

## Attachment E: Summary of proposed changes between the current and draft updated competencies for general registration

Current competency	Proposed updated competency	Changes made
<p><b>Competency 1: Knowledge of the discipline</b></p> <p>Overall knowledge of the discipline underpins all of the other competencies and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of psychological principles, professional ethics and standards</li> <li>• theories of individual and systemic functioning and change</li> <li>• dysfunctional behaviour</li> <li>• psychopathology, and the cultural bases of behaviour and organisational</li> </ul>	<p><b>Competency 1: Applies scientific knowledge of psychology to inform safe and effective practice</b></p> <p>1.1 Possesses knowledge of psychological concepts, constructs, theories, models of intervention, and methods.</p> <p>1.2 Critically evaluates and appraises levels of scientific evidence from psychology and relevant contemporary research, to guide and inform evidenced-based practice.</p> <p>1.3 Understands the philosophical, theoretical and methodological foundations of various scientific methods and their limitations and selects and applies the appropriate method.</p> <p>1.4 Applies a scientific, culturally informed and evidence-based approach to psychological practice and evaluating outcomes.<sup>1</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New title for competency that focuses on the scientific basis of the profession (as psychology is a broad discipline), and that recognises that knowledge is required across all eight competencies (not just Competency 1).</li> <li>• Included <i>application</i> of knowledge in addition to possessing the knowledge to focus on effective practice and to distinguish a psychologist.</li> <li>• Included importance of <i>safe and effective practice</i>. Competencies in a regulatory context must ensure that psychologists are suitably qualified and competent to practise safely.</li> <li>• Removed specific examples of knowledge (that is, the dot points). Competencies are high level and should not include lists of how to make operational the competency. Competency lists have the dual problem of either being too long (to capture an exhaustive list) or being too short (and miss important concepts). Competencies should be operationalised as appropriate (for example, through</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The definition of psychological practice is outlined in the [Recency of practice registration standard](#) and includes the diversity of roles where psychologists' practice including direct and indirect client care, management, administration, education, research, and advisory, regulatory and policy roles.

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systems.	1.5 Possesses the understanding and ability to design and conduct ethical research relevant to cultural and professional contexts.	<p>accreditation of courses, curriculum for training, KPIs for work context).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included understanding and conducting research to this competency. (The <i>Research and evaluation</i> competency is currently listed as Competency 5). Research is foundational to scientific knowledge, and to evidence-informed safe and effective practice.</li> <li>• Added culturally informed knowledge of the discipline to ensure all eight competencies address cultural safety (C1.4).</li> <li>• Updated the competency title and description to include action verbs, to be measurable, and to be properly written as a competency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 2: Ethical, legal and professional matters</b></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the ethical, legal and professional aspects of psychological practice.</p>	<p><b>Competency 2: Practises ethically and professionally</b></p> <p>2.1 Accepts personal responsibility for professional conduct.</p> <p>2.2 Aligns conduct with the profession’s accepted ethical and professional standards.</p> <p>2.3 Adheres to relevant legal and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>2.4 Explains ethical obligations and decision-making to relevant others.</p> <p>2.5 Reasonably foresees the outcomes of decisions and conduct.</p> <p>2.6 Proactively manages ethical dilemmas using sound ethical decision-making processes.</p> <p>2.7 Practises within the boundaries of professional competence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded the competency description – current description is virtually the same as the competency title. It is truncated and does not provide enough information for clarity of meaning.</li> <li>• Better defined what is meant by ‘professional matters’. Currently professional matters are defined in the national psychology exam curriculum.</li> <li>• Separated this competency into two, with Competency 2 broadly focusing on the legal and ethical components, and Competency 3 broadly focusing on professional matters about the application of legal and ethical understanding in keeping the public safe.</li> <li>• Decided not to list Board’s standards, ethical codes or legal sources (in C2.2. and C2.3) as these are too numerous to list, include different documents depending on jurisdiction and work context (for example, mandatory reporting of abuse), and are regulatory updated. The competencies are intended to be high level.<sup>i</sup></li> </ul>

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	<p>2.8 Maintains competence as a psychologist.</p> <p>2.9 Regularly consults with peers, supervisors, and/or other relevant sources.</p> <p>2.10 Identifies, assesses and manages risks effectively and responsibly in such a way that minimises negative impacts on all concerned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused descriptions on the broad application of legal and ethical understanding in keeping the public safe (C2.2). Other documents (for example, <i>Code of conduct</i>) provide the necessary detail to make operational the high-level competencies.</li> <li>• Moved (and improved) the description of ethics, legal and professional matters that are currently listed in the area of practice endorsement (AoPE) competencies into general competencies. These are core competencies expected of all psychologists. The current AoPE competencies for legal, ethical and professional matters are essentially the same across all nine AoPEs, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– understanding ethical issues in various psychology settings and how to appropriately manage them, and</li> <li>– competence in communicating psychologists' ethical obligations to others (now included in C2.4 and Competency 6).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Competency 3: Exercises professional reflexivity, deliberate practice and self-care</b></p> <p>3.1 Understands the parameters underpinning professional competence.</p> <p>3.2 Recognises the limits of own competence and refers on to other practitioners.</p> <p>3.3 Critically evaluates the effectiveness of own professional practice and strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>3.4 Reflects on the impact of one's own culture, values, beliefs and biases, and acts upon such reflection and ensures practice is responsive and adaptive to client, context and culture.</p> <p>3.5 Engages with reflection and reflexively with disciplinary knowledge and professional practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included a focus on risk management that is broader than managing client risk of harm to self and others (C2.10).</li> <li>• Included a focus on professional reflection and reflexivity, deliberate practice, and self-care, as each of these are essential in ensuring effective and safe practice. The competency mapping project showed that there was a gap between the Board's competencies and international competency standards in this area (C3).<sup>ii</sup></li> <li>• Added reflecting on one's own culture and values to ensure all eight competencies address cultural safety (C3.4).</li> <li>• Included a self-care component in this competency. Comparable regulators for psychology in NZ, UK, USA and the International Declaration have a self-care competency. This is important for effective and safe practice (C3.7).<sup>iii</sup></li> </ul>

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	<p>3.6 Identifies areas for improvement in their professional practice, competence, and conduct and implements activities to enhance competence and development of professional identity.</p> <p>3.7 Monitors and manages self-care to sustain professional functioning and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the competency title and description to include action verbs, to be measurable, and to be properly written as a competency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 3: Psychological assessment and measurement</b></p> <p>The use of appropriate psychometric tools that enable description, conceptualisation, and prediction of relevant aspects of a client's functioning, behaviour, and personality (note: the client may be an organisation, group or individual).</p>	<p><b>Competency 4: Conducts psychological assessments</b></p> <p>4.1 Has knowledge of the relative strengths and limitations of the different methods of assessment and modes of delivery relevant to practice across the lifespan and in different contexts, including cultural contexts.</p> <p>4.2 Identifies assessment needs, plans assessments and selects assessment methods appropriate to the client/s, the context, and purposes of the activity.</p> <p>4.3 Develops and prioritises goals in collaboration with clients and relevant others.</p> <p>4.4 Administers a range of culturally safe assessment methods to assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cognitive functioning capacity and vocational attainment</li> <li>diagnose psychological and psychosocial functioning,</li> <li>risk to self and others</li> <li>parental and family functioning</li> <li>workplace assessments and performance.</li> </ul> <p>4.5 Undertakes, scores and interprets assessment measures.</p> <p>4.6 Formulates results of the assessment measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded competency description – current description is truncated and does not provide enough information for clarity of meaning.</li> <li>Included descriptions about the <i>process</i> of assessment not just knowledge about various assessment tools, by including rationale of tool selection, goal setting, interpretation of results, judgement and decision-making, and communication of results.</li> <li>Included specific reference to competencies relevant to conducting psychological assessments across the lifespan and in different practice contexts.</li> <li>Included specific reference to conducting culturally safe assessments (C4.1 and C4.4).</li> <li>Acknowledged that there is overlap between the competencies for assessment and intervention. Decision to include a <i>preamble</i> to the competencies that notes the interconnectedness of all eight competencies and the importance of taking a holistic approach.</li> <li>Included a <i>definition</i> section of the professional competencies for psychologists document to define 'client' and other terms to improve clarity and help readability. Client may be an individual, couple, family, group, organisation etc.</li> </ul>

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	4.7 Provides meaningful feedback to the client/s and relevant others. 4.8 Integrates feedback from consumers, clients and relevant others. 4.9 Identifies and manages inherent risk associated with assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the competency title and description to include action verbs, to be measurable, and to be properly written as a competency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 4: Intervention strategies</b></p> <p>Activities that promote, restore, sustain or enhance cognitive functioning, emotional adjustment and a sense of wellbeing in individuals or groups of clients through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preventative</li> <li>developmental, or</li> <li>remedial services, and/or</li> </ul> <p>in groups or organisations, restoring or enhancing group and/or organisational functioning.</p>	<p><b>Competency 5: Conducts psychological interventions</b></p> 5.1 Has knowledge of the efficacy and effectiveness of a range of interventions and modes of delivery relevant to practice across the lifespan and in different contexts, including cultural contexts. 5.2 Uses diagnosis, formulation, and client preferences to develop intervention plans. 5.3 Selects and implements intervention/s that will address the goals for intervention and are sensitive to both the client and professional context. 5.4 Outlines the risks and benefits of treatment to the individual relevant to their context, strengths, lived experiences and circumstances. 5.5 Conducts a range of culturally safe interventions that maximise optimal outcomes with clients and that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify and manage clients who are vulnerable or at risk of harm to self or others</li> <li>treat psychological disorders</li> <li>strengthen healthy relationships within the family system or other relevant systems</li> <li>support adaptive psychological functioning in individuals, groups and systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded competency description – current description is truncated and does not provide enough information for clarity of meaning.</li> <li>Enhanced the intervention competency to specify component skills (for example, planning, designing, using current accepted evidence, evaluation, review, communication and managing risks) by using the International Declaration as a basis for improvement.</li> <li>Included specific reference to competencies relevant to conducting psychological interventions across the lifespan and in different practice contexts (C5.1).</li> <li>Included specific reference to conducting culturally safe interventions (5.1 and 5.5).</li> <li>Removed the list of intervention functions (the dot points) and replaced with a more inclusive list focused on the <i>purpose</i> of conducting a range of interventions (C5.5).</li> <li>Acknowledged that there is overlap between the competencies for assessment and intervention and determined to include a <i>preamble</i> to the competencies that noted the interconnectedness of all eight competencies and the importance of taking a holistic approach.</li> </ul>

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	<p>5.6 Regularly evaluates client progress and views about the agreed psychological intervention, client's goals and aspirations, and the effectiveness of interventions.</p> <p>5.7 Uses evaluation results to review and revise interventions as necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included a <i>definition</i> section in the professional competencies for psychologists to define 'client' and other terms to improve clarity and help readability.</li> <li>• Updated the competency title and description to include action verbs, to be measurable, and to be properly written as a competency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 5: Research and evaluation</b></p> <p>The application of critical analysis to evaluate and apply findings from scientific publications in psychology to working with clients, as well as to evaluate and report on interventions.</p>	<p><b>See Competency 1</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included this competency into Competency 1: Applies scientific knowledge of psychology to inform safe and effective practice. Research is foundational to scientific knowledge, and to evidence-informed safe and effective practice, and fits better conceptually with C1.</li> <li>• Acknowledged the importance for psychologists holding general registration to have the knowledge and skills to conduct applied research and know how to apply research to practice, rather than <i>being required</i> to contribute to scientific research knowledge (for example, PhD).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 6: Communication and interpersonal relationships</b></p> <p>The capacity to convey, appraise and interpret information orally and in writing and to interact on a professional level with a wide range of client groups and other professionals.</p>	<p><b>Competency 6: Communicates and relates to others effectively and appropriately</b></p> <p>6.1 Communicates effectively and professionally with a diverse range of clients, colleagues and stakeholders.</p> <p>6.2 Communicates the psychologist's role and purpose.</p> <p>6.3 Provides relevant, timely, and clear feedback, information, and guidance to clients and relevant others.</p> <p>6.4 Uses the most appropriate form/s of communication for the client and context; and is aware of the limitations of each mode of communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded competency description – current description is truncated and does not provide enough information for clarity of meaning.</li> <li>• Enhanced the communication competency to describe <i>specific skills</i> for effective communication, based on an appreciation of the importance of effective communication and interpersonal relationships for safe practice.</li> <li>• Included separate descriptions for communication with clients (therapeutic) and with others (non-therapeutic; for example, colleagues), as these contexts require some different skills.</li> <li>• Included specific reference to ensuring communication is conducted in a culturally safe way (C6.1, C6.5 and C 6.7).</li> </ul>

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	<p>6.5 Establishes and maintains appropriate, safe and respectful working relationships with clients and relevant others.</p> <p>6.6 Establishes and maintains appropriate, safe and respectful working relationships with colleagues in psychology and other professions.</p> <p>6.7 Works collaboratively and makes recommendations and referrals to other relevant practitioners where appropriate.</p> <p>6.8 Understands the roles and works collaboratively with other service providers and professionals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlighted the importance of collaborating and working effectively with other health practitioners to provide safe, high quality, evidence-informed patient/client-centred care (C6.6, C6.7, C6.8).</li> <li>Recognised the importance of communication across all competencies. Decision to include a <i>preamble</i> to the competencies that notes the interconnectedness of all eight competencies and the importance of taking a holistic approach.</li> <li>Updated the competency title and description to include action verbs, to be measurable, and to be properly written as a competency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 7: Working with people from diverse groups</b></p> <p>Demonstrating understanding of Competencies 1–6 one to six above applied to clients whose backgrounds differ from the psychologist’s own, such as people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>from cultures such as, but not only, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples</li> <li>from non-English speaking backgrounds</li> <li>who differ from the psychologist for</li> </ul>	<p><b>Competency 7: Demonstrates a health equity and human rights approach when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities</b></p> <p>7.1 Works with knowledge and understanding of the historical, political, social and cultural context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities, including the ongoing impact of colonisation and racism.</p> <p>7.2 Demonstrates culturally responsive healthcare that considers the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities (e.g. there are different Nations, language groups, clans, culture) and that there are intersecting forms of diversity (e.g. See C8.1 for a list of diverse social identity groups).</p> <p>7.3 Applies the principles of culturally safe care to psychological practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current C7 is truncated and does not provide enough information for clarity of meaning. Separated this competency into two, with Competency 7 specifically focusing on working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities, and Competency 8 broadly focusing on working with people from diverse groups.</li> <li>Expanded competency titles to emphasise a health equity and human rights approach.</li> <li>Included cultural safety in Competencies 7 and 8 in line with the <a href="#">Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy 2020–2025</a> and <a href="#">Statement of intent</a>.</li> <li>The competency mapping project showed that there was a gap between the Board’s competencies and international competency standards in this area.</li> <li>Agreement that Competency 7 needed to be enhanced. Improved descriptors to:</li> </ul>



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<p>example in age, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>7.4 Applies the principles of trauma-aware and healing-informed care to psychological practice.</p> <p>7.5 Demonstrates the ability to reflect on and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Aboriginal knowledges.</p> <p>7.6 Understands the importance of self-determined decision-making for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families, and communities, and works in partnership to achieve health outcomes within an Aboriginal Health frame of reference.</p> <p>7.7 Appropriately consults with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families, communities and organisations to support collaboration in achieving health outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acknowledge the intersectionality of people’s various identities and how this impacts the work (for example, the specific needs when working with a client who identifies as both LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; or when a female client and male therapist are working together) (C 7.2),</li> <li>include information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and the importance of working within an Aboriginal health frame of reference (i.e. health includes physical, social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of individuals and communities) (C7.4, C7.5, C7.6)</li> <li>acknowledge the importance of working in partnership to achieve health outcomes (C7.7).</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement that Competency 8 needed to be enhanced. Improved descriptors to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include a more inclusive (not exhaustive) list of social and cultural identity groups based on the APA Diversity inclusion guidelines and the EU Charter of human rights (C8.1).</li> <li>include specific acknowledgement of the cultural history of psychology and its effects on diverse groups (for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, refugees and their families and communities) (C8.2, C8.3).</li> <li>use the term ‘cultural responsiveness’ rather than ‘cultural competence’ as it is about ongoing learning, critical evaluation of own practice and attitude to work (C8.4).</li> <li>include the importance of practitioners recognising their own personal background and positionality, and how to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Competency 8: Demonstrates a health equity and human rights approach when working with people from diverse groups</b></p> <p>8.1 Works without discrimination and is inclusive, sensitive and respectful of all forms of individual diversity in clients, colleagues, and relevant others and with an understanding of intersecting forms of diversity. This includes, but is not limited to age, race, ethnicity, language, culture, immigration status, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical attributes, ability, disability, cognitive capacity, social and/or economic status, geographic location, educational attainment, and religious and/or spiritual orientation.</p> <p>8.2 Works with knowledge and understanding of the history of psychological theories and practice, their</p>	



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	<p>impact on people from diverse groups, and referral pathways to specialised supports where appropriate.</p> <p>8.3 Understands the impact of cultural identity, values, beliefs and experiences on psychological wellbeing or behaviour, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrant and refugee experiences.</p> <p>8.4 Recognises the impact of one's own values, beliefs, experiences, positionality and cultural identity on practice, and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to culturally responsive practice.</p> <p>8.5 Demonstrates the ability to reflect on and learn from clients/relevant others and their unique experiences.</p> <p>8.6 Adapts psychological practice, including engagement with clients and relevant others, in response to the needs of people from diverse social identity groups including different cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>8.7 Understands the roles of, and works collaboratively with, service providers and professionals who support socially and culturally diverse individuals and groups.</p>	<p>interact with people who are different to the practitioner (C8.4, C8.5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognised the overlap between C7.7 and C8 and Competency 3: Exercises professional self-reflection, deliberate practice, and self-care. Decision to include a <i>preamble</i> to the competencies that notes the interconnectedness of all eight competencies and the importance of taking a holistic approach.</li> <li>– Updated the competency titles and description to include action verbs, be measurable, and to be properly written as a competency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 8: Practice across the lifespan</b></p> <p>Demonstrating understanding of Competencies one to six, applied to clients in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• childhood</li> <li>• adolescence</li> <li>• adulthood, and</li> <li>• late adulthood.</li> </ul>	<p>No new competency proposed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determined that practice across the lifespan is a core competency for general registration and is important across all competencies.</li> <li>• Decided to remove this competency as a standalone competency, and to include practice across the lifespan in all proposed new competencies.</li> <li>• Decided to include overt reference to the terms <i>lifespan</i> and <i>age</i> in several of the updated competencies (Competencies 4, 5 and 8).</li> </ul>

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<sup>i</sup> Board means the Psychology Board of Australia. See [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au).

<sup>ii</sup> Competency mapping project – Independent consultants with expertise in education, accreditation, higher education reforms, and competency writing were appointed by the Board to carry out an objective and impartial review of our current competencies, and to map these against international comparisons and the [APAC Standards](#). The aim was to identify any improvements that could be made to the competencies.

<sup>iii</sup> The aim of the *International declaration of core competencies in professional psychology* is to serve as the foundation for a coherent global system for equating psychology registration, accreditation and training and conduct at the time of entry into the profession. For more information see the International Project on Competence in Psychology (IPCP) [www.psykologforeningen.no/foreningen/english/ipcp](http://www.psykologforeningen.no/foreningen/english/ipcp).