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POLICY OP-3.8

Mutual Recognition Agreement and SCP Endorsed Procedures for Assessment Of Applicants For MRA Competencies

POLICY:

The Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA), signed by all Canadian regulatory bodies and in effect since July 1, 2003, requires that all candidates for registration be appraised for a group of agreed upon competencies in order to qualify for licensing. This policy has been developed by SCP to meet the appraisal requirement. Successful assessment is necessary for inter-jurisdiction mobility to all signing provincial and territorial regulatory bodies in psychology in Canada.

The MRA is based on general knowledge of psychology and five competency areas. These were anchored in a national study of core competencies for general practice of psychology. This was conducted for CPAP, a Canadian national association of fraternal and regulatory bodies in psychology, of which SCP is a member. Thus, it is justified in to use the knowledge, skill, and ability descriptors developed for the MRA as the focus for registration. The registration process and requirements endorsed by the SCP Council are intended to ensure every registered psychologist in Saskatchewan has obtained MRA competencies. These competencies must be demonstrated to have been acquired for a candidate to achieve registration in Saskatchewan, and nationally, in Canada. They make up the necessary and sufficient minimum body of knowledge, set of skills and demonstration of abilities (KSA's) needed by independently practising psychologists in Saskatchewan and nationally across Canada. SCP Council has therefore endorsed them as making up the minimum KSA's for registration.

The elements of Saskatchewan registration in psychology and the focus of the registration process are to ensure accomplishment of MRA competencies. The MRA competencies become the core set of knowledge, skill and ability that psychologists must, at a minimum, acquire. These competencies must be demonstrated.

The MRA as amended by agreement will require all signatory psychology regulatory bodies in Canada to assess all candidates for MRA eligibility after July 1, 2003. Standards for assessment need not be identical, but need to be accepted as comparable by the regulators meeting in consort.

Under the MRA Canadian Psychological Regulators have agreed that every candidate for initial registration or licensing will be evaluated on basic general knowledge of psychology. The EPPP examination is accepted for this purpose by nine provinces. Graduation from a training program in Quebec at a university accredited by the CPQ is accepted as the basis in Quebec.

Applicants to Quebec from out of province are required to present the EPPP. All accept the five core competencies, although some add of limited amount in addition to the requirements. These competencies are listed below, and elaborated in SCP documents. They appear as Appendix A of the Mutual Recognition Agreement. In order to be registered by participatory jurisdictions as full practicing members after July 1, 2003, applicants must have met the background general knowledge requirement and the KSA's listed below, and as approved in the MRA:

The five MRA core competence areas are:

- 1) Interpersonal Relations
- 2) Assessment and Evaluation
- 3) Intervention & Consultation
- 4) Research
- 5) Ethics and Standards

The text of the *Mutual Recognition Agreement* may be found at <http://www.cpa.ca/MRA.pdf> or by web browser at www.cpa.ca followed by clicking on Psychology in Canada and Mutual Recognition Agreement. SPA, in close consultation with SCP prior to the proclamation of the Psychologists Act 1997, in Saskatchewan, was a party to the discussions in developing the MRA, and both bodies approved the MRA.

SCP has chosen to track the development of MRA competencies by new candidates. The degree and source of competence will be documented at the point of applying for provisional practice registration through an applicant self assessment and reference forms from three referees commenting on MRA KSA's and confirming the self assessment. MRA competence development will be embedded and assessed within the 1500 hours of supervised practice required of all new applicants. MRA competence accomplishment will be confirmed during the concluding oral interview.

There will be a transition period during which currently approved supervision plans may be sustained. This will allow for changes in the impact of MRA competency requirements on supervision plans and assessment requirements to begin with newly filed plans. Those dealing with existing plans may follow the second set of MRA procedures described below which are not imbedded in the 1500 hours of supervision. During the transition period it will be acceptable to the College that training in addition to the year of supervised experience be added after the graduate degree if such is required to meet the MRA requirements.

After this period, it will be anticipated that competency will be established by the end of the approved supervision plan period by presenting a combination of pre-graduation course work and post graduation MRA content in supervision plan and implemented during the period of supervision. The oral interview administered by the College will further assure that this has occurred, by focusing specifically on MRA relevant knowledge, skill, and abilities, including, where chosen, Authorised Practice Endorsement (APE) relevant KSAs developed during supervision.

After July 1, 2003, if another province provides MRA competency assessment in its registration appraisal process and requirements, and incoming candidates have been evaluated of the basic general knowledge of psychology and five competency areas, the candidates' registration in Saskatchewan will be facilitated. They may still be required, at the discretion of the Registration Committee, to complete such examinations as may be required of Saskatchewan relevant legislation, jurisprudence, and ethics and standards.

Candidates approaching SCP for registration from other jurisdictions not evaluated for MRA will be required to meet all existing requirements. Some may meet fast track requirements with CRHSPP, National Register, or ASPPB portability qualifications. Those who do not will need to submit the documentation required in Section B (below), and to pass the SCP records assessment and oral interview. They may be asked to complete any examination that may be required in MRA areas in addition to an oral examination.

MRA and Authorised Practice Endorsement (APE)

APE requirements are subsumed under the MRA competencies. Because of the requirements of The Psychologists Act – 1997, achieving recognition for APE requires the assessment, judgment and recommendation of a psychologist who has APE recognition from SCP in the area of competency in which the candidate is applying. This psychologist may also be supervising the candidate. As qualified supervisors assess APE competencies, both at the onset and completion of supervision, they will ensure that the relevant steps are taken during supervision to allow them to complete an application for APE, with and for candidates, at the end of supervision.

SCP ENDORSED ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

A. For candidates to complete 1500 hours of post first qualifying graduate degree supervised work experience in Saskatchewan

Step 1. Application is made for Provisional Registration as a Psychologist. As part of this registration, candidates complete an MRA eligibility self-assessment, filed with the College, documenting their background preparation and source of knowledge, skill and ability for each of the five competency areas. This is supported by three letters of reference from psychologists who know them well and can verify their claims, by attesting on reference forms provided by the SCP to the Knowledge, Skill and Ability of the Candidate for each area at the point of application. (See Reference Form)

Step 2. Supervisors at supervised work settings will be provided with the candidate's claimed MRA competency application and copies of the three reference forms submitted by supporting assessors to the College upon application by Candidate or Supervisor to the College. If referees have asked that their comments be confidential and not shared with the candidate, the reference forms will be collectively summarised by the registrar. Otherwise, they will be shared. During the year of supervision, new registrants must undertake to acquire knowledge, skill, and abilities enhancement based on those outlined in Appendix A of the MRA. The supervisor and candidate will outline a work plan. This will set and track the development of competencies from the

initially assessed level to a level sufficient to meet the MRA expectations for entry to independent practice. The work plan will summarise the tasks over the 1500 hours leading to the achievement of the MRA expectations. This will initially be based on supervisor judgement.

To repeat for clarity, the Primary Supervisor will prepare, with the candidate, a yearlong work plan based on a mutual assessment of the initial application and reference material. The mutual task is to prepare, with the candidate, an MRA relevant work plan, summarising the tasks for the year against the MRA competency areas. This plan will, through two successive reports using the SCP assessment forms, document progress from entry to the completion of MRA eligibility. This will initially be based on supervisor judgement, but this judgement will become increasingly criterion referenced. This will occur as the SCP, supervisors, and candidates gain experience with applicant background descriptions, and work plan development and assessment in the five MRA competencies. This experience and other regulatory bodies in Canada will become crystallised into criteria for recognising achievement of the competencies.

Implementation: This summary will be prepared on a form provided by the College and presented with a copy of the Supervision Agreement. The previous "Supervision Plan" competency areas are subsumed under the MRA competency formulation. All applicants may also seek during the period of supervised practice or post degree internship to establish an Authorised Practice Endorsement if the relevant expectations for supervisor qualification can be met, and this will be subsumed under the MRA competency areas. The form and agreement will address Step 2 and plans for Step 3 below.

Step 3. Applicant and supervisor will jointly identify an individual plan for development of knowledge, skill, and ability under MRA competency KSA descriptors.

Step 4. During the year, the KSA's will be achieved through a combination of agreed reading, experience, and scheduled interaction with the primary or additionally designated supervisors

Implementation: Relevant reading and supervised experience coded by MRA competency area will be identified and logged during the supervision year. This will be done as part of the required supervision log. It will be summarised in the "supervision agreement" established at the beginning of the year and in the interim and final supervisors' reports. Supervision Logs and other described documents will be co-signed by the primary supervisor and the Provisional Practice supervisee when submitted to the SCP.

Step 5. The supervisor will appraise the progress of the candidate and include MRA competency appraisal as the "interim" and "final" report submitted to the SCP documenting required supervision. An APE application form may be submitted at conclusion of the year of practice to be held on the candidate's file until full practice is achieved. Payment of the APE application-processing fee by the candidate may occur at the point of achievement of full practice status, as a condition for assessing and granting APE.

Step 6. In the interim and final supervisors' reports, the latter posted at the end of required 1500 hours of supervision, the supervisor will attest to the competence of the candidate in the areas of MRA. At the end, the supervisor, if the supervisor has APE with the College, will attest to APE competence as a separate final report by completing the APE rating form and the APE application for and with the candidate. The supervisor, primary or secondary, providing attestation of competence will himself or herself be registered with APE competence for the population(s) of claimed primary focus to the applicant.

B. For candidates not supervised in Saskatchewan and not eligible for MRA portability from their current jurisdiction of practice, or supervised prior to the development of MRA assessment by SCP but seeking MRA portability

Step 1. Application is made for Provisional Registration as a Psychologist. As part of this registration, candidates complete an MRA eligibility self-assessment, filed with the College, documenting their background preparation and source of knowledge, skill and ability for each of the five competency areas. This is supported by three letters of reference from psychologists who know them well and can verify their claims, by attesting on reference forms provided by the SCP to the Knowledge, Skill and Ability of the Candidate for each area at the point of application. (See Reference Form)

Step 2. The MRA eligibility of the Candidate will be assessed by a full practising psychologist with at least five years experience, claiming the area of competence of the candidate for SCP membership or member seeking MRA portability of credentials. The Registration Committee will appoint the assessing psychologist.

Step 3. Qualification will be recommended, or additional training or supervision for achievement of MRA will be recommended to the Registration Committee, which will confirm or modify the recommendation.

Note: disagreement between the candidate and assessor will be resolved by decision of the Registration Committee. Disagreement of the candidate with the opinion of the Registration Committee may be appealed to the Council of the SCP.

Step 4. If, in the judgement of the Registration Committee, it is not clear that the candidate, after appraisal by the appointed assessor, is fully qualified for MRA eligibility, a special oral may be convened to establish the MRA eligibility of the Candidate. This shall follow the College for the conducting of oral examinations develops. The oral interview shall be tape recorded, and in the event of disagreement between the oral panel, as confirmed by the Registration Committee, and the candidate, the Council upon appeal to this end may review the oral interview tape by the candidate.

Step 5. If the candidate fails to qualify for MRA and has exhausted their avenues of appeal this shall be recorded. The options for alteration of College status in such instance are two. First, the candidate may produce evidence of obtaining a further academic degree in psychology from an institution acceptable to the college and at least 1500 hours of additional supervised experience.

Alternatively, the candidate may produce evidence that they have met MRA eligibility requirements while practising in another signatory jurisdiction. Except in these instances, the conclusion regarding MRA eligibility shall not be altered. This decision shall not be subject to further application, but remain part of the member's permanent record on the SCP register or in rejected candidate SCP files.

Oral Interview Examination

The Interview Committee appointed by the Registration Committee will sample MRA competency areas, and, in doing so, will for further certainty, provide special attention as required to APE performance and to ethics, standards of practice, and jurisprudence relevant to Saskatchewan psychologists.