

Guidelines for Defining a Doctoral Degree

The following criteria, as developed at the 1977 National Conference on Education and Credentialing in Psychology, will be used to identify doctoral programs as psychology programs. Reference to "professional psychology" refers to psychology as a profession. The term is not intended in the more restrictive sense of applied or practice areas of psychology as the intent is for a generic designation system.

1. Programs that are accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) are recognized as meeting the definition of a professional psychology program. The criteria for accreditation serve as a model for professional psychology training.

OR all of the following criteria, 2 through 11:

2. Training in professional psychology is doctoral training offered in a regionally accredited institution of higher education. A regionally accredited institution is an institution with regional accreditation in the United States, an institution with provincial authorization in Canada, or in other countries, an institution that is accredited by a body that is deemed by the ASPPB/National Register Designation Committee to be performing a function equivalent to U.S. regional accrediting bodies.

3. The program, wherever it may be administratively housed, must be clearly identified and labeled as a psychology program. Such a program must specify in pertinent institutional catalogues and brochures its intent to educate and train professional psychologists.

4. The psychology program must stand as a recognizable, coherent organizational entity within the institution.

5. There must be a clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty areas whether or not the program cuts across administrative lines.

6. The program must be an integrated, organized sequence of study.

7. There must be an identifiable psychology faculty sufficient in size and breadth to carry out its responsibilities and a psychologist responsible for the program.

8. The program must have an identifiable body of students who are matriculated in that program for a degree.

9. The program must include supervised practicum, internship, field or laboratory training appropriate to the practice of psychology.

10. The curriculum shall encompass a minimum of three academic years of full time graduate study and a minimum of one year's residency at the educational institution granting the doctoral degree. The core program shall require every student to demonstrate competence in each of the following substantive areas. This typically will be met through substantial instruction in each of these foundational areas, as demonstrated by a minimum of three graduate semester hours, five or more graduate quarter hours (when an academic term is other than a semester, credit hours will be evaluated on the basis of fifteen hours of classroom instruction per semester hour), or the equivalent:

- a. scientific and professional ethics and standards;
- b. research design and methodology;
- c. statistics;
- d. psychometric theory;
- e. biological bases of behavior: physiological psychology, comparative psychology; neuropsychology, sensation and perception, and psychopharmacology;
- f. cognitive-affective bases of behavior: learning, thinking, motivation, and emotion;
- g. social bases of behavior: social psychology, group processes, organizational and systems theory; and
- h. individual differences: personality theory, human development, and abnormal psychology.

11. All professional education programs in psychology shall include course requirements in specialty areas.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the guidelines for defining a doctoral degree in psychology or want to submit a program for review by the ASPPB/National Register Designation Committee, you may contact stephanie@nationalregister.org.