



UK Council for Psychotherapy

(Draft) Standards of Proficiency for Psychotherapy

February 2009

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Contextual Introduction

This document maps onto the HPC's Standards of Proficiency for a Health Professional the UKCP's most recent draft of their generic standards of proficiency, which reflect current UKCP policies and practices. Additionally we have drawn upon some standards of proficiency from Arts Therapy which we see as a complementary to the UKCP standards.

The UKCP Standards of Proficiency are written in the language of the QAA Framework for Higher Education qualification in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (most recently updated 2008). We have used this framework's descriptor for a Master's degree as the guidance benchmark for the level of the coherent integration of knowledge and skill that a UKCP registrant psychotherapist will be able to articulate and demonstrate. (See QAA Masters level descriptor (2008); appendix A) Further, the UKCP has translated the QAA generic master's level descriptor into a psychotherapy specific descriptor which provides a generic guidance benchmark for what an autonomous, professional UKCP registered psychotherapist will be fully able to do from the moment of initial assessment to the termination of work. (See UKCP generic training outcomes: Masters level; appendix B)

Within the HPC framework, Standards of Proficiency are inextricably linked to, and quality assured by, the Standards of Education and Training (SETs). It has always been the position of UKCP that the Standards of Proficiency of an autonomous, professional psychotherapist, eligible for UKCP registration, reflect Masters level descriptors (see Appendices A and B) and that these are assured by a Masters level Standard of Education and Training. This is also consistent with the European Association of Psychotherapy requirements, Amicus Requirements for an Adult Psychotherapist and the Requirements for Arts Therapist. Psychiatrists with a further specialism in psychotherapy are aligning their standards to this level.

We share the view that the Standards of Proficiency for a psychotherapist need to be set within a Masters Level framework to reflect:

- The complexity and reality of psychotherapy practice (p.5 TSRFD 2001)

- The ability to develop and use a coherent in-depth integration of knowledge and theory, clinical practice, supervision and personal development to generate therapeutic hypotheses and responses.
- The capacity for critical reflexivity in relation to all areas of psychotherapy practice (p.22 TSRFD)
- The ability to recognize and manage complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of ethical, professional and/or clinical understanding and generate informed responses.

All the standards of proficiency for UKCP registrants presented in the following table reflect, therefore, a Masters level of training/education.

This is true for all UKCP training providers whether they are validated by a University as providing a Masters program of professional education and training or providing a UKCP quality assured equivalent.

In broader terms, this mapping exercise reminded us where both sets of Standards of Proficiency are complementary, where they are different and the difference may be one of language rather than intent, and where they did not sit comfortably together, on the face of it, at all. In our view, some of these tensions could be seen as the inevitable challenge of elaborating into the language of proficiency's for a health professional both the science and the art of psychotherapy. (UKCP mission statement).

As the UKCP is a founding member of the European Association of Psychotherapy (EAP) we include below, for your information and consideration, the EAP definition of the profession of psychotherapy. The UKCP standards of proficiency are framed in reference to this.

The European Association of Psychotherapist (EAP) has adopted the definition of psychotherapy used in Austrian law as a working definition. This is still under debate and there are concerns about the use of a German language text when English is the official language of the EAP. Although reservations have been expressed about the EAP definition it has not agreed an alternative definition of its own and the EAP text is the most authoritative currently available. The UKCP was a founding member of the EAP and remains an active participant in this pan-European professional organisation with representation at the European Parliament.

1. Definition of the profession of Psychotherapy

(1) The practice of psychotherapy is the comprehensive, conscious and planned treatment of psychosocial, psychosomatic and behavioural

disturbances or states of suffering with scientific psychotherapeutic methods, through an interaction between one or more person being treated, and one or more psychotherapists, with the aim of relieving or removing symptoms, disturbed behavioural patterns and attitudes to change and to foster the maturation, development and health of the treated person. It requires both a general and a specific training/education.

- (2) the independent practice of psychotherapy consists of the autonomous, responsible enactment of the capacities described in paragraph 1; independent of whether the activity is in free practice or institutional work.

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(Draft)

UKCP Standards of Proficiency for Psychotherapy

Key to the following table

- The HPC standards of proficiency are written in black.
- The UKCP generic knowledge, understanding and skills, are written in green.
- Standards taken or adapted from the Standards of Proficiency for Arts Therapists are written in maroon.

Expectations of a health professional

1a: Professional autonomy and accountability

Registrants must:

1a.1 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession

- understand the need to act in the best interests of service users at all times
- understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council
- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process

UKCP Registrants must:

- demonstrate an awareness of and an ability to manage the implications of ethical dilemmas
- demonstrate an ability to work with others to formulate solutions
- act in the best interests of clients
- treat clients with respect and dignity
- agree to abide by and work within the boundaries the Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for the UKCP Member Organisation through which they are registered
-

1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner

1a.3 understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality

1a.4 understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent

1a.5 be able to exercise a professional duty of care

UKCP Registrants must:

- take appropriate action to protect the rights of children and vulnerable adults
- understand and take personal responsibility for professional conduct
- ensure personal prejudice about a client does not prejudice the way you relate to them
- be able to preserve the confidentiality of your clients
- demonstrate capacity for adaptation and original practice
- demonstrate capacity to identify, assess and manage resolution of clinical problems

1a.6 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement

UKCP Registrants must:

- only practise in the areas in which you have appropriate education, knowledge, skills, training and experience.
- agree to abide by the Continuing Professional Development and re-accreditation requirements specified by UKCP and those of the relevant UKCP Section for their UKCP Member Organisation
- demonstrate responsibility for self-monitoring
- act within the limits of their knowledge, skill and experience

1a.7 recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly

UKCP Registrants must:

- act within the limits of their knowledge, skill and experience
- ensure that you maintain reasonable awareness and a level of understanding regarding relevant laws and statutory responsibilities that are applicable
- be able to demonstrate the ability to reflect consistently on the therapeutic process and on own functioning in order to improve practice
- identify and manage appropriately their personal involvement in and contribution to processes of the psychotherapy they practice
- have arrangements to ensure that they can identify and manage appropriately their personal involvement in and contribution to the process of the psychotherapies they practice

1a.8 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise

UKCP Registrants must:

- take action if your physical or mental health could be harming your fitness to practise
- must adhere to UKCP Central Complaints Process, and recognise that failure to do so could affect eligibility for UKCP registration

1b: Professional relationships

Registrants must:

1b.1 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users, and their relatives and carers

- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
- understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals
- be able to make appropriate referrals

1b.2 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

UKCP Registrants must:

- be able to communicate with colleagues and clients about their chosen model of psychotherapy
- evidence a good command of written and spoken English; (disability and equalities exceptions / adaptations to requirement will always apply)

1b.3 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service providers, their relatives and carers

- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5
(This is a major equalities stumbling block for UKCP)
- understand how communications skills affect the assessment of service users, and how the means of communication should be modified to address potential barriers such as age, physical ability and learning ability
- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others
- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socioeconomic status
- understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible.
- recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility

UKCP Registrants must:

- communicate properly and effectively with clients and other therapists
- disclose on request your terms, fees and conditions and, where appropriate, methods of practice at the outset of psychotherapy
- with supporting evidence, assess and report on their own and others' psychotherapy work with patients/clients
- evidence a good command of written and spoken English; (disability and equalities exceptions / adaptations to requirement will always apply)

1b.4 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user

- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users

UKCP Registrants must:

- communicate properly and effectively with clients and other therapists
- be able to engage confidently in professional communication with others about their chosen model of psychotherapy
- be able to explain the nature, purpose and techniques of their chosen theoretical model, in a way that is consistent with their theoretical model, to clients and carers.(S. of P. Arts Therapists)

The skills required for the application of practice

2a: Identification and assessment of health and social care needs

Registrants must:

2a.1 be able to gather appropriate information

2a.2 be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques

- be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment

2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate

2a.4 be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected

UKCP Registrants must:

- have the capacity to evaluate the significance of research findings with respect to practice, and their practice
- be able to apply a chosen theoretical model and knowledge to formulate and apply appropriate therapeutic processes/strategies

- demonstrate a critical understanding of the relevance of studies and research findings in human development, psychopathology, sexuality, ethics and social sciences and critically evaluate their implication for assessment and therapeutic intervention
- have a knowledge of research findings in relation to assessment for therapeutic intervention, and a capacity to critique these
- be able to apply a chosen theoretical model and knowledge to assess patients/clients for suitability for psychotherapy
- be able to observe and record clients' responses and assess the implication for diagnosis and intervention (S. of P. Arts Therapists)

2b: Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs

Registrants must:

2b.1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions

- recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice
- be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of a range of research methodologies
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice

UKCP Registrants must

- be able to demonstrate some critical understanding of the relevance of different approaches to research to psychotherapy practiced
- be able to understand basic research techniques and their application to the investigation and evaluation of psychotherapeutic interventions from assessment to termination of treatment
- demonstrate the capacity to evaluate the significance of research findings with respect to practice, and their practice
- demonstrate a critical understanding of the relevance of studies and research findings in human development, psychopathology, sexuality, ethics and social science and critically evaluate their implication for assessment and therapeutic intervention

2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments
- demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice

UKCP Registrants must:

- keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date
- undertake analysis of complex, incomplete and contradictory areas of clinical understanding in order to conceptualise a range of interventions
- demonstrate awareness of different ways of evidencing practice according to UKCP MO and Section specific methodologies, such as CD-Rom, audio or video tapes, transcripts, 'live' supervision etc - with due regard to equalities considerations

2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, physiological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors

UKCP Registrants must:

- be able to demonstrate the ability to use a chosen theoretical model and knowledge to establish and work with the therapeutic relationship
- demonstrate ability to use models of gendered and culturally influenced human development when considering the client's situation and the implication of these when developing therapeutic hypotheses and therapeutic responses
- demonstrate a critical understanding of and be able to use theoretical knowledge to develop hypotheses and generate therapeutic responses to clinical problems, and to develop new approaches
- work within their level of competence and training, including that which is relevant to working with specific client groups and therapeutic formats

2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully

- understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users, and those involved in their care

UKCP Registrants must:

- be able to recognise the existence of different psychotherapies, based on different theories, and should promote respectful understanding of differences

and similarities between theories

- make appropriate therapeutic interventions consistent with chosen theoretical model and knowledge
- manage appropriate endings in a manner consistent with chosen theoretical model and knowledge
- be able to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of considering the experience of clients in the context of the overall matrix of their lives and the centrality of family, social, cultural, religious/spiritual and political systems which frame their reality
- work within their level of competence and training, including that which is relevant to working with specific client groups and therapeutic formats

2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately

- be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other clinical information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- understand the need to use only accepted terminology in making records

UKCP Registrants:

- must keep records
- must protect information in records from being lost, damaged and accessed by someone without appropriate authority, or tampered with
- when updating records information that was previously there must not be deleted or made difficult to read

2c: Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions

Registrants must:

2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care
- be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunctions with the service user
- recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes
- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- understand that outcomes may not always conform to expectations but may still

meet the needs of service users

2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on clinical practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review

UKCP Registrants must:

- ensure safe and competent practice through regular supervision meetings
- keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date
- undertake analysis of complex, incomplete and contradictory areas of clinical understanding in order to conceptualise a range of interventions and be able to reflect and discuss these
- demonstrate awareness of different ways of evidencing practice according to UKCP MO and Section specific methodologies, such as CD-Rom, audio or video tapes, transcripts, 'live' supervision etc - with due regard to equalities considerations
- engage with the UKCP annual random audit of a percentage of registrants; audit areas include: CPD, Insurance, Supervision and confirmation of qualifications
- with supporting evidence, assess and report on their own and others' psychotherapy work with patients/clients
- evidence a good command of written and spoken English; (disability and equalities exceptions / adaptations to requirement will always apply)

Knowledge, understanding and skills

3a Knowledge, understanding and skills

Registrants must:

3a.1

- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with a knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction
- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process
- recognise the role of other professions in health and social care
- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention

UKCP Registrants must:

- have knowledge of the ranges of psychotherapies and counselling and an awareness of alternative treatments
 - have the ability to recognise when the practitioner should seek other professional advice
 - articulate and demonstrate psychotherapeutic competence, reflecting an in depth knowledge base, from assessment to termination of therapeutic work
 - be able to undertake a critical analysis and evaluation of complex, incomplete or contradictory understanding in all areas of their work and be able to use this to inform their therapeutic work
 - critique chosen model of psychotherapy and compare with alternative approaches
 - demonstrate a critical understanding of studies and research findings relevant to the psychotherapist's mode of psychotherapy, together with awareness of related research where appropriate and use these to inform their practice
 - demonstrate a critical understanding of the relevance of studies and research findings in human development, psychopathology, sexuality, ethics and social science in understanding the therapeutic process and be able to engage these to achieve productive therapeutic outcomes
-
- integrate theoretical knowledge with clinical experience
 - formulate a model of the person and mind
 - formulate a model of gendered and culturally influenced human development
 - formulate a model of human change and the ways change can be facilitated through the process of psychotherapy
 - formulate a set of clinical concepts that relate theory to practice from assessment to termination
 - have the capacity to recognise severely disturbed clients
 - work within their level of competence and training

3a.2 know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different assessment, treatment and management approaches and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual, groups or communities.

UKCP Registrants must:

- be able to recognise the existence of different psychotherapies, based on different theories, and should promote respectful understanding of differences and similarities between theories

- be able to fully manage complex, unpredictable contextual variables that may demand the capacity for adaptation and innovative practice
- employ an in depth understanding of the implicit and explicit dimensions of the therapeutic relationship and be able to engage this to facilitate productive therapeutic outcomes
- develop and use a cohesive in depth integration of theoretical knowledge, clinical experience, professional knowledge and personal experience to generate therapeutic hypotheses and responses
- demonstrate ability to use models of gendered and culturally influenced human development when considering the client's situation and the implication of these when developing therapeutic hypotheses and therapeutic responses
- be able to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of considering the experience of clients in the context of the overall matrix of their lives and the centrality of family, social, cultural, religious/spiritual and political systems which frame their reality

3a.3 understand the need for, and be able to establish and maintain, a safe practice environment

- be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
- be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation
- be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly
- be able to establish safe environments for clinical practice, which minimise risks to service users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control.



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Appendix A

From: QAA Framework for Higher Education qualifications
in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; August 2008.

37 Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

38 Bachelor's degrees with honours form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typically, learning outcomes for these programmes would be expected to be achieved on the basis of study equivalent to three full-time academic years and lead to awards with titles such as Bachelor of Arts, BA (Hons) or Bachelor of Science, BSc (Hons). In addition to bachelor's degrees at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to, for example, graduate certificates or graduate diplomas.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: Master's degree

The descriptor provided for this level of the framework is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 7 qualifications, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research

and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline

- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

39 Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal

Appendix B

Table 3: Generic Training Outcomes – Masters Level

Level Descriptors	Knowledge and Understanding <i>The learner is expected to demonstrate</i>	Analysis <i>The learner is expected to demonstrate the ability to:</i>	Synthesis and Creativity <i>The learner is expected to demonstrate the ability to:</i>	Evaluation <i>The learner is expected to demonstrate the ability to:</i>
Knowledge Base	An advanced level of theoretical knowledge of a chosen model of psychotherapy. A general level of understanding of other major models of psychotherapy. An understanding of research methods relevant to all models of psychotherapy	Formulate a model of the mind and/or person, a model of individual development and a model of therapeutic change using theoretical knowledge of chosen model of psychotherapy. Undertake analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of clinical understanding in order to conceptualise a range of therapeutic interventions	Use a high level of theoretical knowledge to develop hypotheses and generate therapeutic responses to clinical problems. This may involve the development of new therapeutic procedures or approaches	Accurately and with supporting evidence, assess and report on own and others work with clients/patients. Critique chosen model of psychotherapy and compare with alternative approaches
Level Descriptors	Therapeutic Skills	Self-appraisal, Reflection and Practice	Planning and management of learning/practice	Communication and Presentation
Person Skills	<i>The learner is expected to demonstrate the ability to use theoretical knowledge to be able to:</i> Assess clients/patients for suitability for psychotherapy. Formulate and apply appropriate therapeutic processes/strategies. Establish & work with therapeutic relationship. Make appropriate therapeutic interventions & manage appropriate endings	<i>The learner is expected to demonstrate the ability to:</i> Reflect consistently on therapeutic process and on own functioning in order to improve practice	<i>The learner is expected to demonstrate the ability to:</i> Autonomously use resources for learning. Prepare for & make effective use of supervision. Identify, clarify, assess & manage resolution of most clinical problems	<i>The learner is expected to demonstrate the ability to:</i> Engage confidently in professional communication with others
Level Descriptors	Characteristics of Professional Setting	Responsibility	Ethical Understanding	
Context of Practice	<i>The learner is required to demonstrate:</i> Experience of complex & unpredictable or specialised context that may demand capacity for adaptation and innovative practice	<i>The learner is required to demonstrate:</i> Autonomy in professional practice. Responsibility for self-monitoring. Awareness of issues & procedures relevant to professional practice	<i>The learner is required to demonstrate:</i> Awareness of & ability to manage implications of ethical dilemmas. Ability to work proactively with others to formulate solutions	

2001 Training Standards Regulatory Framework (UKCP)