

## Criterion I. Distinctiveness

**A proficiency differs from other proficiencies or similar psychological procedures in its body of knowledge and professional application relevant to one or more parameters of practice and provides evidence of these distinctions with respect to the parameters of practice specified in Criterion III and with regard to training and education specified in Criterion II to follow.**

### **1. Proposed title of new proficiency:**

Personality Assessment

### **2. Provide a brief description of the proficiency (e.g., one or two sentences that would adequately describe the proficiency for the public.)**

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

### **3. Provide a detailed description of how this proposed proficiency differs from and is similar to existing proficiency practices. The comparison and differentiation must cover the parameters of practice that are identified as defining the proficiency in Criterion III below: a) specific population(s), b) psychological, biological, or social problem, c) procedure and techniques.**

#### Distinctiveness of Personality Assessment

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 Cates, 1999; Handler & Meyer, 1998).

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 the 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 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 psychological test data 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 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.

#### Overlap with Existing Proficiencies

Personality Assessment's goals, body of knowledge, and the skills required to be proficient in this area overlap modestly with four recognized proficiencies: *Clinical Gerontology, Assessment and Treatment of Serious Mental Illness, Police Psychology, and Treatment of Alcohol and other Substance Use Disorders*. In these four areas Personality Assessment data are used to obtain information regarding individuals' current psychological functioning that can then be used to guide and structure interventions. In addition, in all four areas, Personality Assessment may be used to help measure intervention effectiveness; by contrasting pre- and post-intervention assessment data, salient domains of outcome may be quantified.

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

#### 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*. As described under Criterion III, Personality Assessment is applicable to a wide range of ages, ethnic 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 (Millon & Grossman, 2007; 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, 2003; 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.

- *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.
- *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

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## **Criterion II. Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills**

**A proficiency is defined by a core of psychological knowledge and skills, and includes specific methods for how psychologists who practice in the proficiency typically acquire its knowledge and skills.**

- 1. For each of the parameters of practice identified above, provide a brief description of the content of the didactic experience (psychology prerequisites to the training program, course descriptions, learning objectives, teaching methods, syllabi, books, or articles) and supervised practice experiences required to assure qualification for the proficiency and how psychology's scientific substrate provides a foundation for the proposed proficiency.**

### a) Specific populations

Psychologists proficient in Personality Assessment are familiar with the strengths and limitations of particular assessment techniques and instruments in working with a particular population of interest. Thus, when working with child or geriatric populations; with criminal populations or with civil litigants; with cultural, ethnic, or linguistic minorities; with disabled persons; 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. 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. Training in working with specific populations must include familiarity with applicable guidelines (e.g., AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999; 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). Specific methods of teaching multiculturally sensitive Personality Assessment are also addressed in the literature (e.g. Dana, Aguilar-Ktibutr, Diaz-Vivar, & Vetter, 2002). 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.

#### b) Psychological, biological, and social problems

Proficiency in Personality Assessment requires competence in the application of findings from Personality Assessment data to the analysis, amelioration, or resolution of psychological, biological, and social problems. Such problems are encountered in a wide range of settings, as described below in Criterion III, including inpatient and outpatient psychiatric treatment settings, medical settings, legal or forensic settings, educational settings, geriatric and rehabilitation settings, and occupational/employment settings. Over and above their general training in Personality Assessment, proficient psychologists obtain specialized competence in the application of Personality Assessment findings to the particular problems that are commonly seen in the specific settings in which they practice assessment. Whereas some graduate coursework and internship experience may provide a foundation for such specialized competence (e.g., in clinical, educational, forensic, health, industrial-organizational, or rehabilitation psychology programs), supervised experience in the particular field of application and continuing education through relevant workshops and symposia (e.g., in geriatric assessment, educational assessment, fitness for duty evaluations) are essential in order to develop and extend such competence and remain up to date with current developments. The Society for Personality Assessment strives to provide a wide range of continuing educational opportunities annually in the application of Personality Assessment to diverse problems and settings. SPA's journal, the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, from time to time devotes special issues to particular areas of application—e.g., Personality Assessment in Psychotherapy (83[3]); Personality Assessment in Medical Settings (89[3])

#### c) Procedures and Techniques

The achievement of proficiency in Personality Assessment requires assessment coursework, supervised practice in applied settings, and continuing education. Those proficient in Personality Assessment must master the following skills: interviewing and case conceptualization; selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment instruments appropriate to specific populations and problems; integration of information from multiple data sources, including personality tests, into coherent and relevant reports that facilitate appropriate interventions and estimate likely outcomes; and provision of feedback that is clear, useful, and responsive to the client.

The core knowledge, skills, and attitudes that define Personality Assessment are acquired in a sequential and graded fashion through formal coursework and practical training in graduate school, and further developed and refined during the predoctoral internship, supervised field placement, and/or post-doctoral specialization. To assure eventual qualification for proficiency in Personality Assessment, we recommend that clinical, counseling, and health psychology graduate students take two or more courses in Personality Assessment with additional coursework in psychopathology, diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders as a pre- or co-requisite. Graduate students in non-clinical specialties (e.g., educational, industrial-organizational) should take two or more courses in Personality Assessment as well as equivalent coursework in its applications appropriate to their areas of specialty (e.g., for those who plan to work primarily with employed populations in the workplace, see the SIOP doctoral education guidelines, 1999). Regardless of specialty, this coursework should include both didactic instruction and practical experience in the following:

- Mastering elements of psychometric theory, including issues of reliability, validity, reference group norms, limits of generalizability, and test construction.
- Exposure to 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.
- Developing competence in the theory, administration, and interpretation of performance-based measures of personality such as the Rorschach and major projective tests.
- Developing competence in the 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.
- Appreciation of the relationship between assessment and intervention.
- Awareness of ethics, laws, and regulations pertaining to Personality Assessment in general and in particular settings.

The core competencies that underlie proficiency in Personality Assessment generally are based on the criteria listed in Domain B of the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology (G & P)* (APA, 2008). Every APA-accredited doctoral program is required to demonstrate that students acquire competence in psychological assessment and measurement. Other knowledge areas that underlie Personality Assessment's scientific basis (i.e., research methods, statistics, psychometric theory, and diversity) are required to be part of an accredited program's curriculum. Consistent with the *G & P*, this competency is expected to be evident both in coursework and in the practicum training as part of the doctoral program's curriculum. Assessment has been recognized as a core competency in the training of professional psychologists by one of the major training councils (National Council of Schools and Programs in Professional Psychology; NCSPP) as well as in recent documents on the guidelines for practice and competencies in geropsychology (American Psychological Association, 2004). Most NCSPP programs subscribe to a sequential, integrated, scholarly, and practice-oriented philosophy in which program administrators and faculty are attentive to the importance of coordinating the teaching of scientific knowledge and clinical skill in developing psychological competencies. Such integrative training across the assessment course sequence might cover a wide range of content and skill areas that inform assessment practice and research applications; examples include learning the standards for testing and assessment (e.g., AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999), issues related to the assessment of specific age groups (e.g., Hyer, Molinara, Mills, & Yeager, 2008), Sattler, 2001; Smith & Handler, 2006), linkages between assessment and intervention (e.g., Mortimer & Smith, 1983), and evidence-based practice in psychology (APA, 2006). Recent survey data from 49 responding NCSPP programs indicated that approximately 92% of responding programs reported having at least one required psychological assessment course within the curriculum and evaluating the competency within the course or curriculum (albeit, we consider two courses a minimum requirement for basic competency), and nearly 76% reported that assessment competency was formally evaluated in both practical and internship (NCSPP & APA Research Office, 2006). In 2007, NCSPP has further refined the articulation of the necessary components in the training in assessment and other clinical competencies with their approval of the Competency Developmental Achievement Levels (DALs; NCSPP, 2007; Kenkel & Peterson, 2010). The DALs articulate the components at various developmental levels starting with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required before beginning practicum and progressing to those attained at the completion of doctoral-level training.

Other reports articulate similar knowledge, skills, and attitudes that provide the scientific substrate for psychological assessment proficiency. For example, in summarizing the work of the Psychological Assessment Work Group in the Competencies Conference: Future Directions in Education and Credentialing in Professional Psychology, Krishnamurthy, VandeCreek, et al. (2005) identified core elements in competent practice in psychological assessment, described current training practices, and offered guidelines for future direction. The knowledge base for the assessment competency (e.g., basic through advanced psychopathology, interviewing techniques, use of formal assessment instruments) is typically disseminated through



traditional classroom instruction, textbooks, and focused readings. Modeling is a common method to build skill in Personality Assessment. For example, students are often required to be psychological test examinees themselves as part of their training. They are also often required to observe a trained examiner administer and score standardized tests. Role plays and direct experience with non-clinical volunteers allows students to practice these skills and receive feedback before they begin working directly with clients, and skill development is honed through practicum training. Again, skill development is often approached in a graduated, cumulative manner by teaching segments of skills related to tests, measurement, and assessment, and then integrating them.

This emphasis on graduate training in the aforementioned areas that provide the scientific and practical foundations for basic competency in Personality Assessment is also evident in the pedagogical literature. Krishnamurthy et al.'s (2004) recommendations for assessment training include: a) providing coursework relevant to diverse assessment models that extend from foundational courses to those involving specific assessment methods; b) offering coherent practicum training experiences in psychological assessment that are consistent with the program model, involve exposure to diverse populations and settings, and include intensive supervision offered through different modalities; c) ensuring integration of coursework and practicum training experiences; and d) fostering the development of essential psychological assessment skills within a framework of coherent, cumulative learning involving progressively increasing complexity. Surveys of doctoral programs provide evidence that psychological testing and assessment have been a major component of the training (e.g., Piotrowski & Zalewski, 1993).

The foundation laid in graduate school is expected to be built upon during the predoctoral internship (or supervised field work, in some industrial-organizational and school psychology programs). The *G & P* (APA, 2008) within Domain B states that all APA-accredited internships must require that their interns demonstrate intermediate-to-advanced “skills, abilities, proficiencies, competencies, and knowledge” (p. 21) in the area of assessment as well as other scientific substrates of Personality Assessment (i.e., diversity, scholarly inquiry). Similarly, the NCSPP, in its recently approved DALs, articulated a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are required at internship for competency in assessment. The importance of this competency is evident in surveys of internship directors where these underlying skills, knowledge, and attitudes were reported to be heavily emphasized (Stedman, Hatch, & Schoenfeld, 2000). Also, recent surveys have found that internships continue to place heavy emphasis on assessment training (e.g., Clemence & Handler, 2001; Piotrowski & Belter, 1999). Internship training also provides a means and context for shaping professional attitudes related to assessment work. Typical methods of evaluating the acquisition of assessment competency during training include course examinations and comprehensive examinations and evaluations by practicum and internship supervisors.

Most of the training requirements for proficiency in psychological assessment in general are directly applicable to Personality Assessment in particular. However,

Personality Assessment also requires specific grounding in personality theory, psychopathology, and particular methods and instruments designed for the assessment of personality functioning.

Ideally, the supervised practicum and internship or field work provide the framework for basic competency in Personality Assessment. For the achievement of proficiency, postdoctoral training is essential. It is crucial that practitioners of psychological assessment participate in regular continuing education in order to hone their skills, develop new techniques, and remain current with developments in the field.

The Society of Personality Assessment in its “Standards for education and training in psychological assessment” (SPA, 2006) emphasizes that Personality Assessment is a complex specialty within psychology practice that requires specific training and development. Advanced skills are required to integrate information from multiple data sources, including from complex and psychometrically strong tests, to address complex clinical questions and derive an in-depth understanding of the individual. Such integrative tasks require advanced levels of specialized expertise and training, cultivated through both doctoral and intensive postdoctoral training and experience.

**2. In what kinds of settings are education and training for the proficiency acquired (e.g., residency, postdoctoral training experience, continuing education, didactic and experiential sequence in a doctoral program)?**

The education and training for Personality Assessment should be acquired in a sequential and graded fashion through formal coursework and practical training in graduate school, and then further developed and refined during the predoctoral 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 the knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

As noted above, APA’s (2008) *G&P* articulates the requirement that APA-accreditation doctoral graduate programs and internships need to assure that their students acquire competency in psychological assessment and measurement as well as the other knowledge areas that underlie Personality Assessment’s scientific basis. However, as noted by Childs and Eyde (2002), the APA’s guidelines used for accreditation 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*. Although, as noted above, 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 in more detail in Criterion IV). 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).

Competent Personality Assessment skills, developed in graduate school and perhaps 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*.

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### **Criterion III. Parameters of practice**

**A proficiency identifies the substantial, specific, and distinctive psychological knowledge and skills that provide the bases for service with respect to at least one of the essential parameters of practice. The parameters to be considered include: a) specific population(s), b) psychological, biological, and/or social problems, c) procedures and techniques. These parameters should be described in the context of the range of setting(s) or the organizational arrangement(s) in which practice occurs.**

As described in Criterion I, the practice of Personality Assessment requires: specific knowledge of the psychometric properties of test instruments which demonstrate their construct validity and clinical utility; the skills required to administer and score tests properly in accordance with established standardized procedures; and the procedures required to analyze and integrate test data with other relevant information, including findings from structured diagnostic interviews, unstructured clinical interviews, historical information, data provided by informants familiar with the person being evaluated, and behavioral observations.

Psychologists proficient in Personality Assessment select tests and methods appropriate for the specific populations they serve and administer, score, and interpret test findings in a manner that is sensitive to and respectful of the individual's age, gender, level of education, and cultural background (American Educational Research Association et al., 1999; Dana, 1996; Dana, Auilar-Ktibr, Diaz-Viva, & Vetter, 2002). Psychologists are cognizant of the legal context in which assessment takes place, including the civil rights of the test taker, the role of the assessment in any current or anticipated legal

proceeding, and any other foreseeable uses of the assessment findings (Committee on Ethical Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists, 1991).

#### a) Specific Populations

Personality Assessment serves a diverse range of populations across a wide variety of settings. 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). 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 geriatric 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.

#### b) Psychological, Biological, and Social Problems

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.

*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; 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).

*Geriatric and rehabilitation settings* – Personality Assessment in geriatric 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).

*Legal/Forensic settings* – Personality Assessment may be used in a broad range of legal and forensic contexts, in both the civil and criminal arenas. 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 & Evans, 2007; Gacono, 2000; Gacono & Meloy, 1994). Personality Assessment also plays an important role in release 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.

### c) Procedures and Techniques

Psychologists have long recognized that Personality Assessment is best conducted by studying the constructs of interest broadly, with a wide range of instruments and techniques (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Weiner & Greene, 2008). Suitable bases for conclusions include the following: a) information that is reported by the patient; b) information that is reported by significant others to the patient (e.g., spouse, parents, friends); c) interpretation of the behaviors elicited from the patient by the assessor during the assessment process; d) the use of narrow-band, self-report measures with known psychometric properties (e.g., Beck Depression Inventory-II, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale); e) the use of broad-band, self-report measures with known psychometric properties (e.g., Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2, Personality Assessment Inventory); and f) the use of performance-based measures with known psychometric properties (e.g., Rorschach Inkblot Method, Sentence Completion Test).

Typically, a personality assessment will include both broad-band and narrow-band instruments. Broad-band instruments are those which yield data capable of addressing a wide array of questions concerning personality. This feature conduces to their use across a great variety of settings, including those listed above. Narrow-band instruments are those that are tailored to a specific set of questions. Consequently, they will tend to be used with specific populations in particular settings. For example, the Eating Disorders Inventory (Garner, Olmstead, & Polivy, 2006) is used in psychiatric settings (for example, an adolescent psychiatric unit) in which questions concerning eating disorders commonly arise.

In some cases, assessment can be used in a therapeutic manner to provide a sense of understanding to patients who may have difficulty understanding their current and long-standing difficulties (Finn, 1992; Finn & Tonsager, 1992, 1997; Fischer, 2000). Inherent in the use of all these procedures and techniques is the assessor's understanding of psychometric principles and how they are applied to each measure.

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#### **Criterion IV: Public Need for Proficiency Practice**

**A proficiency shall be clearly responsive to public need.**

##### **1. What public need does this psychological proficiency serve?**

Personality Assessment provides a comprehensive and accurate 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 and individualized information about those they are working with. For example, Personality Assessment is helpful in:

- a) The rapid alleviation of psychological distress: the development of a personality profile enables the planning of a useful and efficient course of therapy and prevents false therapeutic starts based on misdiagnosis. 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 much longer course of treatment (see Weiner & Exner, 1991).
- b) Identification of 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 change operations.
- c) Better management of risk through identification of risk factors for illness or injury.
- d) Identification of functional status and rehabilitation potential for disabled people.
- 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 of parents and children and assessment of the fit between parent's characteristics and capacities and children's needs in child custody cases.
- h) Assessment of personality characteristics that assist prediction of violent behavior or reoffending and suitability for various case dispositions in pre-sentencing evaluations.
- i) Identification of special needs of students in educational settings and formulation of appropriate remedial plans.
- j) Selection of employees who possess the personality features congruent with the demands of positions
- k) 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; 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.

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

Given the impact of Personality Assessment upon individual lives, a wide variety of standards, guidelines, privileging criteria, and rules that address good practice in a variety of settings with different populations has been developed.

The practice of Personality Assessment, based on psychological theories, research, and instruments, in mental health and counseling settings usually requires state licensure. Most states require a doctoral degree from an approved program, along with internships, supervised 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) 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, 1999), which is currently in the process of revision. These standards are organized into three sections: test construction, fairness in testing, and testing applications. The third section is most relevant to credentialing and includes a delineation of the responsibilities of test users. In particular, Chapter 12, in the third section, directly addresses professional standards that are applicable to Personality Assessment.

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 a significant historical importance because it 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 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, S. M., DeMers, S. T., Fox, H. R., Reed, G. M. (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 address professional practice, including Personality Assessment, with special populations, including the following:

a) *Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations* – APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (1990).

b) *Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities Sourcebook* – Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities Working Group and the Joint Committee on Testing Practices (1999).

c) *Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organization Change for Psychologists* – (APA, 2003).

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 heavily used in personnel settings, general medical settings, geriatric and rehabilitation settings, and in forensic practice. For example, an analysis of test use in child custody evaluations, using Ackerman and Ackerman survey data, revealed that out of 43,195 evaluations 84% used the MMPI (Hagen & Castagna, 2001). In the field of forensic assessments, Borum and Grisso (1995) found that all forensic psychologists in their survey reported use of psychological tests in criminal responsibility evaluations. Of those, 68% rated them as essential or recommended.

Here is a sampling of such 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 the American Psychological Association’s 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, 2003) - 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 it is 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* (1998) – These guidelines acknowledge that special competence is needed in carrying out psychological assessments so that the assessor provides to the relevant parties (e.g., the court or a state agency) “...relevant, professionally sound results or opinions” (p. 5). They are currently in a process of revision.

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 does it is required of all entering employees in a similar job (see *Karraker v. Rent-A-Center*, 2005). On the other hand, 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 thoroughly 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 in 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 (Stedman et al., 2001, 2002). 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 exists suggesting that doctoral programs are emphasizing Personality Assessment less in course offerings (Belter & Piotrowski, 2001).

The inadequacies of contemporary doctoral training might not be of such concern if the internship compensated for elements missing from pre-internship training. Yet, internship sites frequently fail to offer the intensive training in Personality Assessment (Clemence & Handler, 2001; Krishnamurthy et al., 2004). Fifty-six percent 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. This situation is no better in training in other applied areas (e.g., industrial-organization, educational), where the specific standards concerning Personality Assessment are negligible.

As a result of what amounts of a de-emphasis on training in the foundational skills of Personality Assessment in many doctoral programs, internships, and postdoctoral settings, there is an undersupply of professional psychologists who are justly confident in their skills in providing this service. Recognition of a proficiency in this area will encourage doctoral programs in professional psychology, internship sites, post-doctoral programs, and providers of Continuing Education, which want to be recognized as providing training at the level of proficiency, to increase the availability and quality of their training in Personality Assessment, thereby increasing 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 tends to be lower than for 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 over a multi-method approach, which is the gold standard in Personality Assessment. Such a multi-method approach typically involves the use of instruments that are time-intensive and require extensive interaction between the assessor and the client (Piotrowski, 1999; Stedman et al., 2001).

As a result, 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. The 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. It will also facilitate the identification of competent practitioners who regularly practice in this area.

At the same time, clinicians who can document their proficiency in Personality Assessment will be in a stronger bargaining position with Utilization Review managers (who in the area of assessment authorizations are usually themselves psychologists) in managed care companies. Many UR managers have justified their penurious approach to authorization of assessment services in terms of their experience of poorly planned and poorly executed assessments. Psychologists who can provide evidence of their proficiency are likely to have a leg up in this process. In addition, third party payers and managed care companies can perhaps be prevailed upon to employ only UR managers

in the area of authorizing Personality Assessment who have shown themselves to be proficient in this area, thereby leading to better informed and more clinically appropriate authorizations.

Conversely, restrictive treatment authorizations and reduced payments for both clinical personality assessment and therapy services have actually 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. 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 a wide range of 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 other professional groups, 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 inevitably increase the frequency of such referrals.

Although it is entirely possible 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 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-à-vis psychologists with documented proficiency may suffer). Second, we anticipate that recognition of the proficiency will ultimately “make the pie bigger.” In other words, it will be easier for psychologists at all stages of training 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 tend to 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. Such a credential will increase the likelihood that individuals who practice assessment have

appropriate training and 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 certification at all 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 experts, 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

According to Krishnamurthy et al. (2004), training in Personality Assessment requires both course 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 (Stedman et al., 2001, 2002). 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 exists suggesting that doctoral programs are emphasizing Personality Assessment less in course offerings (Belter & Piotrowski, 2001).

The inadequacies of doctoral training might not be of such concern if the internship compensated for elements missing from pre-internship training. Yet, internship sites frequently fail to offer the intensive training in Personality Assessment (Clemence & Handler, 2001; Krishnamurthy et al., 2004). Fifty-six percent 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 already 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 particularly 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.

### Research Trends

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

a) *The 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 major difficulties 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 overlaps 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. The publisher of the MMPI-2 has recently released a shortened and substantially revised version of the venerable instrument based on the RC scales. Known as the MMPI-Restructured Form (MMPI-RF), the new version is leading to still more research and new issues for practitioners.

b) *Rorschach Inkblot Method* – Another popular Personality Assessment instrument is the Rorschach Inkblot Method. Originally published by Herman Rorschach in 1921 this instrument fell into disfavor 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 all extant well-designed research including Exner's own data collection efforts. Exner's Comprehensive System revitalized the Rorschach and ultimately became the standard method used for training, research, and clinical practice. The Comprehensive System has been the object of a prodigious research effort leading to major ongoing modifications in the system all of which increase its psychometric soundness and clinical usefulness. Since 1974, Exner, now deceased, has published three revisions of his initial text with each revision introducing modifications in the System. In the last edition, Exner addressed problems with the initial standardization sample. More recently, other investigators have been providing additional normative information and particularly 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.

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. 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. In 2009, the publisher, Pearson, will release additional information that will be crucial for evaluations done by neuropsychologists. Each time a revision has occurred, the changes have been substantive and require an immersion for the assessor in a thoroughgoing 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 continually on new developments. When Personality Assessment is 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 ease the ways in 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 the 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 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, which is the gold standard in Personality Assessment. Such a multi-method approach typically involves the use of instruments that are time-intensive and require extensive interaction between the assessor and the client (Piotrowski, 1999; Stedman et al., 2001).

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 the appropriate credentials. A power shift would be effected in consumers' and psychologists' interactions with managed care.

#### 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 casually practice personality assessment based on knowledge they have retained from their graduate studies and based on testing skills that have failed to keep up with recent developments in the area. Recognition of the 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 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 integrating it with professional identity, all speak to the need for Personality Assessment to be established as a proficiency requiring credentialing. 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: that is, 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 are at great risk for making mistakes that injure consumers. The potential for harm is increased by the fact that psychological assessments become a permanent part of the client's record. Relative to psychotherapy notes, they are more likely to follow the client 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 rights, and placement of children in foster care versus extended family systems.

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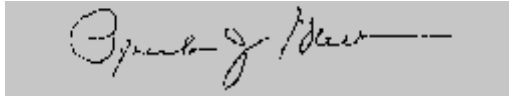
## **Criterion V. Administrative Organization**

1. Society for Personality Assessment (SPA)  
6109H Arlington Blvd.  
Falls Church, VA 22044  
Office phone: (703) 534-4772  
FAX (703) 534-6905

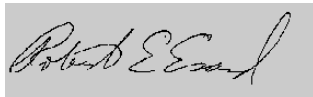
Email: [manager@spaonline.org](mailto:manager@spaonline.org)  
Web Site: [www.personality.org](http://www.personality.org)

2. Contact Person: Paula J. Garber, Administrative Director

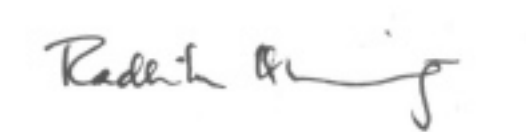
3. Signatures:



Paula J. Garber, Administrative Director



Robert E. Erard, Ph.D., President, SPA Board of Trustees



Radhika Krishnamurthy, Psy.D., President-elect, SPA Board of Trustees

4. Year this organization founded: 1938

5. Incorporation: New Jersey (*Appendix I – (Articles of Incorporation attached—see Appendix I)*)

6. By-laws (*Appendix II - attached*)

7. Officials of SPA

a) Robert E. Erard APA Member  
*President*

Psychological Institutes of Michigan  
26111 W. 14 Mile Road, Suite 104  
Franklin Village, MI 48025-1168

b) Radhika Krishnamurthy APA member  
*President-Elect*

Florida Institute of Technology

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- c) Virginia M. Brabender, Ph.D. APA Fellow  
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- d) Carol Groves Overton, Ph.D.  
*Secretary*  
978 Swayze Avenue  
Washington Cross, PA 18977
- e) F. Barton Evans, Ph.D. APA member  
*Treasurer*  
No. Rockies Center for Forensic and  
Therapeutic Assessment  
17 South Fifth Street  
Bozeman, MT 59715
- f) Ginger C. Calloway, Ph.D. APA member  
*Representative at Large*  
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*Representative-at-Large*  
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Portland, OR 97213-3021
- h) Steve R. Smith, Ph.D. APA Member  
*Representative-at-Large*  
University of California  
CCSP Program  
1110 Phelps Hall  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9490
- i) Ronald J. Ganellen, Ph.D. APA member  
*Representative-at-Large*  
405 N. Wabash, #2819  
Chicago, IL 60611-3591

8. Purpose and objectives: The overarching purpose of the Society for Personality Assessment is to further the applied practice of 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) Recognition of contributors to the study and practice of Personality Assessment.
9. The Society for Personality Assessment has approximately 1450 members. Members are distributed in the following membership categories as follows: Member: 62%; Associate Member: 3%; Student Affiliate: 13%; Fellow: 9%; Life Member: 4%; Life Fellow: 6%; First- and Second-Doctoral Graduate Student: 3%. The Board of Trustees, the governing entity of the Society for Personality Assessment, meets twice a year, once at the annual meeting for a daylong period, and a second time in the early fall. The fall meeting generally extends over a two and a half day period. Members are invited to the Board of Trustees meeting held at the annual conference.

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 engages in decision-making in between meetings. The Committees provide suggestions and recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

The Society comprehends 11 standing committees. These include the Publications Oversight Committee, the Membership Committee, the Financial Advisory Committee, the Program Committee, the Nominations and Elections Committee, the Awards Committee, the Fellows Committee, the Continuing Education Committee, the International Section Committee, the Student Matters Committee, and the Website Committee. Appointments to the Standing Committees are of a two year's duration. These committees work throughout the year and report on their progress twice a year at the board meetings.

10. Annual budget for previous three fiscal years (*Appendices III & V – annual reports and tax returns attached*):
- a) 2007: \$380,503.00
  - b) 2008: \$338,561.00
  - c) 2009: \$437,410.00

11. 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 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 are in the leadership of 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 comprehends Personality Assessment in addition to a number of other areas. 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 Section IX is writing a letter in support of this application. (Appendix IV – *attached*)

12. For 72 years, the Society has been making significant contributions to the proficiency of Personality Assessment. This item will talk about three major areas in which such contributions are made: a) publications; b) education—formative and continuing; and c) sponsored research.
  - a) *Publications* – From its inception, the Society has sponsored a premier journal, *The Journal for Personality Assessment*, which includes articles describing rigorous investigations in the area of Personality Assessment, case studies, theoretical papers, and book reviews on texts 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 very favorable impact ratings, 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 greatly on applied issues in Personality Assessment. It includes regular features on ethics and legal issues, 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 the 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. 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. These standards appear in Appendix vi.

- 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 current sponsored study focuses on the utility for Personality Assessment consultation for improving ongoing psychotherapies in which significant treatment difficulties have arisen. The Board of Trustees, which itself invariably includes major contributors to the Personality Assessment literature, identifies key questions, the answers to which significantly advance the profession. The Society has a fund-raising arm that includes, within its scope, raising funds for sponsored research.
13. 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.
  14. Many of the administrative aspects of the oversight of proficiency recognition, training, and evaluation of providers will be undertaken by the Central Office of the Society for Personality Assessment. The Central Office is managed by the Society’s Administrative Director. The Director will work with the Executive Committee and the **Proficiency Oversight Committee (POC)** to develop the processes, policies, and procedures for the proficiency. These processes, policies, and procedures will be consistent with SPA’s credentialing criteria that appear in Appendix vii. For the first year, the POC will conduct the evaluation of proficiency applications. Following this period, a separate committee (the **Proficiency Evaluation Committee (PEC)**) will be set up to review applications. For continuity, one member of the POC will be on the PEC and head it. Committee members will serve for a two-year period. A grievance committee with membership different from the evaluation committee will be established and will be composed of three individuals: one current Board member and two non-Board members who have achieved proficiency status.

To ensure the proper monitoring of this process, the Society will need to bolster its Central Office Staff. To cover this expense, candidates for the proficiency will be asked to pay an initial fee to apply for the proficiency. After being granted the proficiency, they will pay a fee to have the proficiency re-affirmed at regular intervals. Further, SPA will establish a database. Those individuals who are working toward, or maintain the proficiency will pay an annual fee if they wish their CE activities to automatically be entered into the database.

The Society will publish a brochure describing these processes, policies, and procedures. The Treasurer in conjunction with the POC will develop a budget that will be remanded for audit annually by the Board of Trustees.

## **Criterion VI. Effectiveness**

**A proficiency is characterized by a body of evidence which demonstrates its effectiveness.**

- 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. Where possible, relate this evidence to the parameters identified in Criterion III.**

The evidence base supporting Personality Assessment is extensive, consisting of many thousands of studies with a history that extends over 100 years. As indicated in Criterion III, 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, Geriatric and Rehabilitation, and Occupational and Employment. Accordingly, in the material that follows below we provide six sets of highly selected references regarding the validity of Personality Assessment in these specific settings. Because the literature is so large, the citations consist almost exclusively of meta-analyses rather than individual studies. However, it is worth noting that the 55 meta-analyses listed below synthesize data from thousands of primary studies.

In addition, we note that many other sets of references could have been 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 Meyer, Finn, Eyde, Kay, Moreland et al. (2001). Psychological testing and psychological assessment: A review of evidence and issues. *American Psychologist*, 56, 128-165). 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.

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## **Criterion VII. Quality Improvement**

**A proficiency promotes ongoing investigations and procedures to develop further the quality and utility of its knowledge, skills, and services.**

- 1. Provide a description of the types of investigations that are designed to evaluate and increase the usefulness of the skills and services in this 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).

As for the second type of study, two recent special issues of the *Journal of Personality Assessment* are illustrative: a) Personality Assessment in Psychotherapy (2004) and b) Personality Assessment in Medical Settings (2007). Numerous works investigate or summarize research concerning the specific utility of personality assessment in therapeutic sessions, such as Blatt (2008), Blatt & Shahar, (2004), Farmer, Nelson-Gray,



& Rosmery (2005), Finn (2007), Maruish (2004), Millon (1999), and Tharinger, Finn, Gentry, Hamilton, Fowler, Matson, Krumholz, & Walkowiak (in press).

In order to foster and support future research on the utility of personality assessment, the Society for Personality Assessment Foundation has raised substantial funds for the Utility of Assessment Project. A blue-ribbon panel has been formed to seek, review, fund, and monitor proposals for major research projects that meet expected standards of excellence and relevance. The panel has recently identified a very promising proposal for funding.

**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 that 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 national 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 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.

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## **Criterion VIII. Guidelines for Proficiency Service Delivery**

### **Preamble**

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 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) as well as the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, et al., 1999) 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.

**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, geriatric). 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>. 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 about Personality Assessment. The site is also available for announcements from members that are of interest to practitioners.

In addition to written documents, the Annual Scientific 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, the Michigan Psychological Association) Continuing Education workshops during 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, will sponsor 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 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.

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, its 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 proficiency 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) provides guidelines for the practice of assessment in various settings. *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association,

et al., 1999) 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. These results contribute to the development and ongoing refinement of guidelines for best practices in Personality Assessment.

#### **Criterion IX. Provider Identification and Evaluation**

**A proficiency recognizes the public benefits of developing sound methods for permitting individual practitioners to secure an evaluation of their knowledge and skill and to be identified as meeting the qualifications for competent practice in the proficiency.**

**1. Describe how and by whom the proficiency identifies those who are qualified to practice in the proficiency.**

Applicants for the proficiency can be self-nominated or identified by the SPA Board of Trustees as persons qualified to apply. Applicants' professional vitae will be reviewed by a committee of the Board to ensure that they meet minimal requirements, including a doctoral degree in clinical, counseling, forensic, health, or industrial-organizational psychology and internship or postdoctoral training. Applicants who meet these minimal requirements will be asked to submit a work sample from their personality assessment practice that will be reviewed by a committee of the Board as to whether it meets basic standards of competency. Applicants whose work product is deemed satisfactory will become candidates for the proficiency and will be admitted to an examination process.

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

*SPA will take the following steps to identify practitioners in this proficiency.*

- a) All ABAP certified individuals are automatically "grandfathered" in.
- b) All Fellows of SPA considered for being "grandfathered" in, contingent on Board approval. Each Fellow submits a questionnaire or form that documents assessment experience. A Credentialing Committee appointed by the Board (see below) reviews all Fellows and recommends any questionable applications for Board discussion.
- c) Partial "grandfathering" of SPA members or others possibly accomplished in assessment that have been practicing in the field for 10 years. Applications would be submitted by these individuals with accompanying curriculae vitae. The Credentialing Committee would review and make a recommendation "for" immediate acceptance as proficient, "accept with provisions" suggesting additional continuing educations credits, or "provisional" contingent on completing the course package described below. Those not obviously proficient might be required to submit a work sample.
- d) Application by all others wishing assessment proficiency.
  - i. Recent graduates (past 5 years) of programs in universities recognized for assessment training consistent with SPA standards would be required to have a period of post graduate supervision or a course of continuing education in assessment. Those from these programs with postdoctoral supervision would proceed directly to the application process by completing the questionnaire or form, submitting a work sample, and submitting a C.V.
  - ii. A course package option is available for all others who want to become proficient in assessment. These individuals complete the questionnaire or form, submit a work sample, submit a C.V., and submit a graduate transcript. A specific number of continuing education credits, specific courses and time period should be spelled out for completion of the course package. These individuals need to submit a work sample measuring understanding of basic assessment principles. The components of the package are: basic principles of assessment (multi method assessment, fundamentals of reliability and validity, role of incremental validity, test selection), assessment ethics, test interpretation and integration, and report writing and feedback. Some C.E. credits require these individuals to demonstrate specific proficiency on at least 2 major assessment instruments (pulled from the "top 10" assessment instruments). C.E. credits need to be obtained through attendance at SPA workshop and conference offerings or from APA approved workshops. For specific proficiency in 2 major instruments, a total of 12 C.E. credits is required per instrument.

### ***Credentialing for Proficiency Committee***

This committee will evaluate applications for proficiency and will be composed of three individuals: one Board member and 2 non-Board members who have achieved proficiency.

### ***Appeals***

A grievance committee, with membership different from the credentialing or proficiency committee will be established. One Board member and 2 non-Board members who have achieved proficiency will serve as members.

**3. Describe how and by whom the proficiency educates the public and the profession concerning those who are identified as a practitioner of this proficiency.**

Through its membership directory, newsletter, and website, the SPA can identify persons who have demonstrated proficiency in Personality Assessment and can regularly announce the names of persons who have recently done so. Announcements concerning the nature and purpose of credentialing in assessment proficiency, together with invitations for qualified psychologists to apply, can regularly be included in journals, conference presentations, and newsletters of other societies and APA Divisions (e.g., Divisions 5, 12, 13, 14, 20, 38, 39, 40, 41, & 42) .

**4. Estimate how many practitioners there are in this proficiency (e.g., spend 25% or more of their time in services characteristic of this proficiency) and provide whatever demographic information on available.**

Specific estimates in this regard are difficult to determine. Among relevant facts, however, the Society for Personality Assessment includes approximately 1200 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 2<sup>nd</sup> in frequency of use, the Rorschach Inkblot Method ranking 4<sup>th</sup>, and the Thematic Apperception Test ranking 6<sup>th</sup> (Hogan, 2005).

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**Criterion X. Continuing Professional Development and Education**

**A proficiency provides its practitioners a broad range of regularly offered opportunities for continuing professional development in the proficiency practice and mechanisms to assess the acquisition of knowledge and skills.**

**1. Describe the opportunities for continuing professional development in the proficiency practice.**

Continuing education (CE) opportunities that focus specifically on Personality Assessment are widely available from multiple sources. They are often offered with exclusive content, specifically as workshops in Personality Assessment, and sometimes they are presented as part of an overall, integrated approach to assessment that includes cognitive assessment and other forms of data. In this petition, workshops primarily focused on Personality Assessment are presented to illustrate the wide variety of opportunities for continuing education in this specific area of psychology practice. Some workshops, however, include integration of test data.

We have included a sample of workshops in Personality Assessment from varied sources, as an exhaustive list would be cumbersome. The following workshops have been selected to demonstrate the diversity and the depth of training available. This list is divided into types of training for ease of review: a) CE offered at the APA conventions from 2004 to 2009, b) formal CE opportunities offered from APA-approved providers, and c) a sampling of self-guided CE opportunities.

An additional source of continuing education in Personality Assessment is postdoctoral supervision or consultation. Many psychologists seek supervision or consultation in Personality Assessment, either on a regular basis or as an occasional supplement to their professional development, and this is an excellent approach to individualized skill-building. In addition, at our Annual Conference, we routinely provide experts in the various specific areas of personality assessment, such as forensic, or collaborative assessment, who offer consultation onsite during the conference.

**CE Workshops at APA Conventions, 2004-2007**

**2004 APA Convention**

*Scientific Approach to Personality Profiling of Homicide Cases*; Mark Zelig, PhD, ABPP; Independent practice, Salt Lake City, UT; 7 hours.

*Pre-employment Evaluations for Police and High-Risk Professions*; Mark Zelig, PhD, ABPP; Independent practice, Salt Lake City, UT; 7 hours

*Risk Management of Targeted Violence for Consulting and Clinical Psychologists*; Mark Zelig, PhD, ABPP; Independent practice, Salt Lake City, UT; 4 hours



*Introduction to Cognitive Ability and Personality Testing for Employment Decisions*; Wanda Campbell, PhD; Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C.; Deirdre Knapp, PhD; Human Resources Research Organization, Alexandria, VA; 4 hours.

### **2005 APA Convention**

*Introduction to the Assessment of Malingering in Clinical Forensic Examinations*; Richard Frederick, PhD; US Medical Center for Federal Prisons, Springfield, MO; 4 hours.

*A Forensic Approach to Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations*; Mark Zelig, PhD, ABPP; Independent practice, Salt Lake City, UT; 7 hours.

### **2006 Convention**

*Assessing Criminal and Violence Risk: Theory, Ethics, and Application*; Jeremy Mills, PhD; Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario; Daryl Kroner, PhD; Pittsburgh Institution, Kingston, Ontario; Robert Morgan, PhD; Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX; 7 hours.

*Family Evaluation for Child Protective Cases: A Critically Optimistic Model*; Wes Crenshaw, PhD, ABPP; Family Therapy Institute Midwest, Lawrence, KS; 7 hours.

*A Forensic Approach to Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations*; Mark Zelig, PhD, ABPP; Independent practice, Salt Lake City, UT; 7 hours.

*Pre-employment Psychological Screening for High-Risk Professions*; Mark Zelig, PhD, ABPP; Independent practice, Salt Lake City, UT; 7 hours.

### **2007 Convention**

*New Developments in Violence Risk Assessment and Management*; John Monahan, PhD; University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA; 4 hours.

*Cutting-Edge Advances in Workplace Violence Threat Assessment*; Harley Stock, PhD, ABPP; Incident Management Group, Plantation, FL; 7 hours.

*Advanced Interpretation of the MCMI-III*; Stephen Strack, PhD; US Department of Veteran Affairs, Los Angeles, CA; 7 hours.

### **2008 Convention**

*Integrating Positive Psychology into Assessment and Practice in Both Clinical and Coaching Settings*; Carol M. Kauffman, Ph.D, McLean Hospital, Belmont, MA &

Christopher W. Krebs, Ph.D., Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VA Medical Center, Bedford, MA

*Assessment of Personality Pathology with the SNAP*; Lee Anna Clark, Ph.D.

*Introducing the MMPI-2-RF (Restructured Form)*; Yossef S. Ben-Porath, Ph.D.

*Individualities: Implications of Personality for Psychotherapy*; Nancy McWilliams, Ph.D.

## **2009 Convention**

*Dissociative Disorders---An Introduction to Diagnosis and Assessment*; Harold D. Siegel, Ph.D. & Annita B. Jones, Psy.D.; 4 hours.

*A Developmental Understanding for Assessment and Treatment of Violent Individuals*; Lisa Firestone, Ph.D., 7 hours

*Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Children*; Sam Goldstein, Ph.D. & Jack A. Naglieri, Ph.D.; 4 hours

*Advanced Assessment and Treatment of Attention Deficit Disorders*; Thomas E. Brown, Ph.D.; 7 hours

*What's the Difference among ADHD, NLD, and Asperger's Syndrome?—Updated*; Ilyse H. O'Desky, Psy.D. & Jacequeline Massa, Ph.D.; 4 hours

## **CE Workshops for APA Divisions or APA-Approved Providers (hours noted if available)**

Archer, R. P. (March 2005) *Using the MMPI-A in Forensic Evaluations*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

Barnett, J. E. (March 2007) *Dilemmas, Decision Making, and Ethical Practice in Assessment*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 4 hours.

Ben-Porath, Y. S. (August 2005). *Recent Developments in MMPI-2 Interpretation: The Restructured Clinical Scales and non-K-corrected Profile*. Workshop presented for APA Division 12, Washington, DC.

Ben-Porath, Y. S. (August 2007). *Recent Developments in MMPI-2 Interpretation: The RC Scales and MMPI-2-RF (Restructured Form)*. Workshop presented for APA Division 12, San Francisco, CA.

Ben-Porath, Y. S. (September 2005). *Recent Developments in MMPI-2 Interpretation: Implications for Forensic Assessments*. Workshop presented for the American Academy of Forensic Psychology. St Louis, MO.

Ben-Porath, Y. S. (June 2007). *An MMPI-2 Update for Neuropsychologists*. Workshop presented for the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology. Denver, CO.

Ben-Porath, Y. S. (September 2007). *Introducing the MMPI-2-RF (Restructured Form)*. Workshop presented for the Louisiana Psychological Association, Baton Rouge, LA.

Butcher, J. N. (March, 2005). *The MMPI-2 in Forensic Evaluations: Contributions to Assessment and Problems to Avoid*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 3.5 hours.

Caldwell, A. B., & Doyne, S. E. (October 2006). *The MMPI-2 and Child Custody Training for California Court Rules 5.225 and 5.230* Caldwell Report; Costa Mesa, CA.

Calloway, C. G., & Marvin, R. (March 2008). *Attachment and Child Custody: A Sensible Marriage*. SPA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA. 7 hours.

Choca, J. P., Rossini, E. D., & Craig, R. J. (March 2005). *Advanced Interpretations for the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 7 hours.

Costa, P. T. (March 2006). *Advancing Skills in the Clinical Use of the NEO PI-R*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego. 3.5 hours.

Costa, P. T., Erdberg, S. P., (March 2007). *Multi-Method Assessment: Combining the NEO-PI-R and the Rorschach*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 7 hours.

Erard, R. E. (March 2006). *The Ethics of Psychological Assessment in Clinical and Forensic Practice: An In-Depth Examination*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 7 hours.

Erdberg, P. (March 2006). *Rorschach Assessment of Personality Disorder*. SPA Annual Meeting; San Diego, CA. 7 hours.

Evans, F. B., & Gacono, C. (March 2006). *Presenting the Rorschach in Clinical & Forensic Settings*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 7 hours.

Evans, F. B., & Schutz, B.M. (March 2007). *The Role of the Rorschach in Custody/Parenting Plan Evaluations*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 7 hours.

Finn, S. E. (March 2005). *Therapeutic Assessment*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 7 hours.

Finn, S. E. (March 2006). *Integrating the MMPI-2 and Rorschach in Giving Feedback to Clients*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 7 hours.

Finn, S. E. (April 2007). *Using the MMPI-2 as a Therapeutic Intervention*. MMPI-2/MMPI-A Workshops and Symposia. 3 hours.

Finn, S. E., & Middleberg, C.V. (December 2007). *Why is Johnny So Bad, Sad, or Mad? Using Collaborative Assessment to Change the Family Story*. Oakland, CA, WestCoast Children's Clinic. 19 hours.

Finn, S. E. Ganellen, R.J. (March 2007). *Assessment of Malingering and Defensiveness in Forensic Evaluations*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 3.5 hours.

Finn, S. E. (December 2009). *Introduction to Therapeutic Assessment*. Michigan Psychological Association and Society for Personality Assessment, Livonia, MI. 14 hours.

Greenberg, S. A. (March 2006). *Psychological Damage Examinations: Personal Injury Evaluations, Reports, and Testimony*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 7 hours.

George, C. (March 2005). *The Adult Attachment Projective: Measuring Adult Attachment and its Contributions to Personality and Psychopathology*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 7 hours.

Graham, J. R. (March 2006). *Using the MMPI-2 in Treatment Planning*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 3.5 hours.

Fico, J. (March 2007). *Introduction to the Hogan Personality Inventory*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 3.5 hours.

Harkness, A. R.; McNulty, J. L. (March 2006). *The MMPI-2 Based Personality Psychopathology Five (PSY-5) Scales: Supplementing MMPI-2 Interpretation from an Individual Difference Perspective*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 3.5 hours.

Husain, O., & Smith, B. L. (March 2007). *A Structural Approach to the Clinical Use of the TAT*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 3.5 hours.

Hass, G. A. (March 2007). *Considering Culture and Ethnicity in Personality Assessment*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 3.5 hours.

Karon, B. (March 2005). *The Thematic Apperception Test: A clinical approach*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 3.5 hours.

Karson, M. (March 2006). *Clinical and Forensic Uses of the 16PF*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 3.5 hours.

Kleiger, J. H. (March 2005). *Thought Disorder and the Rorschach*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 3.5 hours.

Kurtz, J. (March 2007). *The Use & Interpretation of the PAI*. SPA Annual Meeting, Arlington, VA. 3.5 hours.

- Kurtz, J. (June 2007). *The Use & Interpretation of the PAI*. Widener University, Chester, PA. 3 hours.
- Meyer, G., & Viglione, D. (March 2005). *An Overview of Current Evidence on the Reliability, Validity, and Utility of the Rorschach*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 7 hours.
- Mihura, J. (March 2008). *A Review of the Validity Research on the Rorschach Comprehensive System Variables*. SPA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA. 3.5 hours.
- Morey, L. *PAI Interpretation*. (October 2005). Arkansas Psychological Association.
- Morey, L. (November 2005). *Introduction and Interpretation of the PAI*. Dallas Psychological Association/North Texas Society for Personality Assessment; (October 2006). National Academy of Neuropsychology Annual Conference, San Antonio; (May 2007). Louisiana Psychological Association.
- Morey, L. (March 2006). *Advanced Interpretation of the PAI*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 7 hours.
- Reise, S. P. (March, 2005). *IRT and the Analysis of Psychopathology Measures*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, ca. 3.5 hours.
- Russ, S. W. (March 2005). *Assessment of Children's Pretend Play*. SPA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 3.5 hours.
- Strack, S. (April 2008). *Clinical Use of the MCMI-III™ and MBMD™ Assessments*. Iowa Psychological Association Annual Conference, Des Moines, IA.
- Strack, S. (March 2008). *The Millon™ College Counseling Inventory (MCCI™): Measuring the Mental Health Needs of Today's Students*. International Counseling Psychology Conference.
- Streiner, D. L. (March 2008). *Developments in Statistics for Personality Assessment*. SPA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA. 3.5 hours.
- Tringone, R. (April 2008). *Clinical Use of the Millon Inventories for Children and Adolescents: The MACI™ and M-PACI™ Assessments*. Iowa Psychological Association Annual Conference, Des Moines, IA.
- Tringone, R. (April 2008). *Clinical Use of the Millon Inventories for Children and Adolescents: The MACI and M-PACI Assessments*. Anaheim, CA.
- Viglione, D. (March 2006). *Rorschach Coding Solutions for the Comprehensive System*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 3.5 hours.

Weiner, I. B. (March 2005). *Rorschach Assessment of Children and Adolescents*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 3.5 hours.

Yalof, J. A., & Abraham, P. P. (March 2007). *Assessment Supervision*. SPA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. 3.5 hours.

As additional examples, here are CE providers for two major Personality Assessment instruments. They have frequent intensive workshops that are easily accessible.

**For the MMPI-2, MMPI-RF, and MMPI-A:** University of Minnesota.  
<http://www.upress.umn.edu/tests/workshops/default.html>

**Rorschach Workshops** was a long-standing provider for basic to advanced training with the Rorschach. Rorschach Training Programs is now the provider, with consistent quality. <http://www.rorschachtraining.com>

### **APA Online Academy Courses (2009)**

Personality Assessment: Ethics and Instruments

Forensic Assessment and the Standard of Care

Advanced Assessment and Treatment of Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD/ADHD)

### **APA Book-Based Independent Study Program (2009)**

Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification (Bestseller) (Book-based Program)

MMPI-2: A Practitioner's Guide (Book-based Program)

The MMPI, MMPI-2, and MMPI-A in Court: A Practical Guide for Expert Witnesses and Attorneys, Third Edition (Book-based Program)

Personality Disorders and the Five-Factor Model of Personality, Second Edition (Book-based Program)

Personality-Guided Forensic Psychology (Book-based Program)

Pedophilia and Sexual Offending Against Children: Theory, Assessment, and Intervention (Book-based Program)

Psychological Assessment of Adult Posttraumatic States: Phenomenology, Diagnosis, and Measurement, Second Edition (Book-based Program)

Addressing Cultural Complexities in Practice, Second Edition: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Therapy [1360180]

**Other Self-Guided Courses or Internet Search Tools**

**IPAT** presents frequent workshops on varied uses of the 16PF. Inquiries go to:  
<http://www.ipat.com/>

**Pearson Assessments** keeps an updated list of workshops available for several of the personality instruments they promote. They also have CD-based self-guided study for the MCMI-III, MBND, MCCI, and VIP; 3 hours each.

<http://www.pearsonassessments.com/and>

<http://www.pearsonassessments.com/training/index.asp>

**Misdiagnosis & Dual Diagnosis**; 6 hours; Professional Development Resources;

<http://www.pdresources.org>

**Anti-Social Youth and Conduct Disorders**; 3 hours; Professional Development Resources; <http://www.pdresources.org>.

**2. Describe the formal requirements, if any, for continuing professional development in the proficiency. What credits are required?**

There are currently no formal requirements for continuing professional development in Personality Assessment, as it has not yet been designated a proficiency. The Society for Personality Assessment has developed guidelines for adequate training in this area that recommend entry-level qualification and outlines continuing professional development (see Appendix VI).

Personality Assessment is frequently at issue in courtrooms across the country, as well as courts in other countries. Psychologists are often asked to demonstrate their proficiency for the court in order to be accepted as an expert witness on a given area involving Personality Assessment. Voir dire examination in the adversarial system requires that psychologists adhere to the highest standards of practice. By designating Personality Assessment as a proficiency, APA will further assist psychologists in practice to maintain and develop rigorous standards for their practice in personality assessment.

Most states require a specified number of CE units in order to maintain licensure (where applicable), and CE that is exclusively related to Personality Assessment frequently meets the criteria specified by licensing boards. One can feasibly obtain CE exclusively in the area of Personality Assessment, with the exception of the specified number of Ethics CE hours, to maintain licensure throughout an entire career. While this may not be a recommended practice, as it suggests a limited focus, it demarcates a clear career track in this requested proficiency area.

**3. Describe how the assessment of an individual's professional development is accomplished in the proficiency.**

The Society for Personality Assessment has recommended guidelines by which an individual psychologist can strive to develop proficiency in this area. This serves as a beginning for such professional development.

For those who wish more formal demonstration of skills developed to an advanced degree of expertise, the American Board of Assessment Psychology provides a rigorous examination process. A psychologist demonstrates his or her Personality Assessment skills and work samples to a highly qualified group of examiners for scrutiny and review. The American Board of Assessment Psychology (ABAP) is a diplomate-granting organization that was founded in 1993. ABAP recognizes excellence in the specialty of assessment and allows for the certification of psychologists who practice, teach, research, and evaluate assessment. The application process consists of three phases. In the first phase, applicants must submit letters of recommendation and demonstrate sufficient training in assessment and ethical practice. Next, applicants who proceed to the next level submit a work sample that is reviewed by the membership committee. The final step of the process involves an oral examination with at least two ABAP members. Current ABAP members include luminaries in the field of assessment psychology as well as educators and practitioners in assessment.

For those psychologists not wishing to use the guidelines described by SPA, or who are unwilling to embark on the examination process, many CE workshops in Personality Assessment provide a means for feedback on progress at an individual level in the form of post-tests. In addition, there is a certification process to demonstrate skill and accuracy with the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) that follows CE activity and professional practice. Rorschach Training Programs provide detailed case material that includes not only coding but interpretation standards to which one can compare independent work. Manuals for interpretation and for scoring were developed by faculty of Rorschach Training Programs and provide psychologists with continual feedback in learning the Rorschach Comprehensive System through individual practice. Self-guided study programs have post-tests that require a specified number of correctly answered questions to demonstrate sufficient learning.

Finally, as noted above, an individual psychologist can obtain supervision or regularly consult with colleagues about Personality Assessment issues. The Fellows Program for the Society for Personality Assessment identifies those with expertise in personality assessment who may serve as supervisors and/or consultants. Feedback from supervision or consultation provides the supervisee or individual seeking consultation with information regarding professional skill development, proficiency, competence, and areas needing improvement.