

FAQs on EuroPsy

EFPA, November 2009

A. General questions

1. What is EuroPsy?

EuroPsy is a European standard of education and professional training in psychology set by EFPA, the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations. Any psychologist who meets this standard can obtain a Certificate and be included in the Register of European Psychologists.

2. What is required to get EuroPsy?

Psychologists must have a university education in psychology of at least 5 years and at least 1 year of supervised practice. They must also sign a statement that they will act in accordance with the ethical rules of the psychologist profession.

3. What are the requirements for the university education?

EuroPsy uses a reference model to evaluate the content and level of academic curricula. The model is called "EuroPsyT - A framework for education and training of psychologists in Europe". It was established by EFPA in 2001.

4. Who decides about the award of EuroPsy?

National Awarding Committees evaluate applications and determine the outcomes of applications for EuroPsy. The European Awarding Committee, established by EFPA, has oversight of the National Awarding Committees and the process for the award.

5. Who is in charge of the EuroPsy Register?

The Register is kept by the Head Office of EFPA in Brussels.

6. What does the word 'EuroPsy' actually mean?

The name EuroPsy was chosen as an abbreviation of "Registered European psychologist".

7. Is the title EuroPsy protected by law?

We are in the process of registering EuroPsy as trademark throughout Europe. Moreover, the title "psychologist" is legally protected in most European countries.

8. How can I learn more about EuroPsy?

Consult the website: <http://www.efpa.eu/europsy>.

9. Can any psychologist get EuroPsy?

No, only psychologists who meet the standards for education (at least 5 years) and supervised practice (at least 1 year) and who have signed a statement of ethical conduct can obtain EuroPsy.

10. Are the standards for psychologists the same in all countries?

There are differences in the education and professional training of psychologists in Europe. This is why it was decided to introduce EuroPsy as a benchmark.

11. Does EuroPsy allow psychologists to practice in another country?

No. There is a European directive that aims to harmonize requirements, but according to the subsidiarity principle countries can set their own rules. Most European countries have certain restrictions. EuroPsy informs "competent authorities" of other countries about a psychologist's education and professional training.

12. What is the official status of EuroPsy?

EuroPsy is a standard set by professional psychologists organized in EFPA. EFPA covers associations of psychologists in 35 countries, with a total of some 250.000 individual psychologists.

13. Is EuroPsy a license to practice?

No. The license to practice can only be awarded by national governments.

14. Is EuroPsy required by law?

No. There is as yet no requirement that psychologists must have obtained EuroPsy. But EuroPsy can facilitate the application of national laws on psychologists' professional activities.

15. Can EuroPsy psychologists settle and practice all around Europe?

European law allows citizens from member states to move freely and to settle and work in any other county of the EU. Practicing psychology in another European country is subject to the law of that country.

16. How are universities involved in EuroPsy?

Universities provide the academic education that is required for psychologists to obtain EuroPsy. EFPA and its member associations are in touch with universities about the standards.

17. Is EuroPsy valid in the whole of Europe?

Yes. EuroPsy applies to all countries whose psychology associations are member associations of EFPA, that is 26 EU countries and 9 other European countries.

18. Who pays for EuroPsy?

Applicants pay for the costs of their education and professional training, including any additional training or practice that may be needed to meet the EuroPsy standards. In addition, they pay a handling and registration fee for EuroPsy. This fee varies from country to country.

19. Who sets the standards for EuroPsy?

The standards were originally devised in a European project by a working group that developed EuroPsy. Setting the standards is now the authority of EFPA which establishes the so-called EuroPsy Regulations. Monitoring the standards is the responsibility of the EuroPsy Coordination Committee, in which the EFPA European Awarding Committee and the EFPA Executive Board collaborate.

20. Who decides what information is in the register?

The so-called Registration details are spelled out in the EuroPsy Regulations. What is entered in an individual case depends on the education and professional background of the psychologist.

21. How does EuroPsy relate to the European Directive 2005/36/EC?

Psychologist is a regulated profession in the sense of the European Directive 2005/36/EC. Recognition of qualifications is based on the "general system", that is, on the basis of mutual recognition between member states – it is not automatic as with the professions that are included in the "sectoral system" (architects, dentists, doctors etc.). EFPA has decided not to put forward EuroPsy as a "common platform", which might lead to "automatic" recognition (without compensatory measures) since the requirements for a common platform in the EU are significantly below the standards of EuroPsy.

22. Is EuroPsy a professional card?

Yes. Although it is currently not a chip card EuroPsy can be considered as a "Professional Card" as intended in the European Directive 2005/36/EC. It can facilitate the cross-border mobility of psychologists by speeding up the exchange of information between member states.

23. How many types of EuroPsy Certificates are there?

There is a basic EuroPsy Certificate and there are also EuroPsy Certificates of Specialized Expertise (in different specialist areas e.g. psychotherapy, work & organizational psychology) which require additional education and professional training.

24. What are the requirements for a EuroPsy Certificate of Specialized Expertise?

The standards vary with the field of expertise, but generally speaking the certificate requires at least 500 hours of additional education and three years of additional supervised practice.

B. Applying for EuroPsy

1. How does one obtain EuroPsy?

Psychologists have to fill an application form (downloadable from the website of the National Awarding Committee or the national psychological association in their country) and submit it with required documents to the National Awarding Committee.

2. How long does EuroPsy remain valid?

Seven years. Before the end of this period the psychologist has to reply for revalidation and an extension.

3. How does EuroPsy promote mobility?

EuroPsy makes cross-border mobility easier by providing a European qualification benchmark and providing information on the qualification of the individual psychologist. It is, in fact, a Professional Card as intended in the European Directive 2005/36/EC.

4. How long is the "grandparenting" (transitional) period?

The so-called "grandparenting period", during which fully qualified psychologists with considerable work experience can obtain EuroPsy, has a fixed term. It ends on July 31, 2013

5. Can students apply for EuroPsy?

No. The application requires a completed academic study of at least 5 years and at least one year of supervised practice.

6. Does EuroPsy acknowledge the Bachelor degree in psychology?

No. The Bachelor degree in psychology has no separate status in the context of EuroPsy. The Bachelor's degree is included in the requirement of a completed academic study of at least 5 years.

7. Does EuroPsy require a master's degree?

Yes. But the master's degree should be based on a 5 year curriculum. When a degree has been awarded on the basis of a shorter curriculum, additional education has to take place. In countries that have not implemented the Bologna system another 5 year degree is acceptable.

8. Can academics in psychology also obtain EuroPsy?

Yes, they can if they satisfy the requirements but supervised practice must be that of a professional psychologist. This type of practice is seen as different from that of a teacher and/or researcher.

9. Are teachers of psychology also eligible for EuroPsy?

No, unless they also work as professional psychologists and meet the regular EuroPsy requirements.

10. Does one have to live in an EU country to get EuroPsy?

No, the requirement is that the EFPA member association of the country has agreed to implement EuroPsy and that there is a National Awarding Committee.

11. What is the added value of EuroPsy compared to a master's degree from a European university?

Not all master degrees satisfy the EuroPsy requirements because they may differ in duration and/or content. EuroPsy certifies that a psychologist has completed at least one year of supervised practice in excess of the master degree, and that the holder has promised to practice in accordance with ethical standards.

12. Can psychologists from outside Europe obtain EuroPsy?

Perhaps. EuroPsy was designed for European psychologists who have received their education and professional training in Europe. However, immigrants from other countries may apply for EuroPsy if they can provide evidence that their education and professional training meets the EuroPsy standards.

13. How many psychologists are covered by EuroPsy?

The estimate is that some 200.000 European psychologists might qualify for EuroPsy. A more definitive answer cannot be given yet.

14. Are services by EuroPsy psychologists covered by insurance companies?

Several countries cover the services of psychologists in the health care area. This is based on national health plans and agreements. EuroPsy does not automatically mean that a psychologist is entitled to having his/her services covered.

C. EuroPsy for consumers

1. Can EuroPsy help to find a psychologist?

Yes. The EuroPsy register has a search function that allows one to find a psychologist in a particular geographical area and field of practice / specialization.

2. How do I find a psychotherapist?

The EuroPsy Register includes psychologists who have a Certificate of Specialized Expertise in Psychotherapy. So, they are easy to find by the search function on the website of the Register

3. Are all European psychologists in the EuroPsy register?

No. The register only holds the names of those who have been certified to meet the EuroPsy standards.

4. Are psychotherapists also covered by EuroPsy?

EuroPsy covers only psychotherapists who are also fully qualified psychologists, that is, those with a double certificate: the general EuroPsy Certificate and a Certificate of Specialized Expertise in psychotherapy. Professionals offering their services as psychotherapists are not included.

5. Does EuroPsy also cover psychiatrists?

No. Psychiatrist is a different profession in the medical field.

6. What is the use of EuroPsy for consumers?

EuroPsy helps consumers to distinguish between the many providers of psychological and similar services. It does not include service providers with a lower education (e.g. Bachelor degree in psychology) and/or a different background (e.g. psychotherapists). It also does not include professionals with a Master degree in psychology who have not completed supervised practice or do not feel committed to clear ethical standards.

7. How does EuroPsy protect consumers?

EuroPsy gives consumers clear and easy-to-access information about qualified psychologists. It ensures that psychologists have the proper training and experience. It also guarantees that the psychologist will operate in accordance with the ethical code of the psychological profession.

8. Which are the ethical standards of EuroPsy?

EuroPsy requires psychologists to sign the so-called meta-code of EFPA, an overarching ethical code that applies to all European psychologists. It also requires psychologists to abide by the ethical code of the country in which they practice.

9. How do I file a complaint about a psychologist?

You can file a complaint with the national psychologists association (address to be found on the website).

10. Is any psychologist ever removed from the EuroPsy register?

This has not happened, yet. It will happen when the term of validity expires without EuroPsy being renewed, or when the psychologist has violated ethical rules.

11. What happens if a psychologist acts against the ethical code?

Any client can file a complaint with the national psychologists association (address to be found on the website). An ethical review committee will examine the case and hear both parties. The committee can pass several sanctions against the psychologist. In case of serious violation a notice will be placed in the EuroPsy Register, indicating that the psychologist no longer meets the EuroPsy standards, and the EuroPsy Certificate will lose its validity. In less serious cases the EuroPsy may be suspended for a certain amount of time.

12. Does EuroPsy also give information on the specialty of psychologists?

Yes it does. The EuroPsy Register and the EuroPsy Certificate spell out in which area of practice the psychologist has proven to be competent. The Register will also mention which psychologists have received a Certificate of Specialized Expertise in a particular domain.

13. Is it possible to consult a psychologist from another country?

Yes, the EuroPsy register helps to find a psychologist from another country. In some cases costs of psychological help may be covered under the national insurance scheme.

14. How does EuroPsy help to find a psychologist?

The EuroPsy register has a search function that allows finding a psychologist in a particular geographical area and field of practice / specialization.

D. The EuroPsy Register

1. Where do I find the EuroPsy register?

The register is to be found on the web at: <http://www.efpa.eu/europsy/register>.

2. Can I trust the psychologists in the EuroPsy Register?

Yes. A strict procedure is followed in evaluating psychologists before they are awarded EuroPsy. Moreover, psychologists have to maintain their expertise and this is also verified.

3. Is EuroPsy up to date?

Yes, the EuroPsy Register is updated at least once a month.

4. What kinds of specialization are there in psychology?

The main areas of practice are: education, clinical & health, work & organization; there is a broad fourth category for other areas (e.g. forensic, traffic psychology).

Certificates of specialized expertise will be introduced for Psychotherapy (2010) and Work & Organizational psychology (2011).

5. How do I choose the right psychologist for my problem?

Check the EuroPsy Register on the website and look for the area of practice and for indications of specialized expertise.

6. Does EuroPsy only cover psychologists in health care?

No. EuroPsy covers all areas of professional psychology.

7. Does EuroPsy guarantee that psychologists keep their knowledge up to date?

Yes. Psychologists are required to spend a certain amount of time on continuing professional development and to maintain their competence by practice. Their record is evaluated when EuroPsy is renewed.

8. How can employers use EuroPsy?

Employers can use the EuroPsy Register to verify whether applicants have met the EuroPsy standards and to determine in which field of practice they are competent.

EFPA, November 2009