



The Psychological Society of Ireland

Policy on Accreditation of postgraduate courses in Psychology

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is the learned and professional body for the profession of psychology in Ireland. The Society has grown significantly since its foundation in 1970 and now has over 2300 members. PSI strives to promote good psychological practice by setting high standards of professional education and conduct for the profession.

The primary aim for which the Society was established, as stated in the Society's Memorandum of Association, is to '*advance psychology as a pure and applied science in Ireland and elsewhere*'. To further this aim the Society advocates, establishes and maintains high standards of professional training for members of the Society and the profession. Furthermore the Society seeks to establish and monitor standards of ethical behaviour, competence and practice within the profession.

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is both a status and a process. As a status, accreditation provides public notification that an institution or course meets standards of quality set by PSI. As a process, accreditation involves seeking PSI accreditation through self-evaluation and external peer review. The accreditation review process seeks not only to meet standards but to continuously seek ways in which to enhance the quality of education and training provided.

Accreditation is a process of quality control and assurance in higher education and other settings, where by, as a result of inspection or assessment or both, an institution or its programmes is recognised as meeting minimum acceptable standards.

The Psychological Society of Ireland, as the professional body representing psychology in Ireland, acts as the accrediting body for undergraduate and postgraduate education and training in psychology in Ireland.

The Society's document '*The PSI process for the accreditation of postgraduate courses in Psychology*' outlines the process for accreditation of postgraduate courses in psychology which is available from the Society's office or on the Society's website (www.psihq.ie).

Ethical Standards

The Society's policy on the accreditation of postgraduate courses in psychology should be read in conjunction with the Society's current Code of Professional Ethics. The Code is intended to regulate the professional activities of PSI members and presents standards of conduct to which psychologists should aspire.

The PSI Code of Professional Ethics is based on the structure of the Meta-Code of the European Federation of Professional Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) (1995). The PSI Code proposes four overall Ethical Principles with a number of subheadings for each one.

The four ethical principles are

1. Respect for the rights and dignity of the person
2. Competence
3. Responsibility
4. Integrity

Professional Standards

The Society is committed to the maintenance, promotion and development of professional standards in education and training for psychologists in Ireland. In order to do so the Society will review its accreditation policies and procedures from time to time. In so doing the Society will adopt a collaborative process with academic institutions, practitioners, employers and other stakeholders to ensure that psychologist's training prepares them adequately for the demands of professional practice in Ireland.

The Society's accreditation policy and procedures should be considered in conjunction with the university's own Quality Assurance scheme by individual courses when seeking accreditation. Information relating to the university's Quality Assurance scheme should be made available to the Society at the time an accreditation application is made.

Accreditation is regarded as a supportive process undertaken in order to work alongside our partners to maintain and develop the highest standards of training and professional competence for psychologists.

In maintaining standards for the professional training of psychologists the Society will be cognisant of EU standards as appropriate.

Statutory Registration

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act was passed into law in 2005. Under this Act, Psychologists, along with eleven other professions, will be regulated. The Society welcomes this development.

The purpose of statutory registration is to protect the public. In order to do so a Registration Board will be established to register psychologists working in Ireland. It is anticipated that in future the evaluation of training for psychologists will come under the remit of the Psychologist's Registration Board. The Society will urge the Board to adhere to current standards for accreditation of psychology courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. To ensure that standards are maintained for future education and training courses, the Society will continue to offer accreditation of psychology courses in third level institutions.

Psychology Specialisms accredited by PSI

The PSI accredits undergraduate and postgraduate academic and professional training courses in psychology in Ireland.

All postgraduate courses in psychology accredited by the PSI require applicants on entry to hold academic qualifications, usually an undergraduate degree in psychology, which satisfy at least the minimum qualifications of Graduate Membership of the PSI. Thus an honours undergraduate degree in psychology is regarded as the essential foundation for entry into postgraduate professional training in psychology.

Currently the Society has accreditation criteria for postgraduate courses in

- Clinical Psychology
- Counselling Psychology
- Educational Psychology
- Health Psychology
- Forensic Psychology (Academic)
- Work and Organisational Psychology

The Society currently accredits post graduate professional training courses in Clinical, Counselling and Educational psychology in Ireland. The Society also accredits an academic postgraduate course in Forensic Psychology.

A complete list of the undergraduate and postgraduate courses currently accredited by the Society is available on the accreditation pages of the Society's website www.psihq.ie

This policy was approved by PSI Council on *19th of September 2008* and will be reviewed within a five year period.