EUROPSY AND THE ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN W&O PSYCHOLOGY

EAWOP General Assembly, May 15, 2009

This report was written by the EAWOP Task Force on the Future Professional Qualifications of European W&O Psychologists

Marco Depolo, Lourdes Munduate, José-Maria Peiró,
Robert A. Roe, Branimir Sverko, Matti Vartiainen
Preface

Aiming at greater mobility of work and organizational (W&O) psychologists and raising the quality of their professional services in Europe, the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) has created a Task Force to define the minimum standards that European psychologists should meet in order to qualify for independent practice in the field of W&O psychology. The Task Force was asked to generate specific proposals for the Advanced European Certificate in W&O Psychology, building on the European Certificate in Psychology (EuroPsy), which represents the first level of professional development and the Advanced European Certificate represents the second level. The Task Force oriented itself at existing norms, such as the ENOP Reference Model and Minimum Standards for W&O Psychology and EuroPsy. In collaboration with ENOP the Reference Model was updated and expanded. Moreover, building on EuroPsy, a detailed description of Competences for W&O psychologists was developed. On the basis of this, a Competence Survey among European W&O psychologists was conducted. New trends and innovative practices have also been explored. Using these and other sources of information the Task Force drafted a set of proposals that are laid down in this report. As requested by EAWOP, the proposals aim to complement the EuroPsy Certificate with an Advanced European Certificate in W&O Psychology that can serve as a means to develop the profession and to guarantee expertise and competence vis-à-vis clients and employers.
### Table of contents

1. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1
2. Aim, rationale and structure of the proposal ......................................................... 3
3. Input Requirements: Academic studies ................................................................. 4
4. Output Requirements: Competences and their Assessment ................................... 5
5. Structure, process and procedures .......................................................................... 12

References .................................................................................................................. 16
1. Introduction

In 2005 the European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA) adopted the EuroPsy system to advance the qualifications of European psychologists. EuroPsy defines a set of requirements regarding the academic education, professional competence, and ethical commitment of psychologists that should be met by individual psychologists in order to demonstrate that they can be expected to render adequate services to their customers and employers. The system is currently being implemented in a number of countries, with the aim of a full scale launch at the European level in 2009. EuroPsy is based on an assessment of the educational and competence portfolio of psychologists. Those who meet the requirements are awarded a “European Certificate in Psychology” and are entered in a public web-based register as a “Registered European Psychologist” for a certain period of time. This qualification can be extended for an additional period provided that certain requirements concerning continued professional development and relevant work experience are met. EuroPsy makes a distinction between ‘contexts of practice’, that is, holders of the European Certificate are considered to be qualified for work in a bounded domain only. To be registered as qualified for that domain, they must have conducted supervised work in the domain and have presented evidence of sufficient competence. W&O psychology is one of the contexts of practice.

EuroPsy clearly represents a great step forward compared to the past when psychologists in Europe had widely diverging qualifications. Yet it only deals with the basic level of qualification needed for entry into the psychological profession. This has been the main reason why the European Association of Work and Organizational psychology (EAWOP) has established a Task Force with the mission to develop proposals for an Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology. The proposals of the Task Force, which has been active between late 2005 and late 2007, are laid down in this report. They aim to establish an Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology that can be obtained after a psychologist has obtained the European Certificate in Psychology and gained further competences in this context.
Like EuroPsy, the qualification system proposed here poses requirements to the academic education of psychologists as well as to the competences acquired during on-the-job learning, in professional practice. Thus, it combines an input model (evaluation of inputs during academic studies) with an output model (evaluation of competences, as output of professional practice). Clearly, psychologists seeking a qualification at the advanced level (obtaining the European Certificate in W&O Psychology) should meet higher standards than those seeking a qualification at the basic level (obtaining the European Certificate in Psychology, with W&O psychology as the context of practice).

The main focus of this report is on setting requirements, assessing candidates and awarding certificates. Yet, the report also addresses the issue of development, considering ways in which psychologists can be trained and coached to obtain the needed expertise and competences. Moreover some practical suggestions are given concerning structures, roles, procedures and forms that will be needed to implement the proposed system.

This report is written for a broad group of stakeholders and policy makers. The primary audience consists, of course, of the Executive Committee, the Constituents and members of EAWOP. But the report is also written with ENOP, Universities, and EFPA in mind. What is proposed is a design of a future qualification system that needs to be further elaborated before it can be implemented. It is hoped that responses from various sides will help to shape the proposed system further, facilitate its coordination with EuroPsy, and promote its ultimate adoption. It is envisaged that for the purpose of implementation a more formal and operational document will have to be written.

The structure of the report is as follows. We will begin with stating the aim and rationale of developing European Certificates, and describing the logic of the proposal. Next, we will describe input and output requirements. After presenting some ideas about developing and assessing expertise and competence, we will deal with the process of awarding certificates and describe practical issues such as organizational structures, roles, procedures and tools. The report is complemented with a set of appendices, dedicated to definitions (Appendix 1), the ENOP-EAWOP Model, competences and competence profiling, a summary of survey results, supervision and coaching, documenting work experience, and Continuing Professional Development.
2. Aim, rationale and structure of the proposal

W&O psychology is the oldest area of applied psychology. Since the early studies conducted at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century an impressive body of knowledge has accumulated. However, at present work and organizational psychology can no longer be considered to be just a field of applied psychology. It is a distinct psychological discipline with its own theories and methods that -- like other psychological disciplines -- relies to some degree on knowledge from adjacent fields. While this discipline is constantly advancing, as basic research improves our understanding of behavioral phenomena, applied research brings innovations in methods and techniques that keep expanding the scope of professional assessment and intervention. It is essential that psychologists working in the field of work and organizations (W&O) are adequately informed about the major theories and methods of the discipline, and that they are able to apply the major methods and techniques in the proper way and also to innovate and develop new methods and techniques to contribute to better solutions for the customers and clients. Their expertise and competence are not crucial to develop the discipline further, but they are also required to serve the interests of the clients to which W&O psychologists offer their service. The general aim in this report, therefore, is to formulate standards that guarantee a certain level of expertise and competence in psychologists working in the field of work and organization.

The standards are meant to apply to all European psychologists working in the field of W&O psychology. A compelling reason for this is that psychologists increasingly work in cross-national settings. Growing mobility of clients as well as psychologists, make it necessary to create tools for safeguarding client interests at a European rather than a national level. A distinction is made between two sets of standards aiming at two levels of professional practice. The first level is that of beginning psychologists -- graduates who intend to start working as a psychologist and who choose to do so in the field of work and organizations. The second level is that of experienced psychologists who want to further develop their expertise and competence and work as a specialist in this field. These two levels are referred to as basic and advanced. As was mentioned in the introduction, psychologists in the first category will have to meet the general requirements of the European Certificate in Psychology (EuroPsy). For psychologists in the second category there will be the possibility to obtain the Advanced
European Certificate in W&O Psychology, provided that they meet the requirements for the advanced level that are spelled out below.

Our proposal is based on the general idea that psychologists in the W&O context can only be considered qualified if they are informed about the theories and methods of the discipline, and are able to apply them competently in practice. This idea, which accords with the science-practitioner model and the notion of evidence-based practice, is operationalized in two complementary ways:

1. A set of requirements concerning the academic education that psychologists should have received before entering into practice;
2. A set of requirements concerning competences that should be acquired through professional practice conducted under supervision or coaching and of which evidence should be provided when applying for a certificate.

These two approaches, which—like in EuroPsy—are referred to as input and output model, are described in the following paragraphs. We will first consider the input model, next we will discuss the output model.

3. Input Requirements: Academic Studies

Academic studies provide students with knowledge, skills, attitudes and basic competences, which can be considered as inputs for developing expertise in W&O psychology. To provide the proper inputs the academic curriculum must have a certain scope and duration. Guidance on this point is provided by the Reference Curriculum Model and Minimum Standards developed by ENOP-EAWOP in 2007, which is included in Appendix 2. The system entails a framework to define the structure of an academic curriculum in W&O psychology. For an explanation of the framework and the standards we refer to the Appendix 2. Here we reproduce the table with the requirements for the Advanced European Certificate in W&O Psychology (Table 1).
Table 1. Minimum standards for the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology (Advanced Level) - Required credits in ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>min. 12</td>
<td>min. 12</td>
<td>min. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses on explanatory &amp; technological theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>min. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses on diagnostic, instrument development &amp; Intervention skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>min. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage &amp; research project</td>
<td></td>
<td>min. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total W O P</td>
<td></td>
<td>min. 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>min. 120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Output Requirements: Competences and their Assessment

In order to practice in the field of W&O psychology – at the basic level or the advanced level – the psychologist must have acquired certain competences beyond what was learned during the academic study. It is, for instance, not enough to know the major theories of motivation and organizational change, or to be able to conduct job analyses or to administer tests. To successfully recognize and address clients’ problems the psychologist must develop a broad range of competences. The notion of competence used here is defined as the “capacity to adequately perform a task, duty or role in the context of a professional work setting”. Thus, a competence is understood to integrate knowledge, skills, personal values and attitudes, and to be acquired through work experience and learning by doing (Bartram & Roe, 2005; 2007). Psychologists’ competences relate to the services they render to clients with the aim to promote the development, well-being and performance of individuals, groups, organizations and society. Competence implies the use of scientific principles, knowledge, models and methods, and their application in an ethical and scientifically sound way. The importance of ethics should be underlined here. The psychologist should not only know the rules of
professional ethics but be able to effectively apply them in practice. Competences are context specific. This explains why they differ across contexts of practice and why they cannot be generalized without further learning.

Psychologists who intend to practice in the W&O field should be competent in analyzing clients’ goals, making the appropriate kinds of assessments, developing required instruments, planning and carrying out appropriate interventions, evaluating effects, giving adequate feedback to clients, and so on – all in the context of work and organizations. This calls for a practice-based learning process, involving real clients, that requires the psychologist to make assessments and take appropriate actions, and that offers an opportunity for reflection. This learning should be guided and supported by a coach or supervisor, who can evaluate the appropriateness of the learner’s activities and give feedback.

The competences that psychologists in the field of W&O psychology should develop and possess can be described by the same general categories used by EuroPsy. There are twenty competences, divided into six functional groups, i.e.:

- Goal specification: Needs analysis; Goal setting
- Assessment: Individual; Group; Organizational; Situational
- Development: Product or service definition and requirements analysis; Design; Testing; Evaluation.
- Intervention: Planning; Direct person-oriented; Direct situation-oriented; Indirect; Product or service implementation.
- Evaluation: Planning; Measurement; Analysis.
- Communication: Giving feedback; Report writing.

As they pertain to the context and the role of a W&O psychologist, these competences can and should be described in more specific terms than is the case in EuroPsy. They can be differentiated according to the three main areas of the discipline, i.e. work, personnel and organization, which are also used in the ENOP-EAWOP model. Next to the primary or professional competences, mentioned above, which reflect the content of the W&O psychology profession, psychologists should also develop and possess some secondary or enabling competences. These are competences that all academic professionals should have. They comprise:
- Continuous professional development,
- Professional relations,
- Research and development,
- Marketing and sales,
- Account management,
- Practice management,
- Quality assurance.

All competences are described in Appendix 3.

The competences and their descriptions reflect the current state of practice in W&O psychology. Changes in organizations, the nature of work, or the content of the profession may require an adaptation of the list of competences. This may imply that the same generic competence categories are retained while the descriptions are updated. It is also possible that certain competences will have to be dropped and/or others added to accommodate changes in the long run.

To establish the relevance and applicability of the list of competences, the Task Force conducted a survey among European W&O psychologists. A report on the survey is presented in Appendix 4. The main conclusion from the survey is that all types of professional and enabling competences are currently seen as relevant and important for the work of W&O psychologists. Some differences in relevance of competences between job types and regions are observed, and some indications can be found that required competences are subject to change over time. These findings require closer analysis because they point at areas where the professional development is needed.

4.1 Preparation and Assessment in Academic Studies

Psychologists in the W&O field are expected to lay the basis for their expertise by means of academic study in psychology with some degree of differentiation / specialization in W&O psychology. The ENOP-EAWOP model indicates which content should be covered and how extensively. It is an important objective for curriculum designers to make sure that the desired content is actually covered to a sufficient degree. Students of psychology should also
be aware of the required content, to be able to make informed choices from the options offered in the curriculum or between curricula offered by different faculties or universities.

The assessment of the academic preparation will take place in two ways. The first way is the evaluation of curricula published by universities to establish whether they meet the criteria set in the ENOP-EAWOP model for the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology. This curriculum evaluation, which is to be executed by experts, shall facilitate the evaluation of individual applications and provide feedback to universities in case of significant shortcomings. Secondly, the personalized curriculum as absolved by an individual psychologist will be subject to evaluation by an awarding committee to see whether it meets the requirements.

4.2 Preparation and Assessment of Competences

A common way to keep track of the process by which professional competences are learned is a Portfolio. This is a collection of documents that provides evidences about professional activities undertaken in terms of “what was done, for whom, when, how, what was produced, how it was evaluated” etc. An additional tool that can greatly enhance the value of the portfolio is a Competence Development Record. This is essentially a table that lists professional activities that have been performed over time and that have resulted in the development of particular competences (see Table 2). These two tools can be used in any practice-oriented learning process, either as a means to monitor and guide the learning process, or retrospectively to document activities that have taken place.

The development of competences by W&O psychologists will profit from a proactive approach in which the psychologist and the supervisor or coach plan ahead which competences will be developed next, and which activities will have to be developed for that. This implies an important role for the supervisor and coach. The role of the supervisor has been defined in EuroPsy. He/she is a fully qualified psychologist who carries professional responsibility for the work done by the psychologist in training, and who provides guidance. The role of the coach is confined to the phase of preparing for the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology. The coach supports the psychologist’s professional development but does so in a horizontal relationship. See Appendix 5.
Table 2. Model of Competence Development Record with examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>For whom</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Doing intakes with new clients</td>
<td>Own firm</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>Interviews with managers and follow-ups</td>
<td>Description of aims in project plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intakes with employees in career planning</td>
<td>Phillips Ltd.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Individual sessions</td>
<td>Aims for development plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual assessment</td>
<td>Testing applicants</td>
<td>AABER Consulting</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>Administration of test battery</td>
<td>Selection advice for 78 candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducting employee interviews</td>
<td>CB bank</td>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>Design of interview, 2 hour sessions, writing protocols and giving ratings</td>
<td>Recommendations on improvement in working conditions and employee development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product design</td>
<td>Knowledge test development</td>
<td>AABER Consulting</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>Exploring technical knowledge domain, generating questions, field testing, item analysis, making scoring rules and norms</td>
<td>Technical Knowledge Test (on-line, 30 items, for technical sales people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee attitude questionnaire</td>
<td>CB bank</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Generating questions for 4 domains based on exploratory interviews; data gathering, scale analysis</td>
<td>Annual Satisfaction Survey (40 items, 5-point Likert)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pro-actively developing competences, with the help of coach, can take the form of fulfilling assignments or performing certain work tasks. A tool to support such an approach is a Competence Development Scheme, which specifies the competences to be acquired and indicates practice/learning periods and deadlines (see Figure 1). This tool can be used as a plan for the learning process and as a progress chart for keeping track of the learning outcomes achieved.
Although it is an important challenge for educators in the field of W&O psychology to guide and promote competence learning, the emphasis in the context of the EuroPsy and the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology is on competence assessment. Making valid assessments about a psychologist’s competences will be difficult unless the assessor – typically a supervisor or a coach – disposes of specific information about the learning trajectory and the outcomes obtained in a range of professional situations that the psychologist was confronted with. Therefore we recommend that competence assessment takes place during the supervision or coaching period and that it is supported by the use of the aforementioned tools, that is, a Competence Development Scheme, a Competence Development Record, and a Portfolio.

![Figure 1. Model of Competence Development Scheme](image)

In the implementation of the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology assessments will have to be made on the basis of documentation that is offered after the psychologist has completed an extended period of work and competence development, accompanied by a process of professional coaching. We recommend that for this purpose the applicant should prepare a structured CV that describes relevant practice learning experiences for each requisite competence (or group of competences). Such a structured CV should be backed up
by a Portfolio that contains documentation about the roles performed and the results obtained. Suggestions regarding the structured CV are given in Appendix 6.

EuroPsy requires that candidates should have demonstrated competence in each of the six major professional functions (Goal specification, Assessment, Development, Intervention, Evaluation, and Communication) as well as in the category of enabling competences, for at least one broad context of practice. The requirements for the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology are different. Here, the requirements pertain to at least one subfield within W&O psychology (that is, Work psychology, Personnel psychology, or Organizational psychology). Moreover, candidates should possess at least 15 out of 20 specific professional competences, with at least 2 in each function, and 6 out of 8 enabling competences.

Competence assessment should not be limited to the evaluation of written documentation, but complemented with an oral examination in which the applicant explains and documents the learning experiences, a Competence Assessment Interview. Such an oral examination represents a good practice in many fields where the competences of professionals are to be assessed.

Competences assessments can be expressed in different formats. We recommend to adopt the rating scale used by the EuroPsy. This is a 4-point scale that indicates the degree to which the applicant can be expected to carry out the activities in which competences is required (see Table 3). The scale can be used to make pass or fail evaluations, depending on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic knowledge and skill present, but competence insufficiently developed</td>
<td>Competence for performing basic tasks but requiring guidance and supervision</td>
<td>Competence for performing basic tasks without guidance or supervision</td>
<td>Competence for performing complex tasks without guidance or supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Competence Rating Scale**
the required level of a competence. For the Basic EDP, competences are evaluated in groups and an overall level of level 3 should be attained (3 = competent to do simple tasks independently). For the A/EDP, it is recommended that a more specific approach be used, whereby at least two competences in each category should be present at level 4 (4 = competent to do complex tasks independently).

5. Structure, process and procedures

We refer to the EuroPsy documentation for a description of the way in which the European Certificate in psychology is issued. Our recommendation to EFPA is that the standards described above are adopted and used in awarding Certificates with W&O psychology as the designated context of practice.

As for the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology, we propose that the authority to award the Certificate rests with a European Awarding Committee (EAC), to be established as an organ of EAWOP. Furthermore, we propose that National Awarding Committees (NACs) are created to process applications and award Certificates on behalf of the EAC. These committees should be composed of senior professionals in W&O psychology and directors of academic programs in W&O psychology at the Master and/or Postgraduate level. The NACs might be appointed by the EAC upon the proposal of the relevant EAWOP Constituents. The NACs are responsible for elaborating national standards that are in agreement with the common European standards on education and competence. That is, they should identify which current systems of academic education and which (former) curricula are (and are not) in agreement with the ENOP-EAWOP Model for the Advanced European Certificate, and the Competence Requirements. These standards should be updated periodically. The National Awarding Committees can handle applications themselves or - in case of large numbers - appoint Application Committees to do so, using the standards that they have set. Any issues on which the NAC’s cannot decide will be presented to the EAC for resolution. The EAC is the highest body responsible for the Advanced Certificate. Monitoring changes in the W&O discipline and profession and updating the ENOP-EAWOP model and the Competence Requirements is a part of this responsibility.

The process of obtaining the Advanced Certificate consists of the following steps:
1. The candidate submits an application (paper or electronic with uploaded documents) to the National Awarding Committee (NAC), which comprises:

- an application form,
- a copy of the university diploma with a list of courses and grades,
- a copy of the European Certificate in Psychology / EuroPsy (in the context of W&O psychology)
- evidence of additional post-graduate education,
- a structured CV,
- a Portfolio,
- evidence of work while being coached as W&O psychologist,
- a Competence Development Record (recommended).

2. The NAC confirms the receipt of the application and asks for supplementary information in case this is not complete or up to date. Next, a threefold evaluation of the application is carried out.
   a. The university degree and the lists of courses/grades are evaluated against current academic qualification standards for the country, which has been validated against the ENOP-EAWOP model for the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology. The question is: Does the applicant have an academic education of the proper type and length?
   b. If the applicant was educated at an earlier time, when a different educational system was in operation, an evaluation of the degree and list of courses/grades is done against a list of curricula that was previously validated against the ENOP-EAWOP model or directly against this model. Again the question is: Does the applicant have an academic education of the proper type and length?
   c. The NAC invites the applicant for a Competence Assessment Interview, performs a reference check regarding the coaching, and evaluates the applicant’s work experience and competences against the competence requirements and the quantitative requirements regarding the work experience.

3. The NAC integrates the results of the evaluations. In case of a deficiency, the applicant is informed about the need for compensation. The Advanced Certificate is either awarded
or not awarded. In the latter case the applicant can appeal and ask for a review of the NAC’s judgment.

4. When the Advanced Certificate is awarded, the applicant receives a certificate and his/her personal details are registered in the Register of European W&O Psychologists, a public register that is accessible through the Internet.

A summary chart of the process is shown in Figure 2.

As a transitional arrangement, psychologists with extensive work experience may apply for the Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology under a grand-parenting scheme. This scheme entails the following:

- the applicant should be a holder of the ECP / EuroPsy (with W&O context)
- s/he should provide evidence of competence gained during a period of at least five years of independent practice as a W&O psychologist, within the last 10 years;
- the evidence is to be assessed by means of a Competence Assessment Interview.

The Advanced Certificate in W&O Psychology will be valid for a limited period of time. After this period the validity can be extended provided that the psychologist has continued to work in the area of W&O psychology, and has maintained his / her professional and enabling competences. The proposal is to set the period of initial validity, as well as that of the extensions, at 5 years. A proposal regarding the requirements for extension, consistent with those of EuroPsy, is given in Appendix 7.
Figure 1. Competences:

- University Diploma & List of subjects

Figure 2. Application process overview

IN:
- ENOP/EAWOP model
- ENOP-EAWOP directory
- List of subjects
- List of accredited curricula

OPERATIONALIZATION:
- Standard setting process

CURRENT QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

VALIDATION

APPLICATION PROCESS

Figure 2. Application process overview
References


