

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Those selecting or reviewing areas of practice should:

1. Review the below [publication from NSRP](#) concerning expanding an area of practice versus entering a new area of practice.
2. Refer to the [practice definitions](#) included in this document.

EXPANDING AREA OF PRACTICE VERSUS ENTERING A NEW AREA OF PRACTICE: WHY WE NEED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THIS DISTINCTION

During the past few years, NSRP has had a significant number of new applicants checking areas in the section of the application asking about intended areas of practice for which they have not had an integrated and organized sequence of formal study. For example, we have had applicants trained in clinical psychology indicating their intent to practice school psychology and conversely and we have received applications from those trained in counselling psychology indicating intent to practice school or clinical psychology. We have also received applications from individuals who do not have an applied degree wanting to practice in applied areas.

In addition to this, NSRP has received numerous requests from candidates to expand their practice into other practice areas. Also, largely through the complaint process, NSRP has recognized that some registrants, who have completed their candidacy within an appropriately identified practice area, have later expanded their practice to include those areas for which they did not receive sufficient formal training.

NSRP recognizes there are areas of overlap in the education and training of psychologists. However, there is also a significant body of theory and knowledge regarding practice that is unique to the different practice areas. When an applicant applies for registration, it is made clear to them that their degree must reflect an integrated and organized sequence of study. When a registrant wants to move to a new area of practice, this same standard applies. While they may already have a large number of foundational courses, it is also the requirement that they have an integrated and organized sequence of studies directly related to the new practice area that they wish to enter.

Some of the confusion appears to involve a failure on the part of some registrants to recognize the distinction between expanding within an area of practice and entering a new area of practice. The following is offered to help clarify this important distinction.

Having achieved an integrated and organized sequence of study within a practice area, the psychologist may decide to expand the population they are working with or learn other new skills related to that practice area. Doing this would be governed by Standard **IV.1** as outlined below.

Moving to a new practice area without having the integrated and organized sequence of study required for others working in the area, however, would very likely be considered a violation of Standard **IV.3**.

From the Standards for Providers of Psychological Services

Standard **IV.1** Psychologists shall limit their delivery of services to those areas of competence as defined by verifiable training and experience. Psychologists must maintain their competence through the Continuing Competence Program and ensure any evolution in practice aligns with [the Learning Plans & Scope of Practice Policy](#).

Interpretation: In the event that a psychologist chooses to **expand** services beyond the range of those usually delivered, the psychologist shall obtain pertinent training and/or appropriate professional supervision.

Standard **IV.3** Psychologists who wish to **change** their service specialty or to **add** an additional area of specialization must meet the same requirements with respect to subject matter and professional skills that apply to post-graduate training in the new specialty. Psychologists should consult the [learning plans & scope of practice policy](#) to develop a formal learning plan.

Interpretation: Psychologists seeking to qualify for a change in or addition of a specialty must complete training equivalent to a formal post-graduate program in that specialty. This training should be individualized, with due credit given for relevant coursework or requirements previously satisfied.

Merely completing an internship or acquiring experience in a practicum setting is not considered adequate preparation for becoming a clinical, counselling, industrial-organizational, or school psychologist when prior training was not in that relevant area.

Fulfillment of such an individualized training program must be documented through a formal Learning Plan as outlined in the [Learning Plans & Scope of Practice Policy](#). Completion may be verified by a certificate from a recognized post-graduate institution or by documentation approved by the Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology.

Issued by The Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology

Date: January 2008

Revised: January 2010, January 2026

DEFINITIONS OF PRACTICE AREAS¹

Adapted from the REGISTRATION GUIDELINES of the College of Psychologists of Ontario (revised February 2008). The Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology expresses gratitude to the College of Psychologists of Ontario for allowing NSRP to adapt the Practice Definitions for use in Nova Scotia.

Clinical Psychology

Requires the following minimum working knowledge base:

- knowledge in the foundational content areas of psychology, i.e., the biological bases of behaviour, the cognitive affective bases of behaviour, the social bases of behaviour, and the psychology of the individual;
- knowledge of learning;
- knowledge of all relevant ethical, legal and professional issues;
- knowledge of research design and methodology;
- knowledge of statistics; and,
- knowledge of psychological measurement.

Clinical Psychology is the application of knowledge about human behaviour to the assessment, diagnosis and/or treatment of individuals with disorders of behaviour, emotions and thought.

In addition to the above minimum knowledge base, Registrants practicing Clinical Psychology require the following:

- knowledge of psychopathology/abnormal psychology;
- knowledge of personality/individual differences;
- knowledge of psychological assessment;
- knowledge of psychodiagnostics;
- knowledge of intervention procedures/psychotherapy; and,
- knowledge of evaluation of change.

In addition, practitioners who provide services in Clinical Psychology to children and adolescents must have a background in developmental psychology and knowledge of appropriate assessment and therapeutic techniques.

For Registrants practicing Clinical Psychology, the following minimum skills are required:

- the ability to perform an appropriate clinical assessment;
- the ability to formulate and communicate a differential diagnosis; and,
- the ability to plan, execute and evaluate an appropriate treatment program

¹ The Board recognizes that subspecialty areas of practice are evolving (e.g. Health Psychology, etc.) but such areas should correspond with the broader practice areas (e.g. Clinical Psychology).

Counselling Psychology

Requires the following minimum working knowledge base:

- knowledge in the foundational content areas of psychology, i.e., the biological bases of behaviour, the cognitive affective bases of behaviour, the social bases of behaviour, and the psychology of the individual;
- knowledge of learning;
- knowledge of all relevant ethical, legal and professional issues;
- knowledge of research design and methodology;
- knowledge of statistics; and,
- knowledge of psychological measurement.

Counselling Psychology is the fostering and improving of normal human functioning by helping people solve problems, make decisions and cope with stresses of everyday life.

The work of Counselling Psychology is generally with reasonably well adjusted people. In addition to the above minimum knowledge base, Registrants practicing Counselling Psychology require the following:

- knowledge of psychological adjustment/lifespan development;
- knowledge of personality/individual differences;
- knowledge of psychopathology
- knowledge of psychological assessment;
- knowledge of psychodiagnostics;
- knowledge of intervention procedures/psychotherapy; and,
- knowledge of evaluation of change.

In addition, practitioners who provide services in Counselling Psychology to children and adolescents must have a background in developmental psychology and knowledge of appropriate assessment and therapeutic techniques.

For those who intend to practice Counselling Psychology, at a minimum, the following skills are expected:

- the ability to perform an appropriate counselling assessment;
- the ability to formulate and communicate a differential diagnosis in order to develop an appropriate counselling intervention and to identify clients who must be referred elsewhere; and,
- the ability to plan, execute and evaluate an appropriate counselling intervention.

School Psychology

Requires the following minimum working knowledge base:

- knowledge in the foundational content areas of psychology, i.e., the biological bases of behaviour, the cognitive affective bases of behaviour, the social bases of behaviour, and the psychology of the individual;
- knowledge of learning;
- knowledge of all relevant ethical, legal and professional issues;
- knowledge of research design and methodology;
- knowledge of statistics; and,
- knowledge of psychological measurement.

School Psychology is the application of knowledge about human behaviour and development to the understanding of the social, emotional and learning needs of children, adolescents and adults, and to the creation of learning environments that facilitate learning and mental health.

To declare competence in school psychology, Registrants are expected to be currently practicing, or to have had substantial practice, in a school setting.

In addition to the above minimum knowledge base, Registrants practicing in School Psychology require the following:

- knowledge of intellectual, social, behavioural and emotional assessment;
- knowledge of psychodiagnostics;
- knowledge of exceptional learners;
- knowledge of normal lifespan development and cross-cultural differences in learning and socialization;
- knowledge of developmental and general psychopathology;
- knowledge of instructional and remedial techniques;
- knowledge of multidisciplinary team approach for case management;
- knowledge of counselling, psychoeducational and early intervention techniques;
- knowledge of systems and group behaviours within, and related to, the school organization.

Practitioners who provide services in School Psychology should be aware of the impact of medication and medical conditions on learning and behaviour.

For Registrants practicing School Psychology the following minimum skills are required:

- the ability to perform an appropriate psychological assessment;
- the ability to formulate and communicate a differential diagnosis;
- the ability to plan, execute and evaluate an appropriate psychoeducational intervention;
- the ability to plan, execute and evaluate appropriate prevention programs.

Forensic Psychology

Requires the following minimum working knowledge base:

- knowledge in the foundational content areas of psychology, i.e., the biological bases of behaviour, the cognitive affective bases of behaviour, the social bases of behaviour, and the psychology of the individual;
- knowledge of learning;
- knowledge of all relevant ethical, legal and professional issues;
- knowledge of research design and methodology;
- knowledge of statistics; and,
- knowledge of psychological measurement.

Forensic/Correctional Psychology is the application of knowledge about human behaviour to the understanding, assessment, diagnosis and/or treatment of individuals within the context of criminal and/or legal matters.

In addition to the above minimum knowledge base, Registrants practicing in Forensic/Correctional Psychology require the following:

- knowledge of criminal justice/legal systems;
- knowledge of the application of psychological principles within the federal and provincial legal systems;
- knowledge of psychopathology/abnormal psychology/criminal behaviour;
- knowledge of personality/individual differences;
- knowledge of psychological assessment;
- knowledge of psychodiagnostics;
- knowledge of risk assessment/management;
- knowledge of intervention procedures/psychotherapy; and,
- knowledge of evaluation of change.

In addition, practitioners providing services in Forensic/Correctional Psychology to children and adolescents must have a background in developmental psychology and knowledge of appropriate assessment and therapeutic techniques, and applicable legislation.

For Registrants practicing Forensic/Correctional Psychology, the following minimum skills are required:

- the ability to perform an appropriate assessment;
- the ability to formulate and communicate a differential diagnosis; and,
- the ability to plan, execute and evaluate an appropriate intervention.

Clinical Neuropsychology

Requires the following minimum working knowledge base:

- knowledge in the foundational content areas of psychology, i.e., the biological bases of behaviour, the cognitive affective bases of behaviour, the social bases of behaviour, and the psychology of the individual;
- knowledge of learning;
- knowledge of all relevant ethical, legal and professional issues;
- knowledge of research design and methodology; knowledge of statistics; and, knowledge of psychological measurement.

Clinical Neuropsychology is the application of knowledge about brain-behaviour relationships to the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of individuals with known or suspected central nervous system dysfunction.

In addition to the above minimum knowledge base, Registrants practicing in Clinical Neuropsychology require the following:

- knowledge of lifespan development;
- knowledge of personality/individual differences;
- knowledge of psychopathology;
- knowledge of neuroanatomy, physiology and pharmacology;
- knowledge of human neuropsychology and neuropathology;
- knowledge of psychological assessment;
- knowledge of neuropsychological assessment;
- knowledge of psychodiagnostics; and,
- knowledge of clinical and neuropsychological intervention techniques.

In addition, practitioners providing services in Clinical Neuropsychology to children and adolescents must have a background in developmental psychology and knowledge of appropriate assessment and therapeutic techniques.

For Registrants practicing in Clinical Neuropsychology the following minimum skills are required:

- the ability to perform an appropriate neuropsychological assessment;
- the ability to formulate and communicate a differential diagnosis; and,
- the ability to plan, execute and evaluate an appropriate neuropsychological intervention.

Industrial / Organizational Psychology

Requires the following minimum working knowledge base:

- knowledge in the foundational content areas of psychology, i.e., the biological bases of behaviour, the cognitive affective bases of behaviour, the social bases of behaviour, and the psychology of the individual;
- knowledge of learning;
- knowledge of all relevant ethical, legal and professional issues;
- knowledge of research design and methodology;
- knowledge of statistics; and,
- knowledge of psychological measurement.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology is the field of psychological practice and research that aims to further the welfare of people and the effectiveness of organizations by: understanding the behaviour of individuals and organizations in the workplace; helping individuals pursue meaningful and enriching work; and, assisting organizations in the effective management of their human resources.

In addition to the above minimum knowledge base, Registrants practicing Industrial/Organizational Psychology require the following:

- knowledge of organizational behaviour;
- knowledge of psychological adjustment/lifespan development;
- knowledge of personality/individual differences;
- knowledge of assessment for selection, promotion and career development;
- knowledge of the psychology of training in organizations;
- knowledge of intervention procedures within the context of the organization;
- knowledge of evaluation of change.

For Registrants practicing Industrial/Organizational Psychology, the following minimum skills are required:

- the ability to perform an appropriate assessment;
- the ability to identify individual clients who must be referred elsewhere;
- the ability to plan, execute and evaluate an appropriate organizational intervention.

Definitions of Practice Areas

Issued by The Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology

Date: January 2010