



Society for Personality Assessment  
since 1938

# PROFICIENCY IN PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

## PART I: AN OVERVIEW

# PROFICIENCY IN PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

- The American Psychological Association (APA) officially recognizes Personality Assessment as a Proficiency in professional psychology.

## WHAT IS A PROFICIENCY?

- The Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP) defines a Proficiency as:

“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.”

- <http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/personality.aspx>

## PROFICIENCY COMPONENTS

The Proficiency in Personality Assessment involves (but is not limited to):

- The administration, scoring, and interpretation of empirically supported measures of personality traits and styles in a variety of contexts and settings (e.g., clinical, forensic, organizational, educational) in order to
  - refine clinical diagnoses,
  - structure and inform psychological interventions,
  - increase the accuracy of behavioral prediction

## COMPONENTS CONTINUED

- Meaningful integration of information from multiple data sources, including personality tests and additional assessment measures, into coherent and relevant written reports that facilitate appropriate interventions and provide a basis for verbal feedback that is clear, useful and responsive to the client or patient

## THE SOCIETY FOR PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

- Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) is committed to the field of personality assessment and focused on increasing the competence and proficiency of psychologists providing service in our field.
- SPA completed a lengthy application process with APA to have personality assessment formally recognized as a proficiency.
- A proficiency committee via SPA has developed a formal application and recognition process for the proficiency.

## PROFICIENCY PURPOSE

- The main purpose of the proficiency is to help establish and maintain an acceptable minimal standard or expectation for personality assessment services, as reflected by a written report, for the protection of public consumers from poor quality or even harmful assessment services.

## CLARIFICATION

- The proficiency is not a credential like a board certification in that it does not grant privileges. However, because it attests to competence in personality assessment, it is useful to report in various assessment work contexts.

# Proficiency Qualification & Benefits

## WHO QUALIFIES

To qualify to apply for proficiency, a psychologist:

- 1) must be licensed in the state in which they practice or have a certificate to practice and
  - 2) must be currently providing personality assessment services to the public
- *The proficiency is not limited to SPA members*

## PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT SERVICES

- Assessment services may include:
  - Conducting personality assessments
  - Assessment consultation
  - Teaching and supervising assessments (even though less direct)

## WHO DOES NOT QUALIFY

- Since the proficiency is focused on demonstrating certain skills in the interest of protecting the public and consumers, those who are primarily involved with assessment research and scholarship do not qualify for the proficiency.
- This is not to say that such individuals are not competent or proficient in personality assessment.
- The same goes for those who are no longer practicing assessment due to retirement or other reasons.

## BENEFITS OF PROFICIENCY RECOGNITION

- By participating in the proficiency process, you are helping to ensure the maintenance of standards for personality assessment.
- You are also aiding in developing the public's recognition of personality assessment as a valuable service psychologists provide.

## BENEFITS CONTINUED

- Upon being deemed proficient, you will have a means to communicate to professional colleagues and members of the public information about your own competence and personality assessment skills.

## What are some professionals in the field saying about the proficiency?

Those of us who work and train in this area know that proficiency in personality assessment is not simply a by-product of, nor is it guaranteed by earning a doctoral degree in clinical or counseling psychology. Rather, it requires specialized didactic and practical training in the integrative process of personality assessment. I was very pleased to see SPA successfully pursue recognition of Personality Assessment as a proficiency and appreciate the organization's spearheading implementation of the proficiency recognition process. I encourage anyone doing work in this area, whether relatively new to the field, or a seasoned veteran, to pursue recognition of proficiency in personality assessment.

Yossef S. Ben-Porath  
Kent State University



Although the proficiency status is voluntary and has no ramifications for licensing at the moment, I believe it enhances the reputation of personality assessment and supports the idea that expertise in personality assessment is an achievement we can be proud of.

Stephen Finn

Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin Texas

(SPA Exchange Winter 2014)

Having personality assessment represented as a proficiency by APA is an excellent step toward ensuring quality of assessment in the field. Not only does it recognize a baseline level of performance in assessment, but it actually sets up a standard for training and supervision of assessment at the doctoral level, which has lacked consistency for far too long.

A. Jordan Wright

President Section IX

Co-Author of the *Handbook of Personality Assessment* 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

## RESOURCES AND LINKS

- Please visit the SPA website for additional information including an overview of the proficiency, how to apply, and the recognition process: <http://www.personality.org/about/proficiency-application/>
- You can also contact the SPA Proficiency Coordinator at: [proficiency@spaonline.org](mailto:proficiency@spaonline.org)

