



## **ADVISORY REPORT OF THE SUPERIOR HEALTH COUNCIL no. 9194**

### **Definition of and competency profile for clinical psychology in Belgium**

This report aims at providing clinical / health care psychologists with specific recommendations on definition and profile of competencies.

The advisory report was validated by the Board on  
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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

With this advisory report the SHC provides a definition, a description of the field of professional activity and a profile of competencies of the clinical psychologist as a health care professional in Belgium. The scientific literature, publications of international professional organizations and discussions with representatives of the profession and related health care professions, the academic world and policy makers served as a base for the advisory report (SHC, 2015). The double professional title of **clinical / health care psychologist** was adopted in order to reflect the scope of professional activities. The advice considers the profession at the level of competence for entry into independent practice. The training route to acquire this level of competence consists of a master's degree in the domain of clinical / health care psychology, obtained after minimum five years of university training, completed with minimum one year of supervised practice (Lunt et al., 2015).

A clinical / health care psychologist in Belgium is a professional practicing clinical /health care psychology, defined as: "***the autonomous development and application of theories, methods and techniques of scientific psychology in the promotion of health, in the psychological screening, diagnosis and assessment of health problems, and in the prevention, the management and the treatment of these problems in people***".

These activities are applied in the broad field of health care such as health education and promotion, prevention and treatment of health problems, rehabilitation and crisis intervention. This implies that the clinical / health care psychologist can be actively integrated in the first, second and third line of patient care and in the broad scope of health care institutions in Belgium.

A competency profile for the Belgian clinical / health care psychologist is proposed, based on various internationally recognized competency models such as the competency cube (Rodolfa et al., 2005), , and more specifically on the revised competency benchmark model (Hatcher et al., 2013), as proposed by the American Psychological Association. Models advanced in countries such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and the model of the EFPA (Lunt et al., 2015) were also taken into account.

The competency profile of the Belgian clinical / health care psychologists at the level of entry into independent practice is described by means of foundational and functional dimensions. The

foundational competency dimension refers to professionalism, relational skills and scientific competencies. The functional competency dimension refers to professional application of evidence based psychological practice in psychological assessment and interventions, educational competencies and system competencies, referring to interdisciplinary relationships, organizational and societal engagements. These competency domains are operationalized in behavioural benchmarks in order to make the competency model suitable for various uses, including development of education and training programs, quality assessment and control, function descriptions in professional contexts, and health care policy development.

## REFERENCES

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Hatcher RL, Grus CL, McCutcheon SR, Fouad NA, Campbell LF, Leahy KL. Competency Benchmarks: Practical Steps Toward a Culture of Competence. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology* 2013;2:84-91.

Rodolfa E, Eisman E, Rehm L, Bent R, Nelson P, Ritchie P. A cube Model for Competency Development: Implications for psychology Educators and Regulators. *Professional Psychology; Research and Practice* 2005;36(4):347-54.

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