their assessment techniques, apply norms, and obtain informed consent in a manner that is suitable for the characteristics of the individuals assessed and the settings in which assessment takes place.

Personality Assessment provides reliable, valid, and useful information concerning psychological, biological, and social problems in a wide range of settings, including but not limited to, the following. A list of relevant and current references per each setting/specialty area noted below is included later in this petition under Criterion VIII.

*Inpatient and outpatient psychiatric settings* – Because the symptoms of most mental disorders are best understood in terms of how they interact with the patients’ overall personality functioning (PDM Task Force, 2006, 2017; Krueger, 2005; Krueger & Tackett, 2006; Millon & Davis, 1996; Westen, Gabbard, & Blagov, 2006), Personality Assessment often plays a central role in psychodiagnostic evaluations. Understanding affect regulation, interpersonal interactions and self-perceptions, reality testing and perceptual organization, level of distress, the broader adaptive strengths or coping skills, defensive style, conflicts, strivings and aversions, and problem-solving preferences of a patient’s personality is usually vital in planning effective clinical interventions. (Kubiszyn Meyer, Finn, Eyde, Kay, Moreland, Dies, & Eisman; 2000; Meyer, 2002). Although not every patient with a primary psychiatric disorder requires a personality assessment, an evaluation can often be valuable to clinicians in clarifying complex diagnostic issues, assisting in developing appropriate treatment plans, or identifying
personality characteristics and patterns of thinking, relating, and reacting that may interfere with
developing a therapeutic alliance and benefitting from treatment. In addition, findings from a
psychological evaluation can provide objective evidence to aid in identifying patients who deliberately
report psychological symptoms, personal problems, and limitations in functioning in an unrealistic,
exaggerated manner to obtain a tangible reward, such as being granted disability benefits, escaping
unwanted responsibilities, or avoiding unpleasant situations (Ganellen, 2007; Weiner & Greene, 2008).
In addiction treatment settings, Personality Assessment has been shown to be useful in assigning
patients to types of treatment well suited to their individual needs (e.g., Gilmore, Lash, Foster, &
Blosser, 2001).

Medical settings – Personality Assessment of patients with a primary medical problem can provide
valuable information objectively showing whether a patient would benefit from treatment for a co-
morbid psychiatric disorder, such as depression or an anxiety disorder; whether psychological factors
interacting with the patients’ biological conditions contribute to their report of symptoms; perception
of their capabilities and limitations; or need to seek attention, support, and reassurance from others by
calling attention to their medical symptoms; or whether response to treatment may be complicated by a
patient’s personality characteristics, psychological needs, and style of relating to others (Berry, Elliott,
& Rivera, 2007; Sirri, Fabbri, & Fava, 2007).

Older Adults and rehabilitation settings – Personality Assessment in Older Adults settings can be used
to help identify both strengths and liabilities relevant to planning for special services and living
arrangements. Such assessments are particularly helpful in distinguishing between emotional and
social problems and cognitive or medical-biological problems in this population. Personality
Assessment is used with physically and mentally disabled people in appraising the emotional impact of
the disability, evaluating motivational factors, and developing rehabilitation and accommodation plans
(e.g., Trezona, 1991 and Rossi et. al., 2014).

Legal/Forensic settings – Personality Assessment may be used in a broad range of legal and forensic
contexts, in both the civil and criminal arenas (e.g., Archer & Wheeler, 2013). Among these are: the
psychological assessment of personality factors as they relate to civil and criminal competencies;
assessments of mens rea and violence risk potential in criminal prosecutions and sentencing
proceedings; the psychological assessment of litigants in a personal injury context; and family
assessments in child custody disputes and juvenile and foster placements (see Melton, Petrila,
Poythress, & Slobogin, 2007). In correctional settings, Personality Assessment can also be a critical
resource in screening for individuals at risk of violent or self-destructive behavior or for psychotic
decompensation and in identifying appropriate treatment assignments and placements for incarcerated
offenders (Gacono, 2000; Gacono & Evans, 2007; Gacono & Meloy, 1994). Personality Assessment
also plays an important role in forensic decision-making, whether in the context of bail proceedings,
probation and parole determinations, or specifying conditions for management and supervision.

Educational settings – Personality Assessment is used in pre-school, school, and university settings to
assess students’ dispositions in the physical, social, and academic environment of the classroom. These
include appraisal of students’ cognitive and emotional resources, as well as aptitudes and skills, necessary for academic performance and for successful social and behavioral adaptation to the educational environment. Personality Assessment is used in the diagnosis of behavioral and learning problems, which inform individual educational plans and eligibility for special accommodations. Personality Assessment is vital in identifying both biologically based pervasive developmental disabilities (e.g., autism, Asperger’s syndrome) and more circumscribed disabilities (e.g., ADHD, non-verbal learning disability) in children (e.g., Yalof, 2006). Early interventions with such problems can dramatically improve their adjustment to their home and school environments.

References


**Education and Training**

**Criterion VI. Initial acquisition of knowledge and skills.** A proficiency is acquired through a defined program of study and training that enables psychologists to develop the necessary competence to use this proficiency.

Commentary: Education and training in a proficiency may occur at the doctoral or postdoctoral level or through an organized continuing education program. Irrespective of when it is offered, education and training in a proficiency is of a sequential, integrated nature with organized oversight of didactic and appropriate supervised experience related to the knowledge base and skill sets distinctive to the proficiency. Background of relevant competencies of faculty/instructors are described as well as learner evaluation procedures. In addition, there are organizational mechanisms in place that provide oversight and coordination of the education and training in the proficiency. When education and training in a proficiency is achieved through interdisciplinary study, organization/s(s) responsible for the proficiency will describe how the proficiency meets the criteria within the context of interdisciplinary education and training. If the proficiency is interdisciplinary be sure to highlight the training component that is specifically relevant to psychologists.

Education and training in Personality Assessment is acquired in a sequential and graded fashion through formal coursework and practical training in graduate school, and then further developed and refined during the pre-doctoral internship, field work, and/or postdoctoral specialty training. At the postdoctoral level, there must be continuing educational experiences that maintain the proficiency and further elaborate relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Achieving and maintaining proficiency in personality assessment is a lifelong endeavor.

APA’s (2017) *Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology (SoA)* articulates the requirement that APA-accreditation doctoral graduate programs and internships need to assure that their students acquire competency in assessment as part of their profession-wide competency development, as well as the other discipline-specific knowledge areas that underlie its scientific basis. The associated Implementing Regulation (C-8 D; July, 2017 revision) specifies six areas of expected
competency that include knowledge of diagnosis, understanding behavior in contexts, application of knowledge of functional and dysfunctional behavior, selection/use of tests and data collection “using multiple sources and methods,” interpreting assessment results, and communication of findings. Furthermore, academic knowledge is expected to be integrated with practical experience. However, as noted by Childs and Eyde (2002), previous and current accreditation guidelines do not specify the content to be taught, the number and quality of courses required, or the methods to be used in providing assessment training or that any particular emphasis be placed on Personality Assessment. In other words, not all doctoral programs may provide the foundation needed for students to develop basic competency in Personality Assessment, much less proficiency. Furthermore, there are differences in the level of “projective” (also called performance-based) personality assessment training across Practitioner-Scholar, Scientist-Practitioner, and Clinical-Science programs, and declining emphasis in this area in many programs (Ready & Veague, 2014). Although, as noted earlier, recent surveys have found that internships continue to place heavy emphasis on assessment training (e.g., Clemence & Handler, 2001; Piotrowski & Belter, 1999), many graduate schools fail to prepare students adequately for assessment at the internship level (as described previously). Many internship supervisors are dissatisfied with the preparation of graduate students for the assessment component of their internship duties, to the point where remedial instruction is often required. Thus, despite admirable efforts by accrediting bodies to ensure the quality of assessment training in graduate and internship training, far too many psychology doctoral programs graduate young professionals who are inadequately prepared for basic, much less proficient, assessment practice (Clemence & Handler, 2001; Stedman et al. 2001).

The emphasis on doctoral, postgraduate, and continuing education training depends in large part on the sufficiency of the doctoral training. When a doctoral program has provided substantial training in interviewing and relational skills of assessment, case formulation, psychological testing, and ethical and professional development in assessment (NCSPP, 2007), postdoctoral training can then be devoted to the acquisition of more advanced skills and the application of knowledge to new settings and populations. When doctoral training has been deficient in any of these areas, however, the formative training must occur on a post-graduate basis (either in the postdoctoral year or in a CE context). While graduate courses clearly cover important information about testing and assessment, Bram and Peebles (2014) note that "few training programs offer guidelines for how to synthesize the gathered information into a formulation" (p. 18).

Competent Personality Assessment skills, developed in graduate school and refined in postdoctoral programs, may gradually mature into proficiency during professional practice through professional experience under the guidance of professional consultations, continuing education workshops, and attendance at national conferences. A high level of commitment to continuing education is crucial, regardless of the quality of doctoral or postdoctoral training, because it is through continuing education that practitioners learn about the substantial research that is being done in the field, which has strong implications for practice. Regarding the latter, it may be noted that an annual national conference, devoted to Personality Assessment has been held continuously for over 70 years by the Society for Personality Assessment and that workshops and papers in the area of Personality Assessment are featured prominently at the annual APA Convention (particularly under the auspices of APA Division
12). Professionals also acquire proficiency in Personality Assessment through study of the vast and expanding research literature. Not only do all of the major psychologically-focused publishers produce numerous texts each year, but there also are hundreds of peer-reviewed articles published annually both in APA and non-APA journals, most prominently *Psychological Assessment*, the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, and *Assessment*.

In a continued effort to promote the development of competency in personality assessment via training, the upcoming SPA Convention (March 2018) will offer two roundtable discussion sessions that specifically and directly (among several other more general ones) address issues in training and personality assessment. The first is titled Graduate Training in Test Administration and Scoring: Barriers, Processes and Rubrics; and the other is The Utility of the Proficiency Report Review Form in Assessment Coursework and Clinical Training.

1. Identify the type of organization or consortium of organizations that provide oversight of education and training programs in the proficiency.

Organizations that provide oversight including education and training programs related to this proficiency are the same as those that provide the typical doctoral level clinical training. These include universities, clinical practicum, internship, and post-doctoral fellowship and various settings for such training and experience. Personality assessment opportunities are often available at all training levels and within a multitude of settings including outpatient clinics, inpatient/hospitals, forensic settings, schools, etc. Training in personality assessment occurs via formal didactic seminars and supervised practicum experience, and then continue with more specialized training in clinical internships and post-doctoral research and clinical experiences. Individuals who seek qualification in this proficiency will have such didactic class experiences and field based supervised experience as well as post license experience providing assessment services.

2. Describe how the oversight organization/s:

- Defines the learning objectives in terms of competencies within the proficiency, and ensures that these learning objectives are assessed as program outcomes;

- Develops curriculum guidelines regarding the didactic and supervised practice experiences required to acquire competence in the proficiency. These shall include the content areas to be addressed, the populations worked with, and the procedures undertaken; and,

- Provides to CRSPPP, the Board of Educational Affairs, and APA members on a regular, periodic basis an update of the knowledge base, documentation of evidenced-based practice developments, and education and training program outcomes in the proficiency.

Currently, SPA has defined the requirements for obtaining this proficiency. Application materials are available to those seeking to become recognized via the SPA website. In addition to documenting
licensure in good standing and having adequate experience with assessment, psychologists must be providing personality assessment services to the public, either directly or via supervision or consultation. In addition, most applicants must submit a report sample with testing data. Each application is reviewed by three reviewers who have been recognized as proficient and are either ABAP Diplomates or SPA Fellows, thus have already demonstrated a certain level of expertise in assessment. The review of submitted reports is completed using the Proficiency Report Review Form (See Proficiency in Personality Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual Attachment I). This evaluation tool was developed by SPA including many of the leading psychologists in the field of personality assessment. The form was then reviewed and approved by the SPA Board of Trustees. The form covers five main areas that are considered necessary to demonstrate proficiency: comprehensiveness, validity, integration, client-centered, and overall writing. Each category includes multiple items (with overall total of 22). Certain items are considered critical and must meet proficiency in order to meet overall proficiency determination (For example, use of at least 3 methods of assessment such as an interview, self-report, and performance based). This evaluation tool is readily available for potential applicants to become familiar with respect to proficiency expectations. A couple of proficiency-based workshops have already been offered at the SPA annual convention and the APA annual convention and more will be available.

The upcoming SPA Convention (March 2018) will offer two half-day Continuing Education workshops will directly address the proficiency in personality assessment, with one focused on report writing (Proficiency in Personality Assessment: Producing an Integrated Report) and the other on diversity and cultural considerations (Developing Proficiency in Diversity-Sensitive Personality Assessment).

All proficiency based materials available via the SPA website may be utilized by graduate program instructors as well as assessment supervisors at all levels of training as a guiding tool. Updates to the knowledge base and practice developments are expected every 5 years through the renewal of the proficiency recognition. The Proficiency Coordinator along with the Proficiency Committee and Board of Trustees with support of the Central Office staff provide oversight for reviewers, reviews, applications and recognition process. The Proficiency Committee is also working towards developing more specific materials to introduce the proficiency and provide resources towards competency training in personality assessment. These include a formal letter directed at APA approved clinical psychology programs and pre-doctoral internships introducing the concept of proficiency in personality assessment and its importance. In addition, brief Power Point presentations, for instructors as well as students about the proficiency are being developed. Finally, a companion resource guide is also being developed to complement the Proficiency Report Review Form, to help support coursework teaching as well as field training and supervision within the context of striving towards proficiency.

3. Provide examples of the kinds of settings where education and training for the proficiency is acquired (e.g., residency, postdoctoral training experience, continuing education, didactic and experiential sequence in a doctoral program).
Education and training for the proficiency in personality assessment can potentially be acquired in any of the standard training settings, including practicum, internship, doctoral program, postdoctoral training, and continuing education. Course work in assessment includes personality assessment. A foundation of various assessment measures, administration, scoring, interpretation, integration of multi-method approach, and report writing are all addressed in some capacity. Whether under the supervision of an instructor administering measures to peers or volunteers or working within a clinical setting providing direct assessment services to clients in various setting, one develops their skills.

The knowledge and skill acquisition obtained for meeting this proficiency is sequential and builds upon the foundation provided in the previous level of training. The model requires continued engagement. Numerous parties facilitate training. Program directors for doctoral programs in psychology that train practitioners are the most notable who directly perform these duties. Practicum, internship, and postdoctoral trainers are also active trainers. SPA counts among its members many such individuals and reaches out to such individuals with convention programming on training issues. SPA also maintains an interest group specific to the education and training of personality assessment. The group brings together assessment instructors and supervisors at various levels of training. The group members share resource and opportunity for consultation is available at the annual convention. SPA is currently in the process of establishing specific website pages for the various interest groups, education & training included. The pages would include assessment syllabi, resources recommended to enhance the training of personality assessment and links to relevant sites and organizations. This forum will also provide an additional opportunity to discuss the proficiency and its applicability to training at all levels.

4. Describe the types of mechanisms that programs offering education and training in the proficiency use to ensure oversight and coordination of a program of study in the proficiency.

Training for this proficiency does not occur in a centralized training site or through one single program. Instead, it occurs in multiple venues coordinated by varied universities, practicum sites, and internship and postdoctoral training sites. Programs offering such education and training are accredited programs meeting regional and any special program requirements for training psychologists who will seek licensure. Such programs are regularly reviewed by regional and program accreditors, as are any associated internship training opportunities. Program faculty are otherwise subject to general ethical guidelines for practice in terms of the trainers remaining proficient to do their jobs and work within their scope of practice.

5. Describe how the program sponsor ensures that psychology trainees enrolled in the program have completed, or are in the process of completing their education and training in the scientific and applied professional foundations of the profession.

This proficiency requires a licensure in Psychology, and therefore the requirements for completing education and training in the scientific and applied professional foundations of the profession of Psychology are a prerequisite for applying for and obtaining this Proficiency. Applicants must
complete an application and submit a sample psychological report with testing data evaluated by three reviewers before receiving a certificate deeming them proficient.

6. Describe the qualifications necessary for faculty who teach in these programs.

The training qualifications of faculty are maintained in accord with general ethical guidelines for practice in terms of the trainers remaining proficient to do their jobs. Regular review of such sites for accreditation insure that individuals are working within their scope of practice and maintaining adequate knowledge and skills to be trainers. It is expected that supervisors and instructors that provide supervision and didactic teaching will have adequate experience in the area of psychological assessment, and specifically personality assessment as well as related areas such as personality development, psychopathology, therapeutic interventions, diversity and ethics. Most assessment supervisors providing clinical supervision are licensed thus they must comply with state based requirements for qualifications.

There is limited information available about assessment instructors at the graduate level. Eighty four out of 183 APA-accredited programs were surveyed in 1997 (Eyde & Childs, 2000); in these 413 faculty members taught psychological assessment courses. When all faculty members who listed assessment as a primary or secondary interest area were considered, it was found that about one fifth listed assessment as a central aspect of their professional identity. Of the assessment faculty members, 80% were licensed in psychology. Seventy seven out of 233 APA-accredited programs were surveyed in 2011 (Ready & Veague, 2014); the majority of programs (Clinical-Science 65%, Scientist-Practitioner 70%, Practitioner-Scholar 76%) had four or more faculty with assessment expertise, distributed across all ranks.

Those psychologists who teach, train, or supervise assessment are certainly encouraged to gain proficiency recognition in personality assessment. This both helps ensure their skills level as well as set a positive example to their students and trainees who will become potential applicants upon licensure. As noted per data above, many of those who teach assessment courses in graduate programs may or may not have the specific skills and career paths that necessitate that they themselves are licensed or have the same credential as those seeking the proficiency. For example, an individual may be teaching personality assessment but they do not conduct assessments in the field themselves nor have they provided clinically based personality assessment services since their supervised experience. Or an individual may be a supervisor who is licensed and has some assessment expertise, but is not necessarily up to date on the multiple measures available. SPA continues to explore ways to further engage instructors and supervisors in the proficiency process. The Proficiency Coordinator and Committee have put together a letter to be distributed to APA accredited programs, both graduate and internships describing the proficiency and its importance, especially as it applies to graduate training. One of the goals of such outreach is to set the proficiency in personality assessment as an expectation or “next step” upon completing one’s formal training and licensure.
Thus far, proficiency based workshop leaders have been recognized as proficient and thoroughly familiar with the proficiency process and relevance to the field of personality assessment. SPA will work to ensure that future proficiency workshop presenters are as well.

7. Describe how the program sponsor ensures that all promotional materials have accurate and complete information, including how potential participants can obtain detailed information about program requirements, goals, objectives, etc.

Currently there are no approved specific “training programs” for this proficiency. Accurate and complete information about the requirements for the proficiency are available via the SPA website. Information sessions are provided annually at the SPA convention and SPA plans to increase such visibility in the future. Materials and information are available to individual candidates wishing to apply as well as those involved in any assessment training aspect with graduate level training.

8. What qualifications are sought for student admission?

As noted, there are no approved “training programs” specific to this proficiency that require admission at a particular institution. Instead, graduate programs and pre-doctoral internships that provide experiences necessary to achieve proficiency in personality assessment have specific entry requirements including academic ability, clinical potential, and prerequisite coursework that ensure high quality applicants. The same requirements that guide admissions to doctoral programs in counseling and clinical psychology leading to licensure as a practitioner are the standards used to guide qualifications for admission to a program of study addressing the proficiency.

9. Describe how program sponsors provide data on attainment of competence in the proficiency program by participants as defined by standards set by those responsible for program oversight of the proficiency. This will include both short and long-term data on program outcomes.

Because there are no approved “training programs” specific to this proficiency that require admission at a particular institution, the only outcomes available are pass rates of individuals who attempt to become recognized as proficient. As this proficiency was formally established seven years ago, and is still being refined the data available are limited at this time. However, SPA has established an online database that will allow us to keep track of number of applicants, those who pass and those who do not, as well as those who renew their certificate at the 5-year mark. With the help of the SPA administrative office, the proficiency coordinator will be able to provide such short term and long-term data.

10. Describe how program sponsors ensure that the curriculum addresses: (a) ethical decision making and practice, (b) issues of cultural and individual diversity, and (c) the most current information on evidence-based practice as that construct is defined by APA policy.
Applicants must be licensed (or certified to practice) as psychologists and in good standing. This requirement ensures that applicants have had adequate and ongoing training and experience in ethical decision-making and practice related to general clinical practice. Some states also require ethics training as part of the license renewal process. SPA provides an annual ethics continuing education workshop at its annual convention addressing specific ethical issue within the area of personality assessment practice. As noted earlier, training for this proficiency occurs in multiple settings and levels (graduate programs, practicum sites, and internship and postdoctoral placements) thus, diversity and evidence-based practices are maintained in accord with general ethical guidelines for practice in terms of the trainers remaining proficient to do their jobs. The APA conducts regular accreditation reviews for programs and internships to make sure certain standards are maintained and certain areas of practice are addressed sufficiently. This helps ensure that individuals are working within their scope of practice and maintaining adequate knowledge and skills. SPA regularly disseminates information on the most up to date evidence-based practice and training via its newsletter, website, annual conference, and scholarly journals.

References


American Psychological Association Committee on Accreditation. (2017). Standards of

Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology


Criterion VII. Maintenance of Competence. The organization(s) seeking recognition for the proficiency is responsible for identifying or providing its practitioners with regularly scheduled opportunities for continuing professional development in the proficiency practice and assessing knowledge and skills.

Commentary: This criterion requires that petitioners articulate what continuing education may be necessary to maintain competency in the proficiency, particularly given the rapidly increasing and ever-changing research and information related to the proficiency. The petition should specify which mechanisms are used to achieve these goals.

1. Describe the opportunities for additional continuing professional development and continuing education in the proficiency practice. Provide detailed examples.

There are currently multiple opportunities for continuing professional development toward the proficiency in Personality Assessment and more are being developed continuously by SPA. The Society for Personality Assessment is approved by APA to provide Continuing Education, and has developed specific workshops for its annual conference (2016, 2017) as well as the APA annual convention (2016) that provide hands-on opportunities to enhance one’s proficiency related skills addressing the various components noted previously that are included in the proficiency recognition process. In addition, information and symposia sessions providing valuable information about the purpose, importance of, and obtaining the proficiency are also available via the SPA convention (2015, 2016, 2017), as well as additional conferences across the country that target psychologists who may be potential applicants (e.g., NCSPP, 2017) and future conferences including but not limited to The MMPI Symposium 2017 and Collaborative Therapeutic Assessment Conference 2017. In the future, SPA plans to provide CE credits via online webinars to increase access to such opportunities.

The upcoming SPA Annual Convention (Match 2018) offers two half-day Continuing Education workshops will directly address the proficiency in personality assessment, with one focused on report writing (Proficiency in Personality Assessment: Producing an Integrated Report by Wright & Pade) and the other on diversity and cultural considerations (Developing Proficiency in Diversity-Sensitive Personality Assessment by Krishnamurthy & Brabender). Below is a sample of workshops offered at the SPA conventions between 2014 and 2017 illustrating the range of professional development available within the context of personality assessment. Finally, in the past several years APA has offered webinars Co-sponsored by the Society for Personality Assessment that have been viewed by many clinicians and graduate students. These included Psychological Assessment in Primary Care: A
Primer for Graduate Students by John Porcerelli, PhD, Psychological Report Writing: Resources, Research, and Strategies by Gary Groth-Marnat, PhD, How Therapeutic Assessment Works: Theory and Techniques by Stephen E. Finn, PhD, Ethical Issues in Psychological Assessment by Linda K. Knauss, Ph.D., ABPP, and most recently Improving Therapeutic Outcomes with Personality Assessment by Larry Beutler, Ph.D. SPA plans to continue this collaboration in the future as well as reach out and collaborate with additional societies and organizations in related fields and sub-fields in personality assessment to further enhance awareness and understanding of personality and psychological assessment and specifically, the importance of proficiency.

SPA Convention 2014

Full Day Workshops

The Rorschach Performance Assessment System: Overview and Case Illustration Gregory J. Meyer, Joni L. Mihura, University of Toledo, Toledo, OH S. Philip Erdberg, Independent Practice, Greenbrae, CA

Working with Shame in Psychological Assessment Stephen E. Finn, Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX

Advanced Clinical Application of the MMPI-2 Maximizing Interpretive Efficiency David S. Nichols, Independent Practice, Portland, OR

Trait-based Assessment of Psychopathology Christopher J. Hopwood, Michigan State University, East Lansing,

Half Day Workshops

Why Write a Therapeutic Story? How Stories Communicate Assessment Findings with Children, Adolescents, and Adults Diane H. Engelman, Center for Collaborative Psychology, Psychiatry and Medicine, Kentfield, CA Deborah J. Tharinger, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX Marita Frackowiak, Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX J. B. Allyn, Center for Collaborative Psychology, Psychiatry and Medicine, Kentfield, CA

Multicultural Evidence-based Assessment of Child, Adult and Family Psychopathology Thomas M. Achenbach, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT Leslie A. Rescorla, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA

Forensic Psychological Assessment and Immigration Court F. Barton Evans, Clinical and Forensic Psychologist, Asheville, NC, Giselle A. Hass, Clinical and Forensic Psychologist, Washington, DC R-PAS Assessment in Child Custody Cases Robert E. Erard, Psychological Institutes of Michigan, Bloomfield, MI
Forensic Application of Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) Ali Khadivi, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center, Bronx, NY, John E. Kurtz, Villanova University, Villanova, PA

The Millon Inventories: Therapeutic Applications and Updates toward the MCMI-IV Seth Grossman, FIU College of Medicine, Cooper, FL

Applying R-PAS to Children Donald J. Viglione, CSPP, Alliant International University, San Diego, CA

How to Write a Better Forensic Report Anita L. Boss, Independent Practice, Alexandria, VA, Julie A. Gallagher, Independent Practice, Brentwood, TN

**SPA Convention 2015**

**Full-Day Workshops**

Forensic Use of the Personality Assessment Inventory Christopher J. Hopwood, Ph.D. Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI Mark A. Ruiz, Ph.D. James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, FL

Use of the MMPI-2 RF in Evaluation of Trauma Related Conditions Paul A. Arbisi, Ph.D., ABAP, ABPP Minneapolis VA Health Care Center/University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Psychological Testing that Matters: Creating a Road Map for Effective Treatment Anthony D. Bram, Ph.D. Cambridge Health Alliance/Harvard Medical School, MA Mary Jo Peebles, Ph.D., ABPP, ABPH Private Practice, Bethesda, MA

Using Psychological Testing to Change the Family Story Marita Frackowiak, Ph.D. Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX Francesca Fantini, Ph.D. Catholic University, Milan, Italy J.D. Smith, Ph.D. Baylor University, Waco, TX

Introducing the MCMI-IV: Assessment and Therapeutic Applications Seth Grossman, Psy.D. Private Practice/FIU College of Medicine, Miami, FL

**Half Day Workshops**

Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Assessment in the Current Training Context Jessica Gurley, Ph.D. Steven J. Lally, Ph.D., ABPP American School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University, Washington, DC

The Rorschach Performance Assessment System: Basic Interpretation with Cases Joni L. Mihura, Ph.D. Gregory J. Meyer, Ph.D. University of Toledo, Toledo, OH
Personality Assessment Consultation Opportunities with the Federal Aviation Administration: An Orientation to FAA Practices and Standards Chris Front, Psy.D., ABAP Federal Aviation Administration, Washington DC

Using the Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS) with Children and Adolescents S. Philip Erdberg, Ph.D. University of California, San Francisco, CA

Advances in the Rorschach Comprehensive System Assessment of Adolescents Irving B. Weiner, Ph.D., ABPP, ABAP University of South Florida, Tampa, FL Shira Tibon Czopp, Ph.D., ABAP Tel Aviv, Israel

Teaching Personality Assessment (But Not Personality Testing) Steven Smith, Ph.D. Palo Alto University, Palo Alto, CA

Assessing Psychosis with Clinical Interview and Psychological Testing James H. Kleiger, Psy.D. Private Practice, Bethesda, MD Ali Khadivi, Ph.D. Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center, Bronx, NY

Domestic Violence Update: Assessment of Issues in Family and Criminal Courts Nancy Kaser-Boyd, Ph.D., ABAP Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

SPA Convention 2016

Full-Day Workshops

The Rorschach Performance Assessment System: Overview and Case Illustration Gregory J. Meyer, PhD, University of Toledo, OH Joni L. Mihura, PhD, University of Toledo, OH

Forensic Psychological Assessment in Practice: Case Studies Corine de Ruiter, PhD, Maastricht University Nancy Kaser-Boyd, PhD, Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA

Applications and Interpretation of the MMPI-2-RF (Restructured Form) in Forensic Settings Martin Sellbom, PhD, Australian National University
Advanced MMPI-2 Interpretation: A Symptom-Focused Approach David Nichols, PhD

Psychological Testing and Matters: Creating a Road Map for Effective Treatment Anthony D. Bram, PhD, Cambridge Health Alliance/Harvard Medical School; Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute

Half Day Workshops

Proficiency in Personality Assessment: Producing an Integrated Report Hadas Pade, PsyD, CSPP
**Alliant International University, A. Jordan Wright, PhD, Empire State College, SUNY**

R-PAS Contributions to Contextualizing Violence with a Case Illustration and Recommendations for Use in Court *Donald J. Viglione, PhD, ABPP, CSPP Alliant International University Robert E. Erard, PhD, Psychological Institutes of Michigan, P.C.*

Multicultural Tasks of Emotional Development (MultiTED) Test *Edward E. Gotts, PhD, HSPP, Independent Researcher*

**SPA Convention 2017**

**Full Day Workshops**

Introducing the MMPI-A-RF *Robert P. Archer, PhD, Bay Forensic Psychology, Norfolk, VA*

An Ultra-Brief Model of Therapeutic Assessment (TA) with Adult Clients *Stephen E. Finn, PhD, Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX Jan H. Kamphuis, PhD, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands Hilde De Saeger, Viersorong Institute for the Study of Personality Disorder, The Netherlands*

Integrating Multimethod Assessment results in a Meaningful Way for the Client *Pamela Schaber, PhD, Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX Filippo Aschieri, PhD, European Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Milano, Italy*

Children in the Legal System: Using Research to More Accurately Assess and to Hear Their Voices *Ginger C. Calloway, PhD, Private Practice, Raleigh, NC Margaret Lee, PhD, Private Practice, Mill Valley, CA*

Using Clinical Judgment in Therapeutic Assessment of Adults Who May or May Not Have an Autism Spectrum Disorder *Dale Rudin, PhD, Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX*

The Role of the MMPI-2 RF in Assessment of Trauma Related Conditions *Paul A. Arbisi, PhD, ABAP, ABPP, University of Minnesota*

Forensic Applications of the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) *Mark A. Ruiz, PhD, ABPP, James A. Haley Veterans Hospital and Clinics, Tampa, FL*

**Half Day Workshops**

Integrating the R-PAS and the PAI *Chris Hopwood, PhD, Michigan State University Joni Mihura, PhD, University of Toledo Greg Meyer, PhD University of Toledo*
Proficiency in Personality Assessment: Producing an Integrated Report *Hadas Pade, PsyD, Alliant International University A. Jordan Wright, PhD, Empire State College, SUNY*

Proficiency in Personality Assessment: Producing a Client-Centered Report *Steve Smith, PhD, University of California Jamie Kent, PhD, Palo Alto University*

The Rorschach Comprehensive system: Coding and Administration *Barry Ritzler, PhD, Rorschach Training Program, Long Island University David Shmerler, PhD*

Therapeutic Feedback with the MMPI-2 - A Demonstration *Richard Levak, PhD, Independent Practice, Del Mar, CA*

Rorschach Assessment of Personality Disorder *Philip Erdberg, PhD, UC-SF School of Medicine, Corte Madera, CA*

2. Describe the formal requirements for additional continuing professional development and continuing education in the proficiency and recognition of practitioners. What credits are required?

At initial application for proficiency, applicants must submit their CV, documenting their training in personality assessment as well as continuing education credits that allow them to continue conducting assessment services. At minimum, applicants must have successfully completed a pre-doctoral internship and met requirements for state licensure. In addition, every 5 years, those recognized as proficient will submit a renewal application, including updated CV and training completed related to the proficiency to demonstrate they are up to date regarding assessment with evidence based measures and current developments within the field. Applicants may demonstrate such updates with formal continuing education course work completed, attending relevant conference sessions, and listing professional articles read. SPA will continue to provide such opportunities as well as provide links to additional resources that may fulfill this requirement.

3. Describe how the assessment of an individual's professional development and continuing education as it relates to initial competency or the maintenance of competency is accomplished in the proficiency.

For the initial proficiency application, materials submitted include documentation of formal education at the doctoral level, pre- and post-doctoral internship, and specific discussion of ongoing training in personality assessment. Most applicants also submit a redacted assessment report with data as a work sample illustrating their skills. Psychologists who are recognized as proficient must renew their proficiency status every 5 years to verify the maintenance of their skill set. Maintaining the level of proficiency recognized via initial application is similar to the expected maintenance of competence for licensure. The renewal process is simpler and quicker than the original application and primarily
entails completing an affirmation with a brief questionnaire and a modest processing fee (see Maintenance and Renewal of Proficiency Status document, Appendix III).

To remain proficient psychologists are expected to stay current and up to date with instruments utilized, scoring and interpretation procedures, updated norms especially with respect to certain populations, demographics and settings. Psychologists are also expected to continue practice within the boundaries of their competence and to follow all ethical guidelines provided in the field of psychological assessment. Finally, psychologists are expected to maintain their competence and proficiency status by participating in various professional development activities, as described below.

Psychologists are expected to have participated in at least 20 hours of formal professional development activities with 6 of these hours pertaining to ethical issues within personality or psychological assessment and 6 pertaining to diversity issues within psychological or personality assessment. Formal professional development activities related to assessment may include any of the following: Completion of or leading Continuing Education workshop or symposia (in-person, online, or via home study); Publication or formal editorial reviews of peer-reviewed articles; Attending professional conferences; Viewing webinars; Teaching a relevant course; Providing supervision; Receiving or providing peer consultation. SPA offers many such professional development opportunities via the annual convention, webinars in collaboration with APA, the JPA, as well as co-sponsoring events such as The Therapeutic Assessment Conference and The MMPI Symposium. In addition, the SPA Proficiency Committee is developing a resource guide as a companion to the Proficiency Report Review Board, listing relevant book, chapters, articles, webinars, and additional resources that directly address the different areas of proficiency identified. Psychologists’ renewal applications will be reviewed by the Proficiency Coordinator and if needed additional members of the Proficiency Committee, and the SPA Board of Trustees.

Evaluation and Assessment

Criterion VIII. Effectiveness. A proficiency demonstrates the effectiveness of the distinct procedure(s), technique(s), or applied skill set(s) that comprise the proficiency with evidence consistent with the APA 2005 Policy on Evidence-based Practice.

Commentary: A body of evidence is to be presented that demonstrates the effectiveness of the proficiency with appropriate problems and populations and documents the best available research.

1. Summarize evidence of the effectiveness of the proficiency, utilizing the published literature, manuscripts published in refereed journals (or equivalent), outcome studies, practice guidelines, consumer satisfaction surveys, etc., that demonstrate the efficacy of the proficiency. The manuscripts cited should be relevant to the proficiency, drawn from a variety of sources and inform the practice of the proficiency.
The evidence base supporting Personality Assessment is extensive, consisting of thousands of studies with a history that extends over 100 years. As indicated previously, Personality Assessment can provide reliable, valid, and useful information concerning specific populations and psychological, biological, and social problems across a wide range of settings by drawing on a range of assessment procedures and techniques. The six representative practice settings that were noted as part of Criterion III included Inpatient and Outpatient Psychiatric, Medical, Legal and Forensic, Educational, Older Adults and Rehabilitation, and Occupational and Employment. Accordingly, in the material that follows below we provide six sets of selected references regarding the validity of Personality Assessment in these specific settings. Because the literature is so large, many of the citations consist of meta-analyses rather than individual studies. However, additional studies that further inform the practice of the proficiency are also included.

In addition, we note that many other sets of references could be compiled for specific populations (e.g., children, couples, personality disorders), specific types of Personality Assessment methods (e.g., self-report scales, performance tasks), or applied Personality Assessment questions (e.g., assessing treatment outcome, differential diagnosis). We also recognize that evidence on validity can be considered just one manifestation of evidence concerning effectiveness or efficacy (see Bornstein, 2017; Meehl, 1995; Meyer, Finn, Eyde, Kay, Moreland, et al., 2001). Finally, we note that although the general evidence supports the validity of Personality Assessment measures in these and other practice settings, validity is conditional and depends on the specific clinical inference that is being considered for a particular scale being used in a certain context to assess an individual possessing a unique constellation of characteristics.

Inpatient and Outpatient Psychiatric Settings

As the articles cited below confirm, there have been a wide range of studies addressing Personality Assessment techniques and specific tests published in peer-reviewed journals, many of which are APA journals. Personality Assessment assists in the accurate diagnosis of mental and personality disorders, thus assisting other practitioners and consumers in multidisciplinary mental health care settings. This reaches far beyond symptom checklists, which often neglect the personality and underlying dynamics that can present both obstacles and avenues to more effective treatment. These are but a sample of the wide range of articles on this topic, which encompasses the individual, diverse populations, and the variety of mental health settings ranging from state hospitals to private practice to outpatient services for veterans.


signs: The utility of the MMPI-2 Restructured Form Validity Scales in prediction of premature termination. *Assessment*, 22, 279-288. doi: 073191114541672


Medical Settings

Although biological factors (e.g., type of illness, illness severity) help determine patients’ adjustment during and after medical treatment, evidence suggests that psychosocial variables including personality, coping style, stress management, and social support also play a significant role (Orom et al., 2009; Penedo et al., 2013). As the importance of psychosocial processes in medical treatment has become established, researchers have begun to examine the impact of personality on patients’ response to various interventions. Assessment of personality variables that moderate treatment impact is an active area of inquiry as psychology becomes increasingly integrated into primary care.

General Health Psychology:


Psychosomatics: Journal of Consultation Liaison Psychiatry, 48, 185-194.


Bariatric Surgery:

Along with a thorough medical chart review and a clinical interview, The American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) recommends some form of psychological testing. Guidelines for conducting psychological assessments in bariatric surgery settings (Sogg, Lauretti, & West-Smith, 2016) specifically include personality traits as well as issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and overall social-emotional functioning, often uncovered via personality testing. Overall, such psychosocial factors have been found to have significant potential to affect long-term outcomes of bariatric surgery. Many of these factors can be identified via personality assessment. The recommendation by ASMBS suggests that a psychological/personality test/measure should map onto relevant domains of psychopathology and personality related to constructs of interest in bariatric settings (e.g., depression, anxiety, and impulsivity), yield good reliability and validity coefficients, and have normative data published. Additionally, nearly 1/3 of bariatric surgery candidates tend to respond in a socially desirable manner on personality inventories, indicating that bariatric surgery patients are not always forthcoming about their psychosocial functioning (Ambwani et al., 2013; Marek, Ben-Porath, & Heinberg, 2016; Marek, Heinberg, et al., 2016). Marek and Colleagues (2016) reviewed a number of personality assessment inventories and their psychometric properties in bariatric surgery settings. Including personality assessment in bariatric surgery evaluations can aid or challenge differential diagnoses, reveal clinical information on risk factors that the patient may be sensitive to disclosing during an interview, and provide information on the extent to which a candidate is over- or underreporting symptoms. According to Sogg et. al. (2016), there is growing research suggesting that certain personality characteristics are related to obesity risk. In addition, identifying certain personality characteristics may improve predictions of psychosocial, medical, and behavioral outcomes as well as suggest certain strategies for optimizing surgical results.


**Chronic Pain:**


**Oncology:**


Organ Transplant:


Spine Surgery/Pain-Control Implants:


Legal/Forensic Settings

The APA has recognized Forensic Psychology as a specialty area, and Section 10 of the Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology (SGFP) contains relevant parameters for assessment in general. Personality Assessment as a proficiency would ensure that practitioners of Forensic Psychology have additional training and guidance as they provide this essential service to the judicial system. The listing of chapters, handbooks, and peer-reviewed articles below is but a summary, and many of them are contained in APA publications. Personality Assessment is often critical in clarifying a diagnosis for the court and identifying personality characteristics that assist the court in making decisions about a wide variety of psycho-legal questions. As noted previously in this document, Personality Assessment is used in many forensic contexts, such as child custody, pre- and post-trial criminal matters of all kinds, sexually violent predator commitment, immigration matters, personal injury and disability claims, etc. It is incumbent on any practitioner of Forensic Psychology to provide the most accurate and relevant information possible to the courts and to the attorneys who are the consumers of their work. The proficiency in Personality Assessment would provide additional assurance that those who use these methods are employing best practices of assessment (SGFP, Section 10.02).


Tarescavage, A. M., Cappo, B., & Ben-Porath, Y. S. (2016). Assessment of sex offenders with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2-Restructured Form (MMPI-2-


**Educational Settings**


**Older Adults and Rehabilitation Settings**


**Addiction and Substance Abuse Treatment Settings:**


**Occupational/Employment Settings**


**Police and Public Safety Settings:**

The use of personality assessment in the area of law enforcement and public safety has increased substantially over the past several decades being utilized for pre and post conditional job offers (and additional purposes such as fitness for duty) across majority of police departments in the United States. Weiss (2010) suggested that since police work entails a wide range of activities, it is likely that the application of personality based instruments to different kinds of police and public safety evaluations will only continue to grow in the future. Weiss (2010) also noted that using personality measures in the contemporary practice of police psychology assessment is essential. Areas assessed often include integrity, impulse control, stress tolerance, interpersonal skills, and dependability among many others. Certain widely used personality inventories such as the MMPI-2 RF and the PAI, have been adapted as well as specifically re-designed to help make employment screening decisions in the public safety field. Multiple studies, including the ones listed below, provide further insight on how certain scales (traditional or newly developed) are relevant to police applicants’ performance at the academy and on the job as well as potential for problem behaviors. Multiple studies utilizing such measures have collected law enforcement specific norms to enhance the interpretation of results with respect to this particular population. Result shave been quite positive with strong correlations between psychological
screenings based recommendations and outcomes.


**Criterion IX. Quality Improvement.** A proficiency promotes ongoing investigations and procedures to develop further the quality and utility of its applications.

Commentary: The public interest requires the best services possible for consumers. A proficiency, therefore, continues to seek ways to improve the quality and usefulness of its practitioners' services beyond its original determination of effectiveness. Such investigations may take many forms. Petitions describe how the research and practice literatures are regularly reviewed for developments that are relevant to the proficiency's skills and services, and how this information is publicly disseminated.

1. Provide a description of the types of investigations that are designed to evaluate and increase the usefulness of the applications used in the practice of the proficiency. Estimate the number of researchers conducting these types of studies, the scope of their efforts, and how your organization and/or other organizations associated with the proficiency will act to foster these developments. It also is appropriate to provide evidence of current efforts in these areas.
Two broad classes of investigations help to evaluate and increase the usefulness of the skills and services in Personality Assessment: 1) validation studies concerning the application of instruments commonly used in personality assessment in particular applications and with particular populations and 2) studies evaluating the utility or incremental value of personality assessment in particular settings.

With regard to the first type of study, the major assessment journals (e.g., *Journal of Personality Assessment, Assessment, and Psychological Assessment*) as well as various journals devoted to specialized applications of personality assessment (e.g., *Journal of Child Custody, Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*) publish hundreds of such studies annually, and the number of investigators is legion. For example, the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, published by the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA), alone has published over 400 such studies just on validating applications of various scales and forms of the MMPI in the past 10 years, including some 20 recent articles investigating the merits of the new Restructured Clinical (RC) scales and the new Restructured Format (RF). *JPA* also regularly publishes case studies illustrating best practices and new applications of personality assessment techniques (e.g., Therapeutic Assessment).


The *Journal of Personality Assessment* also offers periodic special sections, issues, and series addressing in depth various issues within the context of Personality Assessment via multiple articles (see selected examples noted previously). The journal also offers ongoing perspectives on Personality Assessment in the Diagnostic Manuals as well as Clinical Case Application sections across volumes. A few select examples of special editions and sections from recent years are: Personality Assessment and the Law (2016); Cultural Considerations in Collaborative and Therapeutic Assessment (2016); Teaching, Training, and Supervision in Personality and Psychological Assessment (2016); Personality Assessment and the DSM: A Match Made in Heaven? (2015); Difficult Assessment Cases: Psychodynamic Perspectives (2015); Mixture Modeling in Personality Assessment (2014); Openness to Experience (2014); Personality Assessment in the DSM-5 (2011); and Integrating Personality, Psychopathology, and Psychotherapy Using Interpersonal Assessment (2010).

In order to foster and support future research on the utility of personality assessment, the Society for Personality Assessment Foundation (SPAF) has raised substantial funds for the Utility of Assessment Project. A panel consisting of SPA members with a history of successful scholarship in this area has been formed to seek, review, fund, and monitor proposals for major research projects that meet expected standards of excellence and relevance.
2. Describe how the proficiency seeks ways to improve the quality and usefulness of its practitioners' services beyond its original determinations of effectiveness.

The Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) seeks to improve the quality and usefulness of psychological assessment services through education and various other means of communicating new findings and techniques in the field of psychological assessment. SPA has a yearly meeting for the purposes of dissemination of research, discussion and elaboration of theoretical innovations, as well as providing a context for professional communication among psychological assessment specialists. SPA produces a biannual newsletter (the *SPA Exchange*) for sharing ideas, problems, and new findings. Finally, SPA publishes the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, a leading peer-reviewed journal in the field of psychological assessment.

3. Describe how the research and practice literature are regularly reviewed for developments which are relevant to the proficiency's skills and services, and how this information is publicly disseminated.

The editorial board of the Society for Personality Assessment regularly examines the broader psychological literature for its implications for personality assessment. Specifically, the editors consult the literature on psychological assessment that is published regularly in numerous peer-reviewed journals, including *Applied Measurement in Education, Applied Psychological Measurement, Educational Assessment, Educational and Psychological Measurement, European Journal of Psychological Assessment, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, Journal of Personality Assessment, Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment, Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, and *Psychological Assessment*. The editors survey annual reviews of major topics in psychological assessment, which are published yearly in the *Annual Review of Psychology* and the *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*. Also consulted is the *Buros Mental Measurements Yearbook* provides independent scholarly evaluations of all commercially available psychological and educational assessment instruments while *Tests in Print* provides an index of tests along with reviews and literature for specific tests. The editorial board will use this information to solicit articles and to encourage authors to expand the scope of the literature they address.

At SPA’s annual conference, an effort is made to bring in individuals who represent areas outside of personality assessment. For example, psychologists who write on the topic of personality, neuropsychological assessment, and risk management are invited to present. Also, participating in our annual meeting are individuals from other disciplines, such as attorneys, who engage in professional activities relating to personality assessment.

**References**


**Criterion X. Guidelines for Proficiency Service Delivery.** The proficiency has developed and disseminated guidelines for practice in the proficiency that expand on the profession's general practice guidelines and ethical principles.

Commentary: Such guidelines are readily available to proficiency practitioners and to members of the public and describe the characteristic ways in which proficiency practitioners make decisions about proficiency services and about how such services are delivered to the public.

Because Personality Assessment is a core competency in the practice of professional psychology, it is imperative that appropriate standards of care be maintained and that these be communicated both to members of the profession and to the public at large. The proficiency takes seriously the need to promulgate guidelines for ethical and competent practice and to disseminate these widely. Recent experience has shown that potential misunderstandings about the appropriateness of Personality

---

2In this context, professional proficiency guidelines refer to modes of conceptualization, identification and assessment of issues, and intervention planning and execution common to those trained and experienced in the practice of the proficiency. Such professional guidelines may be found in documents or websites including, but not limited to, those bearing such a title or as described in a variety of published textbooks, chapters, and/or articles focused on such contents.
Assessment and the elements of competent and ethical practice demonstrate the need for ongoing communication.

Because the field of Personality Assessment is always evolving (new instruments are developed, standard instruments are revised and updated, norms are developed for new populations, new techniques are developed for sharing assessment findings with clients etc.), it is necessary for the proficiency to communicate with practitioners on an ongoing basis about developments in the field. The Ethics Code (American Psychological Association, 2002, 2010) as well as the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA et al., 2014) both require that psychologists base their practice on up-to-date information. The proficiency strives to assure that such information is readily accessible to those practitioners who need it.

We recognize that to be proficient, a personality assessment psychologist must practice ethically. Even though core ethical principles are universal across practice situations, ethical knowledge is continually evolving. In order to ensure that proficiency practitioners have an up-to-date awareness of the demands of ethical practice, we are in the process of making available to our practitioners an ethical toolkit (Appendix IV) that contributes to the literature on ethics and personality assessment. A link to this toolkit will appear on our proficiency webpage. The proficiency committee is exploring the possibility of adding a requirement for both those applying for the proficiency recognition and those seeking renewal to attest to having received one substantial exposure to training in personality assessment in the last 5 years. Our annual convention always features at least one CE credit-bearing workshop or symposium on the ethics of personality assessment. However, those not attending the convention might have difficulty accessing relevant resources. The Society for Personality Assessment is currently seeking approval to be a Home Study CE credit provider. Once this status is achieved, we will develop on-line resources to enable practitioners to obtain training in the ethics of personality assessment. At such time, it would be feasible for the Society to require such ongoing training.

1. Describe how the proficiency's practitioners assume effective and ongoing communication to members of the discipline and the public as to the proficiency's practices, practice enhancements, and/or new applications.

Communication with members of the discipline takes a number of forms. Scientific advances in Personality Assessment are communicated through several professional journals, notably the *Journal of Personality Assessment* (official publication of the Society for Personality Assessment), *Psychological Assessment* (published by the American Psychological Association), and *Assessment* (published in conjunction with Section IX, Assessment Psychology, of Division 12 (the Division of Clinical Psychology) of the American Psychological Association), along with a variety of more specialized journals applicable to particular settings (e.g., educational, organizational, forensic, Older Adults). These publications keep members of the profession informed on the latest developments in assessment techniques including new instruments, updated norms, the most recent data on reliability and validity, and the application of assessment techniques to specific populations or problem areas.
The Society for Personality Assessment also publishes and distributes to its members a semi-annual newsletter, *The Exchange*, which provides information about the activities of the Society as well as substantive articles on the teaching, ethics, and practice of Personality Assessment in various settings. Additionally, the Society also maintains a public web page, [http://www.personality.org](http://www.personality.org). This site is used to communicate with members of the Society as well as other professionals, and contains information about upcoming educational events, recent developments that affect the proficiency, and official statements of the Society regarding Personality Assessment. The site is also available for announcements from members that are of interest to practitioners.

In addition to written documents, the Annual Convention Meeting of the Society for Personality Assessment provides an opportunity for practitioners of the proficiency to learn of current developments in the science of Personality Assessment that affect service delivery. This meeting also provides continuing education workshops aimed at sharpening the skills of practitioners. In particular, a workshop on ethical practice of Personality Assessment is offered on an annual basis. SPA also co-sponsors, with other organizations (e.g., the Center for Therapeutic Assessment, National Academy of Neuropsychology, and the Michigan Psychological Association) Continuing Education workshops throughout the year on new developments in assessment practice. Other organizations, notably Section IX (assessment) of Division 12 (clinical) of the American Psychological Association and the American Board of Assessment Psychology, provide continuing education workshops and symposia in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association. For example, in the 2010 annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Division 12, Section IX, sponsored a symposium on integration of test data. Other organizations provide continuing education in their specific areas of interest (e.g., Rorschach Training Programs, MMPI-2 & RF Workshops, etc.). Finally, various professional listservs are utilized by members of the Personality Assessment practice community to discuss problems and dilemmas encountered in the practice of assessment.

In the past several years APA has offered webinars co-sponsored by the Society for Personality Assessment that have been viewed by many clinicians and graduate students. These included *Psychological Assessment in Primary Care: A Primer for Graduate Students* by John Porcerelli, PhD, *Psychological Report Writing: Resources, Research, and Strategies* by Gary Groth-Marnat, PhD, and *How Therapeutic Assessment Works: Theory and Techniques* by Stephen E. Finn, PhD, as well as two more recent webinars noted earlier in this document. SPA plans to continue this collaboration in the future and further enhancing awareness and understanding of personality and psychological assessment.

Communication with the public is equally important and is accomplished in several ways. The Society for Personality Assessment has developed a brochure describing Personality Assessment, appropriate uses and benefits, to be distributed to the lay public as well as professionals in other disciplines. In addition, the web page of the Society is continually updated and available to the lay public and contains information about Personality Assessment.

The Society for Personality Assessment also maintains a Public Affairs Office for the purpose of
educating and informing the public about Personality Assessment as well as clarifying misconceptions about the practice when these arise. The Public Affairs Office seeks to inform legislatures, judiciaries, third party health care payers, and other decision-makers of the appropriate use of Personality Assessment in various settings. For example, the office has written to legislators in those states contemplating statutes that would affect the practice of assessment to explain what assessment consists of as well as the appropriate standards for training and practice in the proficiency. Where appropriate, members of the society also communicate this information through various media outlets, including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.

Finally, the proficiency seeks to educate groups that are often consumers of Personality Assessment through participation in continuing education events. These include physicians, psychiatrists, attorneys, and judges.

2. How does your proficiency encourage the development of guidelines of practice?

In addition to the ethical guidelines that govern the practice of professional psychology in general, there are specific standards and guidelines for the competent and ethical practice of Personality Assessment. Section 9 (Assessment) of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2002, 2010) provides guidelines for the practice of assessment in various settings. The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA et al., 2014) provide additional guidance for practitioners. Furthermore, the Society for Personality Assessment has promulgated a set of standards for education and training in assessment (Society for Personality Assessment, 2006), which articulate minimum standards for competence in the practice of Personality Assessment. The Society regularly reviews these standards and revises them as appropriate.

The Society for Personality Assessment, through its Journal, Annual Scientific Meeting, and Continuing Education Workshops, seeks to develop guidelines for the practice of various aspects of assessment in different settings and to disseminate these to members of the profession. Where appropriate, the Society also publishes official position statements on aspects of the practice of Personality Assessment (Society for Personality Assessment, 2005, 2006). In addition to publication in the Journal of Personality Assessment, these position statements are made available through the Society’s web page. As part of this effort, the Society also sponsors research on new developments in assessment practice as well as funds dissertations. The results of these projects are presented at national meetings and, where appropriate, published in scientific journals.

An example of this broad effort is a project conducted in relation to assessment supervision. Dialogue between SPA and APA’s Education Directorate led to a shared recognition that guidelines for assessment supervision are lacking. The Society sponsored a competitive grant process leading to the evaluation of a number of proposals of projects that would shed light on current supervisory practices in assessment. Currently, one study has been published in the Journal for Personality Assessment (Iwanicki & Peterson, 2016) and a second manuscript will be submitted very soon. The kind of survey and qualitative data yielded from such a project serves as one foundational element in the establishment of guidelines, which will foster competent, ethical personality assessment. The Society
is continually monitoring areas of practice related to personality assessment to ascertain where further guideline development would be useful and what research might support the establishment of guidelines.

Finally, in the process of reviewing the work samples of psychological assessors, the committee has an opportunity to see where assessors might be having difficulty delivering effective products. Were the committee to identify such areas, we could propose to the board the drafting of guidelines to assist psychologists in rendering more useful services. For example, were we to find that psychologists aspiring to be deemed proficient had difficulty in integrating data from various sources, we could propose that guidelines be developed to address this problem.

References


**Criterion XI. Provider Identification and Evaluation.** The administrative organization(s) responsible for the proficiency has sound methods for evaluating competence in the proficiency and recognizing practitioners who have achieved competency.

Commentary: Identifying psychologists who are competent to practice the proficiency provides a significant service to the public. Assessing the knowledge and skill levels of these professionals helps increase the ability to improve the quality of services provided. Initially practitioners competent to practice in the proficiency may simply be identified by their successful completion of an organized sequence of education and training. As the proficiency matures it is expected that the proficiency will develop more formal structures for the recognition of competency in practitioners.

1. Describe how and by whom the proficiency identifies those who are qualified to practice in the proficiency.
Participation in the proficiency process occurs at multiple levels including applicants, the SPA Proficiency Coordinator, proficiency reviewers (identified as particularly notable in the field of personality assessment), members of the SPA proficiency committee, and members of the SPA Board of Trustees.

All licensed psychologists who provide personality assessment services are encouraged to apply for proficiency recognition. Applicants must meet minimal requirements including a doctoral degree in clinical, counseling, forensic, health, or industrial-organizational psychology (or a related health-service psychology degree), completion of internship, and postdoctoral training. Applicants must be providing personality assessment services under an active license or certification in their jurisdiction. Applicants may fall into one of several categories depending on years of experience in the field of personality assessment and related credentials. Applicants who have already demonstrated a certain standard including ABAP Diplomates or SPA Fellows have a simplified application process whereas psychologists without such credentials are asked to submit additional materials. Specific details about these application categories are described in the following section and are available via the SPA website (and the previously submitted Policies and Procedures Manual). SPA continues to enhance the advertising of the proficiency to its members and beyond. Along with readily available information on its website, SPA has developed a brochure for psychologists explaining the application and recognition process and the importance of the proficiency. This brochure has been distributed in multiple conferences so far including the APA Convention, Therapeutic Assessment Convention, The International Rorschach Convention, and The Annual MMPI Symposium. The Society will continue to reach out to additional organizations and conferences that are related to the field of personality assessment to further advertise the proficiency and encourage applications.

The Proficiency Coordinator is a position appointed by the SPA Board of Trustees and requires oversight of the application and recognition process along with advertising of the proficiency. Proficiency reviewers are licensed psychologists who have been previously recognized as proficient in personality assessment AND have demonstrated a certain level of recognized or credentialed expertise in the area, including either as SPA Fellows or ABAP Diplomates. Such credentials help ensure that reviewers have exceeded the level of proficiency, to the level of expertise, and thus are qualified to review the samples submitted by applicants. Many, although not all, reviewers, are leading figures in the field of personality assessment and have been long term SPA members who have not only participated in a multitude of trainings but have facilitated and led many of them. Three reviewers are assigned for each application and the details of the process are described in the next section as well as the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Members of the SPA Proficiency Committee are highly committed SPA members who volunteer to support the proficiency effort and work alongside the Proficiency Coordinator in developing and overseeing the application and recognition process. Some members are also SPA Board of Trustees members and others are leading figures in the field of personality assessment and long-standing SPA members who regularly present at the annual convention as well as other professional national conferences on personality assessment related issues. Finally, the SPA Board of Trustees includes SPA
members who are dedicated and highly committed to the field of personality assessment and ensuring high standards in the field. Some of the positions are appointed while others elected. Most are voluntary non-paid positions. CVs of reviewers, proficiency coordinator, committee members and Board members are available upon request.

2. Describe how and by whom the proficiency assesses the competencies of individuals who wish to be identified as practitioners in this proficiency.

SPA has taken the following steps to identify practitioners in this proficiency.

a) All ABAP certified individuals who have undergone board certification and shown expertise and excellence in the field of assessment (at a higher level than the proficiency requires) are automatically "grandfathered" in as long as they are currently providing personality assessment services under an active license.

b) All Fellows of SPA considered for being similarly "grandfathered", contingent on Board of Trustees approval. Each Fellow submits a questionnaire that documents assessment experience. A selection of proficiency reviewers approved by the Board reviews all Fellows applications and endorses those who meet requirements for final Board review and approval.

c) Regardless of their SPA membership status or lack thereof, applicants who have been providing personality assessment services as a licensed or certified psychologist for more than 5 years, submit an application, CV and sample report with testing data. Three reviewers are assigned by the Proficiency Coordinator to review their application including all materials submitted. Details of this process are described in the Proficiency Policies and Procedures Manual. Based on their determination they either endorse a candidate, or not, for recognition. Those applicants endorsed are then submitted to the Board of Trustees for final review and vote for approval of proficiency recognition. Ten of 14 Board members must vote to approve a candidate for proficiency to be awarded.

d) Regardless of their SPA membership status or lack thereof, applicants who have been providing personality assessment services as a licensed or certified psychologist for less than 5 years, submit an application, CV and sample report with testing data as noted in the item above but also include a statement from a senior assessment psychologist who can attest to their assessment skills. Such a statement is available via the Policies and Procedures Manual. The review and recognition process is the same as noted above.

SPA has developed clear and accessible guidelines for proficiency expectations, application requirements and the recognition process. Such materials are readily available on the SPA website http://www.personality.org/about/proficiency-application/. These materials include handouts as well as brief webinars. The Proficiency Coordinator is available via email to address any questions by potential applicants as well as those who have gone through the process. SPA has also developed a
couple of proficiency based workshops and in the process of developing more to address the various components of the proficiency. Proficiency based Integrative report workshops have been offered thus far at the SPA 2016 Annual convention (half day) and the 2016 APA Annual Convention (full day). This workshop has also been submitted for the 2017 APA convention. Two half day workshops (Integration and client centered report writing) are offered at the upcoming SPA 2017 Convention. SPA plans to further develop webinars and other training materials to enhance proficiency for potential applicants as well as though who may have not met proficiency. A proposal of additional proficiency-based workshops is included in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

3. Describe how and by whom the proficiency educates the public and the profession concerning those who are identified as practitioners of this proficiency. How does the public identify practitioners of the proficiency?

Those recognized as proficient are listed (with their permission) on the SPA website and available to the public. This list is currently being updated to include more information about providers and enhance access of information for public consumers and other providers. Initially SPA announced the names of persons who had recently been recognized via the Exchange newsletter. Such practice may be resumed in the future. Updates about the proficiency along with its basis and purpose together with invitations for qualified psychologists to apply are provided regularly via the Exchange newsletter and e-newsletter sent to SPA members via email. In addition, the proficiency flyer that was initially developed and distributed at various conferences and trainings that typically have potentially qualified applicants to further inform the professional community has been updated into a more informative and formal brochure (see Appendix V). SPA will continue to share this brochure and include invitations to apply for recognition in professional journals, conference presentations, and newsletters of other societies and APA Divisions (e.g., Divisions 5, 12, 13, 14, 20, 38, 39, 40, 41, & 42). A similar brochure aimed to inform the public as well as non-psychologist providers is currently in development which will also include links to the SPA website and list of those providers listed as proficient.

4. Estimate how many practitioners are qualified to practice in this proficiency (e.g., spend 25% or more of their time in services characteristic of this proficiency). Provide whatever demographic information is available.

More than 100,000 psychologists are licensed in the United States (see APA, 2014). Based on limited information available about current practitioners perhaps 10% practice personality assessment at the level that would qualify them to apply for the proficiency.

There are currently approximately 65 psychologists recognized as proficient. Specific estimates for how many qualify are difficult to determine. Among relevant facts, however, the Society for Personality Assessment includes approximately 1,200 members (excluding student members), and survey data indicate that: a) assessment is the second most frequent service provided by clinical psychologists in various settings, after psychotherapy (Phelps, Eisman, & Kohout, 1998); b) psychologists working in independent practice or in health care or government settings spend 15-23%
of their time doing assessment (Phelps et al., 1998); and c) of the 10 psychological tests most widely used by clinical psychologists, six are Personality Assessment measures, with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory ranking 2nd in frequency of use, the Rorschach Inkblot Method ranking 4th, and the Thematic Apperception Test ranking 6th (Hogan, 2005).

5. Estimate how many practitioners are qualified to practice in this proficiency (e.g., spend 25% or more of their time in services characteristic of this proficiency), and whose primary practice is not within the discipline of psychology (i.e. Pharmacists). Provide whatever demographic information is available.

Practitioners who are not psychologists are not qualified to practice in this proficiency, so the answer to the question asked is none. As psychological assessment is exclusively under the purview of psychologists, this proficiency is exclusively for psychologists who already have a license as a Psychologist in their state and meet the other noted requirements. This is not a proficiency that would be offered to anyone outside the discipline.

References


http://www.personality.org/about/proficiency-application/

END OF PETITION FORM
Standards for Education and Training in Psychological Assessment: Position of the Society for Personality Assessment

An Official Statement of the Board of Trustees of the Society for Personality Assessment

The Society for Personality Assessment is a national and international professional organization devoted to research and practice in the field of psychological assessment. As such, it represents practitioners of assessment regardless of discipline or degree.

It is the position of the Society that psychological assessment is a specialty that requires intensive and ongoing education and training to be practiced competently and ethically and in order to protect the public. At a minimum, practitioners should adhere to the appropriate standards for educational and psychological testing (American Educational Research Association, et al., 1999; Turner, et al., 2001). With the pressure of managed care for diversified services, and the burgeoning of shorter degree programs for mental health practitioners, the likelihood that more inadequately trained individuals will begin to practice assessment has increased. Indeed, there have been recent efforts in several states to downgrade the level of professional expertise required to practice assessment by including assessment as a generic service under most or all mental health licenses. While many such programs include education and training in assessment, this is not required for licensure in disciplines other than psychology in most states.

This document will articulate the rationale that psychological assessment, which heretofore has been a specialty within psychology, is not a generic mental health service and set forth standards for education and training in this area.

I. Need for Standards for Education and Training in Psychological Assessment

Psychological assessment is a complex specialty within psychological practice that requires specific training. Psychotherapy training alone does not prepare the practitioner to provide psychological assessment. Practitioners of competent assessment must be conversant with methods of test construction and the theory of measurement. They must understand the strengths and limitations of particular psychological tests and instruments as well as the proper ways of administering them, interpreting them, and integrating them into a coherent and clinically relevant report.

It is important to appreciate the difference between two aspects of clinical evaluation that are commonly confused: appraisal and psychological assessment. By appraisal we refer to either informal assessments of patient problems or the use of rating scales that produce single scores with very specific interpretations. Psychological assessment, on the other hand, is a complex task that involves the integration of information from multiple sources, including psychological tests, to answer complex clinical questions. This distinction is important to clarify what has been confusion about precisely what constitutes “appraisal” and what constitutes “assessment.” Although all clinicians appraise their clients informally and many use rating scales and other unidimensional instruments, psychological assessment involves the use of psychological tests and techniques to derive a complex, detailed, in-depth understanding of an individual from multiple data sources to facilitate diagnosis, treatment, and/or outcome. Integrating the complex information from these instruments and tech-
niques requires specialized expertise and training in order to analyze and formulate the findings competently.

Inappropriate or untrained use of psychological assessment instruments exposes patients to harm. Unreliable or invalid conclusions drawn from psychological assessment can be more dangerous than ineffective psychotherapy for four reasons:

1. Psychological assessment typically involves a relatively brief encounter with the client. As a consequence, the possibility for serious misinterpretations is magnified. Therapists typically have many hours to get to know an individual, thus improving on the possibility of eventually making an accurate diagnosis. In addition, for the same reason, there is a greater likelihood that a client can recognize inadequate treatment and make a change. By contrast, assessments typically occur over the course of one to three sessions, so the opportunity to correct an inaccurate diagnosis or inference on the basis of subsequent information is far less. Furthermore, by the time a client notices that the assessor has erred, the assessment is likely to be concluded.

2. Psychological test reports usually become a permanent part of an individual’s medical record and are likely to follow him or her throughout his or her life, carrying with them the imprimatur of scientific fact. While ineffective or poorly conducted psychotherapy can be harmful, it is less likely to leave the kind of record that will influence subsequent medical decisions about the client. The record of treatment will be more easily viewed as the opinion of a single individual and therefore held with less certainty. In addition, psychotherapy notes are more protected under privacy regulations than are the results of psychological assessment.

3. Psychological assessments lead to important decisions about clients’ lives. While such assessments are typically used to inform treatment decisions, they can be used in other ways as well. In addition to informing decisions about what kind of psychological, neurological, or psychiatric treatment—including the need for hospitalization—to pursue, psychological assessment is used in other contexts that can significantly influence high-stakes outcomes in the life of an individual or family. Such decisions include: assessing dangerousness, awarding or denying disability benefits or access to special education services, and offering or denying employment or security clearance. Psychological assessment also plays an important role in informing courts and other bodies in various matters concerning decisions as to whether or not an individual is to be awarded or denied custody of his or her children, compensated for alleged emotional trauma as part of civil damages, incarcerated, or put to death. Inadequately trained psychological assessors can have a profound impact on the lives of individuals well beyond the sphere of mental health treatment.

4. Society as a whole is harmed both by inappropriate decisions made about individual clients as well as by the loss of confidence in professional judgment resulting from psychological assessment errors.

II. Education and Training Standards for Competent Practice

Comprehensive education and training are essential for competence in psychological assessment. Assessment requires both specific knowledge and specific training that are not merely an extension of general psychological or psychotherapeutic principles. The following are minimal requirements for competence in assessment:

Education: Two or more courses of graduate education in psychological assessment with additional coursework in psychopathology, diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders as a pre- or corequisite. More education and training is necessary in order to conduct neuropsychological assessments. This coursework should include both didactic instruction and practical experience in the following:

- Psychometric theory, including issues of reliability, validity, reference group norms, limits of generalizability, and test construction.
- Theories of intelligence and human cognition, including the role of race and ethnicity in intellectual evaluation and the administration and interpretation of cognitive assessment instruments.
- Theory, administration, and interpretation of performance-based measures of personality such as the Rorschach and major projective tests.
- Theory, administration, and interpretation of major self-report inventories, such as the MMPI-2 or the PAI, including the applicability of specific population norms to individual clients.
- Appropriate selection of instruments to answer specific referral questions and the construction of a test battery.
- Integration of data from multiple data sources, including interview, psychometric tests, and collateral sources.
- Communication of assessment results to different referring individuals and agencies and feedback to clients themselves.
- Relationship between assessment and treatment.

Training: Supervised practicum, internship, and post-term degree training in psychological assessment is also essential for the development of competence. This training should include regular administration of assessment batteries under the supervision of a licensed professional with expertise in assessment throughout the education and training period.

Attainment of minimum education and training requirements in psychological assessment is necessary for entry-
level practice. These minimum standards should not be confused with the necessity for the mental health practitioner to develop competent and ethical practice, which can only be obtained through seeking additional educational and training opportunities through workshops, consultation, and coursework. As is true for any area of mental health practice, it is the responsibility of practitioners to hone their skills, develop new techniques, and remain current with developments in the field.

III. Conclusion

Practitioners of any mental health discipline can, in theory, fulfill the educational and training requirements necessary to become proficient in assessment. With this said, historically it is doctoral level psychologists who have received such education in the normal course of their training and who have conducted the bulk of research that serves as the underpinning for competent practice of psychological testing and of assessment training models. It is our position that anyone wishing to practice assessment needs to be held to these standards of training and education in order to protect the public from the adverse impact of incompetent psychological assessment. As mentioned above, practitioners should adhere to appropriate ethical standards. Additionally, Section 9 (Assessment) of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2002) provides well-elaborated guidelines for the practice of assessment. For any state to give its imprimatur to the practice of assessment on the part of a group of mental health professionals who do not possess the education and training outlined above risks exposing the public to significant unnecessary risk.

REFERENCES

January 14, 2017

Stephen D. Rosenthal, Ph.D.
Chair, Commission for Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies
In Professional Psychology (CRSPPP)
American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002-4242

Re: Petition for Recognition of Personality Assessment as a Proficiency

Dear Dr. Rosenthal,

I am writing on behalf of the American Board of Assessment Psychology (ABAP) to extend our full endorsement of the Society for Personality Assessment's petition to renew the status of personality assessment as a professional psychology proficiency. SPA is the premier national organization of professional psychologists involved in personality assessment and upholds the highest standards of training, practice, and research in this area. ABAP shares these standards and recognizes that competent assessment involves developing a unique and extensive set of knowledge and skills.

In placing importance on high quality assessment as an essential component of our professional identity, we recognize that acquiring proficiency in this area requires considerable development beyond the foundational training provided in graduate school and internship. We are therefore in complete agreement with SPA and appreciate their ongoing effort of encouraging psychologists to achieve this recognition status.

I respectfully ask that you and your committee give SPA's application your fullest consideration. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please note we have recently moved to Suite 106 at the same address listed below.

Sincerely,

Alan J. Raphael, Ph.D., ABAP
President, American Board of Assessment Psychology
Co-Editor, Archives of Assessment Psychology
Past Recipient, Division 12 Award for Unique Contribution
To the Advancement of Assessment Psychology
1-305-389-4400; 1-305-372-0010 x 207
araphael@assessmentpsychologyboard.org

1581 Brickell Avenue, Suite 905, Miami, Florida 33129
Tel. (305) 372-0010 x 207 Fax (305) 374-TEST email: araphael@assessmentpsychologyboard.org • www.assessmentpsychologyboard.org
12/14/16

To: Chair, Commission for Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies  
In Professional Psychology (CRSPPP), American Psychological Association  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002-4242

Re: Petition for Continuation of Recognition of Personality Assessment as a Proficiency

Dear CRSPPP Chair:

I am writing on behalf of Division 12 Section IX (Assessment Psychology) to extend my full endorsement of the Society for Personality Assessment's petition to continue to include personality assessment as a professional psychology proficiency. SPA is the premier national organization of professional psychologists involved in personality assessment and upholds the highest standards of training, practice, and research in this area. Section IX shares these high standards, emphasizes that assessment work should be of the highest quality, and recognizes that competent assessment involves developing a unique and extensive set of knowledge and skills.

Section IX's mission statement reflects on the fact that clinical assessment is the unique contribution made by psychologists in the field of mental health and is vitally important to such areas as diagnostic, forensic, neuropsychological, and psychoeducational applications. In placing importance on high quality assessment as an essential component of our professional identity, we recognize that acquiring competency in this area often requires considerable development beyond the foundational training provided in graduate school and internship. We have therefore truly valued the efforts of SPA in the proficiency process, and we have collaborated with SPA to materialize our common goals of advancing the science and practice of assessment psychology at the level that in my opinion meets the definition of a proficiency.

I ask you to give SPA's continuation application your fullest consideration. If you require any further information from me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A. Jordan Wright, Ph.D., ABAP  
President, Division 12 Section IX
Maintenance and Renewal of Proficiency Status

The Society for Personality Assessment

General guidelines:

- Psychologists who are recognized as proficient must renew their proficiency status every 5 years to verify the maintenance of their skill set.
- Maintaining the level of proficiency recognized via initial application is similar to the expected maintenance of competence for licensure.
- All psychology regulatory bodies have a responsibility to the public to ensure the ongoing competence and high standards of practice for psychologists.
- All licensed psychologists are expected to periodically demonstrate that they have maintained the competencies needed for their areas of practice so that they continue to practice safely and with the high standards required of psychologists (MOCAL paper).
- The renewal process is simpler and quicker than the original application and primarily entails completing an affirmation with a brief questionnaire and a modest processing fee.

Maintenance of competence expectations in Personality Assessment:

- Psychologists are expected to stay current and up to date with instruments utilized, scoring and interpretation procedures, updated norms especially with respect to certain populations, demographics, and settings.
- Psychologists are also expected to continue practice within the boundaries of their competence and to follow all ethical guidelines provided in the field of psychological assessment.
- Finally, psychologists are expected to maintain their competence and proficiency status by participating in various professional development activities, as described below.

Overview of process:

- Automatic email reminders will be sent via database as expiration dates approach
- Applicants complete the affirmation and pay a processing fee ($20)
- Renewal applications are reviewed by the SPA Proficiency Coordinator
  - If there are no concerns, renewal will be approved and certificate issued by SPA Central Office.
  - If there are concerns, renewal application will be brought to the attention of the Proficiency Committee/SPA Board of Trustees for a decision.
- If a psychologist opts not to renew, an optional survey and request for explanation will be sent. This is for SPA’s information only, in an effort to improve the proficiency process.
- Those who choose not to renew their proficiency, are rejected, or no longer qualify for proficiency, will be removed from the SPA website list of proficient psychologists.
Cost:
  - A late renewal will result in a $25 fee in addition to $20 processing fee.

Renewal application:

1. Has there been any change to your licensure status since your original application?

   Yes, please explain ________________________  No

2. Do you continue to provide personality assessment services (conducting assessment, assessment consultation, teaching, or supervising assessment)?

   Yes  No, please explain ________________________

3. Since your original application, have you been the subject of any ethical complaints?

   Yes, please explain ________________________  No

4. In the past 5 years, have you participated in at least 20 hours of formal professional development activities* in the area of personality or psychological assessment?

   Yes  No, please explain ________________________

   4a. Have at least 6 of those hours addressed diversity issues?

   Yes  No, please explain ________________________

   4b. Have at least 6 of those hours addressed ethics issues?

   Yes  No, please explain ________________________

5. Have you kept up to date with administration, scoring, and interpretation procedures for assessment measures you utilize in your practice?

   Yes  No, please explain ________________________

By clicking on the ‘submit’ button, renewal applicants will be certifying that the information provided is true and correct.

*Formal professional development activities related to assessment may include any of the following:

- Completion of or leading Continuing Education workshop or symposia (in-person, online, or via home study)
- Publication or formal editorial reviews of peer-reviewed articles
- Attending conferences
- Viewing webinars
- Teaching a relevant course
- Providing supervision
- Receiving or providing peer consultation
Toolkit on Ethics in Personality Assessment

The Society for Personality Assessment

Virginia Brabender and Linda Knauss

Note: This resource list does not include the general ethical resources that exist for psychological assessment or psychological practice in general. Featured are those resources that speak to personality assessment, in whole or in part.

Webinar


Newsletter Articles

Knauss, L.K. (2017). What every psychologist needs to know about research ethics. 
SPA Exchange, 29(1), 4,12,13.


**Journal articles and book chapters**


SPA offers psychologists the opportunity to get formally recognized as proficient in personality assessment.

Apply Online at:
http://www.personality.org/about/proficiency-application/

Personality Assessment is a recognized proficiency by the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP).
Proficiency in Personality Assessment

What is a Proficiency?
➢ The APA’s Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP) describes a proficiency as a distinct procedure, technique, or applied skill set in professional psychology within which one develops competence.

Why is Proficiency Important?
➢ Provides a basic set of expectations for all licensed psychologists providing personality assessment services
➢ Supports the concept of using assessment to understand the “whole person”
➢ Establishes a standard of practice intended to provide accurate and helpful assessments

The Proficiency in Personality Assessment
➢ Available via the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA)
➢ Entails the use of empirically-supported measures of personality and psychological functioning in various settings to foster understanding and inform interventions and behavioral prediction
➢ Requires meaningful integration of information from multiple sources into a written report that provides a basis for useful feedback

The Application and Recognition Process
➢ Submit a Curriculum Vita, a summary of training in personality assessment, and a de-identified assessment report
➢ Materials are reviewed by three psychologists with established expertise in assessment
➢ Receive detailed feedback on report utilizing a formal review form
➢ Reviewers make a recommendation to the SPA Board whether the applicant is deemed proficient
➢ Approval by SPA Board of Trustees for formal recognition
➢ Receive a certificate and have credentials available on the SPA website
➢ No consequences if not deemed proficient and can reapply at any time

Why get Recognized?
➢ A formal way to verify your skills for colleagues, third party providers, and clients
➢ Enhance the field of assessment by maintaining adequate standards of practice

To find out more information, including cost, go to: www.personality.org