

EuroPsych project

The European Diploma in Psychology

This consultation paper comes from a project group funded by the European Union (EU) under its Leonardo da Vinci programme, and working during the period 2001-2004 to develop a European Diploma in Psychology. This document provides summary information concerning the proposal to establish a European Diploma in Psychology which will serve as a European standard or benchmark, will promote the high quality of the profession of psychology, and which will facilitate mobility amongst psychologists across the countries of Europe. A number of issues have been highlighted in this document, followed by specific questions. These issues relate to the draft Regulations and their Appendices which are available on the website www.europsych.org. Please respond to the consultation document before December 31 2003. The proposals are being subject to wide consultation with a number of stakeholders; these include: national associations of psychology, universities, topical or sectoral associations of psychology, regulatory bodies and relevant government departments. Responses should be directed to the member of the project team in your country (see list in the EDP proposal), or if necessary to the project director Professor Ingrid Lunt at i.lunt@ioe.ac.uk.

Introduction

The present time provides a major opportunity to create a European standard which will develop and promote the quality of the profession, not only in the interests of clients but also of professional psychologists themselves. A number of factors contribute to create this opportunity at the present time.

There is a general strategy within the EU to do more for the protection of consumers. There is also a growing commitment within EU and some individual countries to move towards definition of professionals in terms of their competences, rather than simply their level of education. These developments coincide with moves within EU to revise the Directives concerning professional qualifications and mobility, and to develop a single Directive to replace the previous 'sectoral' and 'general' directives under 89/48/EEC. There is also within Europe an increase in the number of countries which have developed their own legal regulation of the profession of psychology.

Thus there is a clear need within countries within EU and in the wider membership of the European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA) to consider what are the basic expectations that a client, as well as colleagues can have about the academic education and professional training of the psychologist, and the competences that a psychologist can be expected to have.

A number of benefits of the development of the proposal for the European Diploma in Psychology (EDP) have been identified. These include the following:

(i) *Transparency for clients*

Clients across Europe will get a better view of psychologists' qualifications

(ii) *Quality*

A European accreditation of the quality of training and qualification;

Revalidation will require maintenance of competence and continuing professional development;

EDP guarantees theoretical, methodological and domain diversity in the curriculum;

Standards will be raised;

EDP will be a guarantee of quality for professionals.

(iii) *Mobility*

Ease of recognition of qualifications in other countries

(iv) *Development of the profession in Europe*

Increased co-operation between practitioners in Europe

Need for co-operation between national associations in ensuring the rights of members working abroad

Transparency of countries' programmes

(v) *Development of the profession within individual countries*

EDP will be a means of collaboration with universities

EDP might enhance the clarifications of specialisations

EDP might help to raise standards within some countries

(vi) *Work opportunities*

Clients may eventually choose an EDP holder in preference to someone holding a national diploma only, especially where the national diploma has been obtained without supervised practice.

(vii) *Status*

Prestige of universities associated with EDP

Prestige of professional associations within EFPA

(viii) *Student recruitment*

Opportunity to develop best practice and to develop curricula and training in relation to Bologna Declaration

The Nature of the European Diploma in Psychology (EDP)

The current proposal is for a European Diploma in Psychology (EDP) which provides a set of standards or a benchmark regarding the professional qualifications of psychologists in Europe.

Thus the European Diploma in Psychology is intended to provide:

- a common curriculum framework (for 'benchmarking' of university curricula)
- a standard or benchmark (to provide a European-wide quality standard)
- a part of a European 'platform' i.e. a form of 'translation mechanism' or 'dictionary' which might be used as a standard to compare individual qualifications with a common European standard and state in which way a particular qualification differs from that standard. If this is the case, it will be a task in future to define clearly the compensatory measures which are needed on the national level to meet the standard

The EDP will promote a high quality standard. It will not replace existing national qualifications or regulations, and it respects national arrangements for the education, training and regulation of the profession. It is intended that the EDP should provide the accepted/recognized European 'standard' to which all countries should aspire and which entitles the holder to the title EurPsych, and which is easily recognised in relation to individual countries' systems. It is envisaged that in the long run national regulations may be adapted bringing greater convergence to a common standard across Europe.

Aim of this document

The aim of this document is to highlight the key elements of the proposal for the European Diploma in psychology and to support the process of consultation. The key elements of the proposal will be listed and clarified below. We are asking for a statement on current practices and for an evaluation. We are also asking you to provide comments and suggestions on any other part of the proposal.

Proposals

1. The European Diploma in Psychology

A system is proposed in which a distinction is made between a basic EDP, which specifies the requirements for entry into the profession, and an Advanced EDP, which defines requirements concerning specialised professional activities. This proposal addresses only the basic EDP. The basic EDP, referred to here as the proposed Diploma, posits certain standards concerning the academic curriculum and supervised practice.

Questions:

1A. How would the standards for the curriculum and supervised practice implied in the proposed Diploma fit your national system?

Choices:

1. The EDP proposal fits with your national situation:

Yes

No

2. The EDP proposal fits in the main with your national system:

Yes

No

The national system does not completely meet the standard in some points. Therefore some compensatory measures would be necessary, please describe:

Phase 1:	Phase 2:	Phase 3:

Or:

Phase 1+Phase 2: 5 years of academic study:	Phase 3:

3. The EDP proposal's level of training (6 years of education and training) fits with your national system:

But there are problems of narrowness vs. breadth of the concept "psychologist" (e.g. the national health regulations do not allow anyone to use the title "psychologist" if he/she cannot show any evidence of competence in the health context) – this would then have consequences to what kind of EDPs would be automatically accepted by the national system.

Yes

No

If there are substantial differences between the EDP proposal and your national system, please describe them – if possible in relation to the 3 phases:

Phase 1:	Phase 2:	Phase 3:

1B. Would the standards of the proposed Diploma facilitate developments within your own country?

Yes

No

How could this standard facilitate developments within your own country?
Please describe as concretely as possible:

1C. Do you support the standards of the proposed Diploma?

Yes

No

2. Professional contexts

The principle adopted is that competences of psychologists tend to be bounded and that clients should be informed about these boundaries. A distinction is proposed between the three main professional contexts of clinical/health, educational, work and organisational, plus a fourth context which may reflect practising psychologists working in contexts outside the main three. Although professional practice is typically differentiated, academic preparation is not necessarily so, and some countries provide a curriculum which is in part differentiated, while others provide a more generic curriculum.

Questions:

2A. Is the basic qualification in your country generic or differentiated?

2B. Which areas of practice (i.e. professional contexts) are distinguished in your country?

2C. Are the three areas mentioned meaningful as areas of practice for basic qualification?

Work & Organ Yes No Unclear

Education Yes No Unclear

Health care Yes No Unclear

2D. Are there in your national system further regulations to consider at the moment or in future/planned?

Yes No Unclear

2E. Do you support this aspect of the proposed Diploma?

Yes No

3. Dependent and Independent Practice

In the proposed Diploma there is a distinction between dependent practice, in which the psychologist works under the responsibility of a fully qualified psychologist, and independent practice in which the psychologist carries responsibility and is fully qualified him/herself. According to the proposed Diploma a psychologist who holds the EDP can be considered qualified for dependent practice in any area of psychology, and for independent practice in the specific area (professional context) in which competence has been demonstrated. There are some restrictions to this rule: qualification for independent practice would not apply in the case of more restrictive national regulations or when an advanced Diploma is required for practice in a particular context.

Questions:

3A. Is there a distinction between dependent and independent practice in your country?

Yes

No

3B. How would the proposed Diploma fit into your national context?

3C. Do you support this aspect of the proposed Diploma?

Yes

No

4. The Register

The principle adopted is that the EDP should be fully transparent for all who are dealing with psychologists. Thus it is proposed that a Register of European Psychologists will be maintained. Psychologists on this Register will meet the minimal standards of education and professional competence as stated in the Diploma regulations.

Questions:

4A. Do you have a Register of professionally qualified and licensed psychologists in your country?

1. Administered by the state or some other official body:

Yes No

Name: _____

2. Administered by the member association:

Yes No

Name: _____

3. Otherwise/Unclear _____

4B. How would the proposed Diploma fit into your national context (of registration)?

4C. Would you support the existence of a European Register?

1. Administered by EFPA

Yes Unclear

No Please explain:

2. Administered by the EU

Yes Unclear

No Please explain:

5. Recognition

5A. How is the process of recognition of the title “psychologist” handled in your national system at the moment for persons coming from other European countries? *(please tick one)*

1. By an official body/by the state
2. By the professional association
3. Otherwise
4. Unclear

5B. How is the procedure organised? *(please tick one)*

1. Clearly defined procedure (where to apply, what are the possible compensation measures, and with fixed deadlines for response to the applicant)
2. Individually adjusted procedure, but with fixed deadlines for response to the applicant
3. Unclear procedure

5C. Is there an official complaint procedure in the case of problems with the applications?

Yes No

Name: _____

6. Revalidation and CPD

The principle is that professional competence declines unless it is actively maintained. Thus in order for a psychologist to remain competent, Continuing Professional Development is needed. This implies that the EDP will lose its validity after 7 years. Revalidation depends on evidence of maintenance of professional competence, through a minimum amount of practice in the preceding period and a minimum amount of professional development.

Questions:

6A. What is the current practice in your country concerning CPD?

6B. Would this system of CPD work in your country?

Yes

No

6C. Are there existing revalidation procedures in your national system at the moment:

Yes

No

Prepared or planned for the future: _____

Please describe the revalidation models which already exist, or are being prepared or planned.

7. Supervised practice

The principle is that while knowledge and skills can be acquired in academic education, the majority of professional competences require learning in practice. Supervised practice is a major tool to ensure that the necessary competences are acquired. At present requirements for supervised practice and the criteria for who might supervise vary considerably across European countries. The development of a European standard provides the opportunity to enhance practice in this area. In the EDP currently the only requirement for being a supervisor is to have two years of independent practice.

Questions:

7A. Does your country have any requirement for supervised practice prior to qualification for independent practice as a psychologist?

Yes

No

Unclear

7B. Do you support this aspect of the proposed Diploma?

Yes

No

7C. What are the rules and requirements for supervision in your country?

7D. Is supervision part of the demanded compensatory measures for an “adaptation period” to gain the status an independent practitioner in psychology in your country?

Yes

No

Unclear

Please describe:

7E. Are there any specific requirements for the right to use the title of a “supervisor” or to practise supervision within professional psychology?

Yes

No

Unclear

Please describe:

8. Immigration

Questions:

8A. What requirements have to be met by psychologists from other countries who wish to practise in your country?

8B. How would the proposed Diploma change this situation?

8C. Do you support this aspect of the proposed Diploma?

Yes

No

9. Emigration

Questions:

9A. What requirements are required to be met by psychologists from your country who wish to practise in another European country?

9B. How would the proposed Diploma change this situation?

10. Other comments

Please make other comments in relation to the proposal below.