

**Report from the Pilot Project  
of the EuroPsy Specialist Certificate  
in Work and Organizational Psychology**

**FINLAND  
ITALY  
NORWAY  
SPAIN  
UNITED KINGDOM**

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## **The pilot project of the Specialist Certificate in W&O Psychology**

The pilot – experimental garden has represented the opportunity for a first implementation and testing of the criteria developed for the Specialist Certificate in W&O Psychology. These criteria were in fact elaborated in 2009 while the Europsy Basic was going to finish its experimental garden phase, and the proposal for the Specialist Certificate in Psychotherapy was going to be presented. The pilot project of the Basic Europsy (2009) aimed “to trail the practical and administrative procedures, and to see how far these could be made to fit local circumstances, and in particular what difficulties and challenges might be faced in the actual implementation of Europsy”. Using the same frame of reference, the pilot project of the Specialist Certificate in W&O Psychology aimed to:

1. check whether the Specialist Certificate is feasible,
2. test whether it can meet different local circumstances, and
3. consider what remains to be done to prepare the wider implementation of the Europsy Specialist Certificate.

In particular, the pilot aimed to collect information and advance knowledge in the various countries about:

- post-graduate learning activities,
- professional activities,
- experiences in the field with regard to supervision and coaching, and
- procedures and materials to be used to report coached practice and competences.

To participate in the pilot, eligible countries had to fulfil the following criteria:

- have participated in the Europsy Basic pilot,
- have already established a National Awarding Committee for assessment of Basic Europsy (in order to establish collaboration between the NAC, National Awarding Committee, and the P-SNAC, Provisional Specialist National Awarding Committee),
- offer a good geographical balance (especially north-south Europe; it was also considered the possibility to have at least an eastern country, but it was difficult to find some country that fulfilled the above criteria).

Thus five countries agreed to participate in the pilot, namely Finland, Italy, Norway, Spain and United Kingdom.

In early 2012 EAWOP and the national association of the five countries involved in the pilot set up the Provisional Specialist European Awarding Committee (P-SEAC) for W&O Psychology; The P-SEAC was formed by:

- Marco Depolo (Italy),
- Henry Honkanen (Finland),
- Lourdes Munduate (Spain),
- Per Straumsheim (Norway),
- Stephen A. Woods (U.K.) and
- Salvatore Zappalà (Italy, chair and liaison with the EAWOP Executive Committee).

The Provisional Specialist National Awarding Committees (P-SNACs) were established in the Spring of 2012; their composition and activities are described in the next sections of this paper.

The P-SEAC met three times during 2012 and once in February 2013, reviewing the requirements, developing the procedure and the materials for the assessment, and coordinating the pilot. P-SEAC members also collaborated with their national P-SNAC in order to transfer the information, clarify and translate the materials in the various languages and report to the P-SEAC the advancements of the pilot. During the autumn of 2012 the Specialist Certificate and the pilot test were advertised in the various countries in meetings, conferences or newsletter in order to inform the W&O psychologists and solicit applications.

The pilot involved two procedures: a) the grand-parenting and b) the regular procedure. The grand-parenting procedure was developed to assess practitioners that match grand-parenting requirements (degree obtained at least five years before the application, five full time years of independent practice in the last 10 years). The “regular” procedure was developed to assess practitioners that fulfill the criteria described as the standard for the Specialist Certificate (3 year of practice after reaching Basic EuroPsy level, between 60 and 90 ECTS of educational activities, 400 hours of supervised practice and 150 hours of supervision in three years). Both the grand-parent and the regular applicants had to fill their application by reconstructing and describing job career, job outputs and competences. Many applicants considered this “backward” procedure as particularly critical and difficult to perform. Details on composition, advertising activities, meetings, number of

applications received, procedures followed by the P-SNACs that managed the pilot are available in the next sections.

The following represents some general conclusions organized under the headings of requirements, procedure and structure.

### *The requirements*

The requirements of the Specialist Certificate exhibit some specificities in comparison to the Basic certificate and pose some challenges for the countries. Availability of educational programs and training, as well as of practices and opportunities to fulfill the requirements (post-graduate learning activities, supervised/coached practice and supervision/coaching) are different across countries. In some countries, like Spain or Finland, universities started very recently to offer a specialist education, while in some others, like Norway or UK, it is the psychological association that regulates educational programs or offers courses and requires structured supervision. Such courses are sometimes offered within a CPD frame, and can vary in terms of contents or quality. However, the pilot shows that (with the exception of UK, and in the near future Italy, where CPD are mandatory to maintain national qualification) such post-graduate programs offered by universities represent additional educational activities that are not required by the law in order to practice, and thus attract a very low percentage of graduated students and practitioners. Increasing such opportunities for post-graduate learning, making them available to many more practitioners, and/or making them more structured, is an important challenge.

Even the other requirement – supervised practice and assessment of competencies - is seen as something new, challenging and delicate in most of the participating countries, both for applicants and for P-SNAC members. In many countries young practitioners have the experience of a supervised or coached practice, and also of structured supervision/coaching. However, there is a need to define supervision in a way that is more compatible with the W&O psychology field.

Interestingly, some applicants reported that, although the preparation of the application was time consuming and difficult, the self-assessment of the competences was very useful to increase self-awareness of their own skills. Thus, like for Basic EuroPsy, although mobility is an important reason for EuroPsy specialist certification, the most interesting result of this project seems to be its role in providing information and guidance for the improvement of the discipline and professional practice. In other words, the specialist certificate may help in developing a qualified program of

post-graduate education in the W&O psychology, and in supporting professional development by means of supervision.

### *Procedure*

Some aspects of the procedure need to be better defined and refined. Although the application forms resulting from the pilot are expected to work well, they will probably need some refinement as more individuals will apply and the variation in type of information provided will increase. It will also be necessary to provide some examples of well-filled applications, in order to make applicants understand which and how much information they should give about their career and competences.

The choice to use the ECTS system to quantify learning experiences and research activities is another source of difficulty. More experimentation and more information about content, type and quality of post-graduate learning activities will be needed to 'translate' hours (often used to describe courses and activities length) in credits. The ECTS User Guide (EU, 2009) is recommended as the standard reference tool.

A final point related to the procedure, that also affects the possibility to fulfill the curriculum requirements, is the fact that not all the countries have adopted the Bologna process. Therefore, what is considered (and counted) as education, research or supervised practice in the context of the Basic Certificate may influence what should be included in evaluating the eligibility for the Specialist Certificate. In other words, the requirements for the Basic and for the Specialist Certificate in some cases will need some coordination (and possibly, adaptation).

### *Structure*

The Specialist Certificate will benefit indeed from the established structures for the Basic Certificate at both the national and the European level. The already established EAC (European Awarding Committee) that oversees the whole EuroPsy project, the EFPA administrative staff and the Register, are resources that will definitely make easier the fast implementation of the Specialist certificate at the European level.

At the national level, the positive collaboration between EuroPsy Basic and Specialist structures will facilitate the process (like, for instance, the integrated or joint assessment of grandparents applying for both the Basic and the Specialist Certificate), and also the efficient use of

resources like the national websites, the promotion of the Europsy project or the administrative procedures and the use of secretary staff. Such efficiency will have to be optimized also to maintain reasonable the costs for applicants that have to get two certificates.

### *Implementation issues*

The requirements for the wider launch of the Specialist Certificate are in part similar to those that were outlined for the wider launch of the Europsy Basic Certificate:

- Existence of a NAC for the Europsy Basic Certificate (because it is not possible to award the Specialist certificate if the Basic NAC is not already established in the country)
- Constitution of a SNAC for the Specialist Certificate, with a liaison person or with agreements about collaboration
- Training of SNAC in procedures of the Specialist Certificate
- Translation of all documents in each country where the Specialist Certificate will be implemented
- Preparation of application forms in each country, based on the common format that was developed in the pilot
- Opening of a webpage for the Specialist Certificate in W&O Psychology within the website of the Basic Europsy
- Support from the national association and a system for its involvement in promotion of the project
- Fee structure that takes into account that specialist applicants will receive two certificates and thus will have to pay two registration fees
- Publicity materials and publicity plans aiming at both universities and professional associations
- Constitution of the SEAC
- Progressive structuring of post-graduate learning activities, in order to provide a formal post-graduate education and/or systematic CPD
- Developing an arrangement for the supervised practice and means for its promotion.

### *Conclusions of the pilot project*

The pilot project, carried out in five countries, demonstrated the feasibility of the EuroPsy Specialist Certificate in Work and Organizational Psychology. It raised interest in EuroPsy within the community of the W&O practitioners, generated awareness of the difficulties and challenges, and identified many useful practical points. The pilot showed that some adaptation to local circumstances is needed, but also identified various pertinent experiences and practices in the education of W&O psychologists at the national level; in some cases such practices are still experimental ones and in some other cases they are more structured. Reinforcing and spreading such practices will allow to develop good quality standards that in some time will become coherent across Europe. EAWOP can have a key role to play in terms of developing, refining and also sharing good practices regarding education and supervised practice, through the many activities that it runs, like its bi-annual conference, workshops, small group meetings, the work-lab for practitioners and also the e-journal. The support and collaboration with EAWOP constituents and individual members will be determinant to this aim. The collaboration between EAWOP and EFPA can help spreading such experience and facilitating the development of additional Specialist certificates.

## **Reports from the countries involved in the pilot**

### **Finland**

*Henry Honkanen*

#### **Post-graduate education in W&O psychology in Finland**

In Finland options for both Grand Parents (GP) and Regular (RB) routes to Specialist in W&O psychology do exist. The GP option consists of various training courses and comprehensive programs. However, the comprehensive CPD and MBA programs are multi-professional and cannot be given the same weight, in terms of ECTS, to courses that are specifically directed to W&O psychologists. GP may meet obstacles in finding interested supervisors outside formal professional supervision.

For the Regular route a university program of 120 ECTS has been developed in accordance with the ENOP-EAWOP training model and it is offered by a consortium of five universities. The program includes a thesis (scientific article manuscript) and 100 hours of supervised practice. The supervision must be given by a trained counselor W&O psychologist. Every second year 16 students are accepted in the program.

#### **P-SNAC Finland**

The Finnish P-SNAC comprises 5 members: two university professors, the president of the Finnish Psychological Association, the president of the TOP-Forum (an EAWOP constituent) and a member of the board of the TOP-Forum.

The P-SNAC informed Finnish psychologists in meetings, on specialist courses, and among university personnel in all Finnish universities. The applicants were invited to test the criteria and the forms.

#### **Applicants and considerations**

A certain number of applicants were invited. They were 8 GP and 14 Regular routes individuals. Applicants were solicited using lists of psychologists that graduated from the Specialist in W&O psychology/Lic.Ph. program offered jointly by all the 6 Universities that train professional psychologists.

Filling in the forms and difficulties in self-assessment of competences was an obstacle thus, although all individuals were interested, of the 22 invitees only 10 completed the task. The 2 GP applications were not on an acceptable level, whereas all the Regular route applications met the criteria. However in most cases more detailed description is needed about the professional roles on the basis of which the competencies can be defined. Most applicants did not possess the Basic EuroPsy certification.



In conclusion, the requirements are met rather well by the Regular route applicants on the basis of the post-graduate specialist training (Lic.Ph.= “professional doctorate”). However, the ‘supervised practice’ in Finland emphasizes, in addition to case working and skills coaching, also the development of professional self-reflection. The professional guidance and advice is given mainly at the work site by colleagues and (not certified) supervisors.

## **Italy**

*Marco Depolo*

### **Post-graduate education in W&O psychology in Italy**

In Italy the Bologna process is in action from many years, and after the three plus two years of education for the master graduation, one year of supervised practice and a national examination are required in order to be enrolled in the Order of Psychologists and be allowed to practice. This means that almost all psychologists interested in practice fulfill the requirements to obtain the Basic EuroPsy certificate. However, such law allows all psychologists, and all W&O psychologists, to practice as practitioners, then there is a limited request, and consequently a limited offer of post-graduate learning activities, with the exception of CPD.

Some learning activities are offered by the National Order of Psychologists, although most of the training activities concern topics and issues related to the clinical practice. There are also cases of one year masters in W&O psychology fields, offered by universities, reserved to individuals that possess a five year graduation title. Such masters are, for instance, in the Personnel psychology field; however they are not systematically offered. Other masters in Human Resource management, which include W&O psychological topics, are attended by W&O psychologists, although they are open to graduates in different fields. Finally there are many universities that offer Ph.D. programs in W&O psychology.

### **P-SNAC Italy**

The P-SNAC was constituted during the spring of 2012. It is formed by the following members:

- Imma Tomay (chair of the P-SNAC, Specialist in W&O Psychology, president of the Regional Order of Umbria),
- Claudio Cortese (Ph.D., professor of Work psychology),
- Alessandra Re (Ph.D., professor of Ergonomics),
- Carlo Stroschia (specialist in W&O Psychology, director of Human resource service in a large company).

At P-SNAC meetings participated also Marco Depolo (P-SEAC member). This group met twice in presence and other two meetings were run through skype.

### **The application and assessment processes**

The Provisional SNAC, in constant liaison with the NAC Group-Italy, implemented the Grand-Parenting pilot process interviewing a group of W&O colleagues provided with sound and proven expertise, to assess the process guidelines, and to validate effectiveness of criteria in differentiating professionals entitled to the Grand-Parenting certification.

It was decided to use interview as assessment procedure. The interviews were carried out by each member of the group, information were filled into the application form which was uploaded online in a reserved directory, in order to give each member of the P-SNAC the possibility to

examine the collected interviews, and gradually fine-tune an effective and shared procedure in data collection and analysis.

In order to fill in the application form, a meeting was planned with the applicant; interviewees often were unable to remember details of their career and practice, and to find the documentation required to complete the form. It was therefore necessary to contact again the applicants asking for integration, which in some cases was not obtained.

Two main adjustments of the procedure were therefore proposed: some restructuring of the application form and a revision of the data collection procedure.

With regard to the interview procedure, after checking interest in certification, the application form was sent to the potential candidate by e-mail with the request to enter data first, then send it back with their curriculum. Once received the documents, the form was completed with data available from the CV and aspects that needed to be clarified were identified; finally, the application form was sent back to the candidate, with the request to clarify unclear aspects (this last step was in some case carried out by phone).

Such experience suggests that it is important that the applicant has some preliminary information about Europsy and the certificate, thus dissemination of information on the SC is a relevant activity. It will also be useful to support the SNAC in filing applications, archiving documents of the S-NAC (like meeting minutes) and in securing an operational link with the NAC (Italy).

The structured application form currently in use seems to provide the best benefit-cost ratio, because it can be partially filled autonomously by the applicant (the first section), and partially supervised (helping the applicant focusing on the detailed training activities in the first part, and giving evidence of the acquired competencies in the final part of the form).

Some clear instructions, as well as some examples on how to fill correctly some part of the application form, will be needed, to obtain a description of the professional roles and competences that are neither too long nor too concise.

### **Applicants and considerations after the assessment process**

A total of 13 W&O psychologists, both freelance and employed professionals, were interviewed. Some of them were senior, other were junior, but none of them fall into the category of Regular applicants, as they all graduated before 2007.

The age of applicants was an information not included into the application form, but the graduation year polarizes the candidates into two different groups: senior applicants, that graduated in between 1981 - 1997, and junior applicants, that graduated from 2003 to 2004.

The assessment process worked well in the Italian situation. Some specific considerations after this process are the following.

### ***Educational and research activities***

The optimal candidate is a senior W&O Psychologist, that keeps a highly detailed CV (or a highly detailed memory of his/her professional activities) and whose competencies are clearly connected to the performed activities.

Not all the applicants selected for the Grand Parenting pilot project reached all the input requirements, although they were identified by S-NAC team because of their recognized competencies. Specifically:

- considering that there is no obligation to have post-graduate educational activities, younger applicants (e.g. graduated from 5 to 8 years before) had some difficulties in fulfilling the criteria of 60 ECTS of learning activities;
- about supervision, it should be clearly specified what is meant by supervision and also that it may include peer-supervision (inter-vision), although it is recommended to clarify conditions for group inter-vision.

In addition, as mentioned above, most of post-graduate courses (e.g. one year HRM or MBA Master) are not specially intended for psychologists, thus it has to be clarified how many credits can be computed as part of the 60 ECTS of learning activities.

### ***Research and developmental work***

It will have to be clarified how to measure the amount of ECTS involved in specific applied research projects. It should be clearly specified that such projects include the design and the implementation of the applied research, as well as the need to give evidence of an output.

One input requirement concerns publications (in peer/professional journals or books). Some applicant asked if such publications had to be directly related to W&O Psychology; thus it may be suggested to clarify this point.

### ***Professional experiences and competencies***

Many interviewees had difficulties in evaluate an average number of hours per week/month dedicated to specific “Professional Practice role”. Similarly, when attending a training course, the time unit is the year, or the hours.

Although showing evidence of competences is a good practice, it has to be addressed that the suggested scale to rank competences needs some training or available example. In one case a young GP self-rated his competences higher than a senior GP, that has a very high experience and is one of the two top HR managers in the regional government. This seems to suggest that biases in self-assessment have to be controlled.

### **Main conclusions and recommendations**

In conclusion, the certification process seems to be functional and matches the situation of Italian W&O Practitioners. It was well accepted by professionals and also by the associations. For the future implementation some aspects need to be kept into account.

It was noticed that the SC in W&O Psychology is almost unknown within the Italian professional community (the same can be said about the Basic Certificate). It will be essential to involve the National Professional Order of Psychologists in order to play a major role in promoting the SC in W&O Psychology.

Grand Parents applicants found difficult (sometimes impossible) to give evidence of each single job experience, especially if far in time, because in Italy the need to update the professional *resumé*

is not considered important, especially for senior professionals working in the same job from long time.

In addition applicants got confused between “ECTS” and “ECM” value of credits. ECM is an Italian system of training credits used in the public health sector, that is now going to be used in all the psychological fields. It will be important to define a criterion of computing from ECM to ECTS.

In Italy the field of post-graduate training and courses is open to private providers, thus the level of quality is quite different depending from the offering organisation. It will be useful to develop a list of "providers" of acceptable courses, like Universities, Psychologists' Associations, SIPLO, but also all accredited ECM providers.

The three years of supervised-coached practice, with at least 400 hours per year, need to be clarified. In Italy W&O psychologist rarely have a supervised practice, similar to the one that is available to clinical psychologists. The supervision and coaching practices used in the W&O Psychology field will have instead to be taken into account.

## NORWAY

*Per Straumsheim*

### Summary

The Norwegian Psychological Association joined the pilot project on the EuroPsy specialist certificate on spring 2012. The Norwegian P-SNAC consisted of a mix of senior and junior practitioners and academics. A survey indicated a substantial interest for the specialist certificate in W&O psychology.

**Comparisons:** The 5 year long specialist education in Organizational Psychology in Norway was compared to the input requirements of the EuroPsy specialist certificate, and was assessed to be equal to 75 ECTS. For grand parent applicants the practice required, after reaching EuroPsy basic level, was adjusted to 7 year of fulltime practice.

**Results:** 15 (7 regulars = RB, and 8 grand parents = GP) applied for the specialist certificate. Of these 13 (7 RB and 6 GP) were acknowledged to fulfill the requirements.

**Main conclusions and recommendations:** Descriptions and assessment of competences, in addition to input requirements, is viewed as a good model to give evidence of the level of expertise. At the same time it is challenging and needs to be further developed. Good models and examples need to be provided both to applicants and assessors (S-NAC's). The volume of input criteria on education and supervision is regarded as reasonable for a specialist education. The Norwegian P-SNAC proposes that the period of practice for GP is substantially extended; this is to 1) stimulate the establishment of specialist educations in countries where these not exist and 2) to ensure that the GP route is not a loophole to get the certification, and by that undermine the trademark of the certificate.

### P-SNAC Norway

The committee was appointed April 30<sup>th</sup> 2013 by the Norwegian Psychological Association, and is consisting of the following members:

- Birgit Aanderaa (Chair and Vice president Norwegian Psychological Association),
- Henning Bang (PhD and Specialist in W&O Psychology),
- Inger Djupskaas (Specialist in W&O Psychology),
- Christer Mortensen (Specialist in W&O Psychology),
- Elisabeth Østrem (Authorized Psychologist, studying to be specialist in W&O Psychology).

Per A Straumsheim served as secretary for the committee and is member of the Provisional S-EAC (coordinating the pilot).

Prior to the appointment of the committee we performed an informal survey, to establish whether there was an interest among Norwegian Psychologist for this certificate. The response was very positive. Invitation was sent out to a limited group of possible applicants, both those with a specialist education ("regulars" = RB) and those without this education ("grandparents" = GP).

## **Post-graduate education in W&O psychology in Norway**

From 1985 there has been a specialist education in Work and Organizational Psychology open for authorized psychologists (having a 6 year education in psychology with one year of integrated supervised practice). This specialist education, regulated by the Norwegian Psychological Association, consists of 5 years of supervised practice (at least 4 year within the field of work and organizational psychology), 256 hours of courses, 240 hours with supervision, and a thesis. The supervision can be given individual or in small groups. The supervisor should be a specialist in W&O psychology, but other psychologists with a long practice within the field can be approved as supervisors.

## **The Norwegian Specialist education and the EuroPsy specialist certificate**

The Norwegian specialist education was confronted with the input requirement of the EuroPsy specialist certificate (90 ECTS), and the ECTS user guide (published by the European Union in 2009) was applied as a framework. The result of this comparison was that the input factors of the Norwegian specialist education in Organizational Psychology, in its present form, can be equvalated to 75 ECTS, while the input factors of the EuroPsy specialist certificate is 90 ECTS. Thus to fulfill the EuroPsy standards, the applicants (“regular applicants”) have to document elements of work and organizational psychology from their basic training (“double counting”) and document additional training activities.

## **“Grand parents” applicants**

Psychologists not having a specialist education in work and organizational psychology could apply following the Grand parent (GP) route. Since a 5 years specialist education for work and organizational psychology already is established in Norway, the P-SNAC wanted to set a much higher limit for those not having this education. The worry was that a low threshold could act as a loophole for those that decided of do not take a specialist education. As a temporary solution, for the pilot, the limit was set to 7 year of practice within W&O Psychology.

GP was also asked about their educational activities, although this was not a requirement. The reason for this was to get an indication of their educational activities.

## **Invitations, applications, and assessment**

**Step one – EuroPsy basis:** 26 persons finished the first step by applying for and receiving the basic EuroPsy certificate (13 RB and 13 GP) by the end of August 2012.

**Step two – Invitation to participate in the pilot and assessment of the first applications:** Invitations to apply for the specialist certificate in work and organizational psychology were sent the 1<sup>st</sup> of December to the 26 persons having received the EuroPsy basic certificate (+ few others that already possessed the certificate). Two early responders (one RB and one GP) sent their applications already within a week, these were screened and pre-evaluated by the secretary and assessed by the S-NAC the 13<sup>th</sup> of December.

Neither of the applications were accepted at this meeting, but feedback was provided, so the applicants had the opportunity to improve their descriptions and documentations. The application form was changed in order to facilitate the description of competencies.

**Step three – coaching of applicants and final assessment:** During the first two weeks of January 2013, 15 applications were received. On the basis of the discussion of the first meeting, advises were given back to most of the applicants with regard to descriptions of roles, the documentation of work activities and, above all, the description of competences. Applications, included documentation, were stored in a Drop-box file and made accessible to the members of the P-SNAC.

Final assessment of the applications was done at the S-NAC meeting the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January. The committee ensured that input criteria were met.

13 out of 15 applications were approved (7 RB and 6 GP).

Many applicants reported that, although they found the process time consuming and the competence descriptions new and difficult, the process had made them aware of the competences they actually possessed and how these were important in their daily work.

The pilot showed that many GP can document many educational activities. Several had taken part to the Norwegian specialist education in W&O Psychology, but had not finished, e.g. by not having finished the thesis.

### **Summary of the experiences and suggestions from the Provisional S- NAC – Norway**

Norwegian Psychologists with practice in work and organizational psychology welcomed the initiative of the EuroPsy specialist certificate in W&O Psychology. A reason for this is probably that W&P Psychologists work across borders, and a European certificate to document their expertise can be valuable.

The extent of information and documentation to be provided with the application should be limited. Some applicants provided a lot of materials and documentation about their work practice, both relevant and less relevant. The application form should contain the advice to prioritize descriptions and documentation that documents competencies.

The competence approach is new and challenging, especially as a retrospective activity. Many of the applicants had problems to describe these in a way that gave evidence of specialist competences in W&O Psychology.

As a “spinoff” effect of this work the Norwegian specialist education in Organizational Psychology will put more emphasize on supervisors evaluation of competence, and use the category of competences provided in this work as a starting point.

The P-SNAC of Norway finds the standards for the EuroPsy specialist certificate in Work and Organizational Psychology inspiring and a good model for developing the education of specialist in W&O Psychology: high standards of education, research activities and supervised practice AND evidence of specialist competences. These standards are the basis and trademark of highly developed expertise of the practitioners that have earned the certificate.



**Grand Parent certification:** One concern is for the standards for certification of Grand Parents (5 years of practice and 40 hours CPD per year) that are considered low and might hollow the trademark of the certificate and also the efforts to develop specialist educations. If psychologists can get the specialist certification without taking the specialist education, why should they take the education? Such a possibility may undermine the efforts to build and develop solid educations. Thus it is thought that the GP route may function as a loophole for those not willing to undertake the efforts of starting on a specialist education.

We do acknowledge that there are psychologists that really have earned a Grand Parent certification. Those are the practitioners that have been working in the field for a long time, that have made contributions to the field or the society and have been acknowledged for this, and/or have been frequently asked to supervise/mentor to younger colleges. In short, GP may lack formal education, but are recognized the specialist certificate for their extensive work and significant contributions for the community of W&O Psychologists.

To stimulate the establishment of specialist educations and to secure the trademark of the specialist certificate we suggest:

1. The Grand Parenting route should only be open for psychologists that have 10 - 15 years of full time practice in the field of W&O Psychology AND can describe and document (through evidence from colleges, employers, or otherwise) their specialist competence.
  - a. We understand that this might seem as a very high requirement in countries that don't yet have a specialist education. We still strongly advocate that the period of practice should be extended.
2. The Grand Parenting route should be open only for a short period of (e.g. – 2 years) after the specialist certificate in W&O Psychology has been established by EAWOP/EFPA.

## **Spain**

*Lourdes Munduate*

### **Summary**

The EuroPsy specialist pilot project offered a good opportunity to explore the situation in Spain regarding two issues, which are not well-known in relation to post-graduate training and the professional practice of WOP: a) postgraduate Masters taught in Spain, in and out of the university; and b) activities developed in the professional practice of WOP psychologists in Spain.

Furthermore, the pilot study represented a challenge in relation to three aspects of the Specialist Certificate: a) the evaluation of competencies, b) supervised practice and c) research competences.

Spain doesn't have a tradition of competency-based management. Therefore, the concept of evaluating the competencies developed through the professional practice in WOP, which is implied in the Specialist Certificate, is difficult to convey to professionals. It is also difficult for practitioners to explicit the competencies which they developed during their professional experience.

The issue of supervised practice is another challenge, due also to a lack of this type of formal supervision, which is very closely to the type of supervision of the clinical field.

A third challenge is related to the difficulty of evaluating the research competencies developed in the professional practice. The official Psychology Degree didn't include a thesis and even during the Master such activity was optional in some cases. This system was changed in 2010, with the new regulation over university education promoted by the Bolonia agreement.

#### **a. The national situation**

In 2005 the Royal Decree (Real Decreto RD 56/2005) for the bachelor and postgraduate programs was published. This changed the structure of Spanish university degrees completely, in order to adapt them to the European Higher Educational Area. With these new regulations, the degree went from being a five-year-long study (300 ECTS) to a four-year-long degree consisting of 240 ECTS. Master programs offered after graduation in Psychology include different durations: there are some Masters that last one year and have 60 ECTS, others last two years (120 ECTS), and a few of them last a year and a half (90 ECTS), in different fields of specialization.

The Psychology Degree is offered in 27 public Universities and 9 private Universities. During the 80's, many Spanish universities started to offer postgraduate programs in W& O Psychology. In addition, private training centres offered a rich and varied range of courses, in W& O Psychology as well as in Human Resources Management. In some cases, these training programs include lectures in both areas. The duration of these programs range from one to two years.

Recent changes in university education regulation have produced the diversification of postgraduate training. Nowadays, two different types of Masters are available: University Masters classified as "Official Degrees" and other Masters offered by universities and private training centres, differing in allowing access to Doctoral programs (only the official ones allow access). Universities offer Master programs in W& O Psychology, in some cases together with other related

disciplines. Public and private training centres (other than universities) offer a wide range of postgraduate courses, some of them restricted to Psychology graduates and others are addressed both to psychologist and non-psychologist graduates. Many of the University programs in W&O Psychology follow the guidelines established by the Psychology Schools' Deans Conference in their "White Book of Psychology Masters". Overall, the postgraduate training in W&O Psychology can be considered satisfactory and as geographically distributed, large enough for attending the demands, with different variations regarding their duration, and subject to standard training and rigour. In Spain, W& O psychology is one of the three main professional areas in Psychology. Data on the preferences of psychology students for professional profiles are not available, but an estimation of career preference shows that 15% of total graduates look for a specialized training in W & O Psychology postgraduate courses.

### **b. Adjustments done for the pilot**

The implementation of EuroPsy (Basic level) in Spain included a deep study of the Psychology Degree Curricula in all the universities which offered this Degree. One important finding was that the Degree did not include the obligation to prepare a bachelor thesis, until the new national regulation (RD 56/2005) was approved (2005) and implemented in 2010. The Spanish EuroPsy NAC systematically checks, for every applicant of Basic EuroPsy, if there are research outputs (such as research papers, published papers or contributions to academic or professional conferences and workshops) developed through research training in Masters or PhD programs.

In the same way, applications for the Specialist EuroPsy in W& O Psychology were particularly checked for research competences. The Spanish P-SNAC adopted some agreements regarding acceptable research competence requirements.

Finally, following the need to be awarded the EuroPsy Basic, some of the applicants applied simultaneously for the Basic and the Specialist certificates.

### **c. Constitution and composition of the P-SNAC**

The committee was appointed in May 2012 by the Spanish Psychological Association (Consejo General de la Psicología de España), and consists of the following members:

- Francisco J. Medina (P-SNAC Chair, Professor of Work and Organizational Psychology, and Chair of the Master of Work and Organizational Psychology in the University of Seville),
- Oscar Cortijo (PhD and Director of Human Resources at University CEU Cardenal Herrera),
- Ramón Loitegui (PhD and Chair of the Navarre Professional Association),
- Luis Picazo (Coordinator of Board of the Madrid Association of Psychologists, and Human Resources Consultant and Executive Coach),
- Pilar Del Pueblo (Organizational consulting in the areas of HHRR, Professional Development and Project management),
- Carmen Santos (Coordinator of the Division of Work, Organizational and Human Resources

Psychology of the Spanish Psychological Association, and freelance consultant).

José Ramos (Chair Basic EuroPsy), Lourdes Munduate (member of the P- SEAC) and Manuel Berdullas (Vice-President of the Spanish Psychological Association) served as advisors.

#### **d. The pilot project development**

The committee had the first meeting in July 2012 focusing on the analysis of the requirements and the discussion of the translated relevant documents for the Specialist certificate.

In order to facilitate the dissemination of the pilot project in Spain, an article was published in INFOCOP, the Psychological Association Journal. Afterwards and with the same objective, the P-SNAC Chair attended a meeting in Santiago de Compostela with all the coordinators of the Spanish WOP Division.

Another meeting of the P-SNAC took place in September, in which evaluation of competencies and changes in the application form were discussed.

To access all the possible professional cases in WOP, the committee decided to solicit applications from grand-parents working in different fields: a) consultancy, b) WOP of public institutions, c) WOP of companies with public funding, d) WOP of private organizations and d) university teachers. Recent graduates from the WOP masters in the universities of Seville and Valencia were invited to apply in the regular route.

The Psychological Association instructed to evaluate only collegiate candidates. This resulted in applications only from grand-parents and none from the regular route. The current crisis situation has caused occupational problems for many graduates of the master programs and has also resulted in these graduates not being collegiate yet. A total of 33 applications was received.

To instruct applicants to describe competences was the most challenging part of all the procedure. Most of the applicants did not fill in the application form as desired but just wrote a mere definition of competences. Some of them confused position, task and job's description with competences. Many people had difficulties filling in the applications, and as a result it took much of their time. Doubts were mainly focused on the description and evaluation of the competences. Only candidates whose organization is using a system of competence management found no problems filling in this section.

Applications were firstly assessed in relation to the basic EuroPsy. All the evaluated applications matched these requirements. Then, research activity, CPD and competences were examined and assessed. After the revision, candidates received feedback on incomplete aspects. Furthermore, they received a description of the competency model of the ENOP which included examples. All these aspects raised observations and comments that can be helpful for improving the Specialized Certificate.

The *evaluation of competences* in a retrospective way is something new in Spain and candidates had problems related to this. Even the evaluation of the level of certain competences was a delicate and complex aspect.

The issue of *supervised practice* was also a challenge because WOP practitioners do not usually supervise other people at work, therefore applicants didn't fill in this part of the application. A question was inserted at the end of the application form in order to collect data on this issue and, on this base, it is possible to conclude that: a) formal training programs include periods of practice frequently supervised by one academic supervisor (a member of the training team) and a professional or external supervisor (the supervisor present in the work place where students develop their apprenticeship as a part of their academic program); b) W&O psychologists are usually assigned a supervisor once they enter the labor market, that is typically focused on tasks and day-to-day work fulfillments, rather than on professional competences..

#### **e. Main outcomes and suggestions from the pilot.**

1. Spain doesn't have a tradition of competency-based management. Therefore, the concept of evaluating the competencies developed through the professional practice in WOP is difficult to convey to professionals. Some examples of well filled applications were requested both by applicants and by P-SNAC members

2. The issue of supervised practice is another challenge, due also to a lack of this type of formal supervision, which is very closely related to the type of supervision of the clinical field. In this regard, two issues were addressed: a) the relevance of having professionals that after 5 years of practice in WOP, and knowing the requirements of the Specialized Certificate, are able to supervise new practitioners in WOP, and b) at the same time, the need to define supervision more coherently with the W&O psychology field.

3. The need to increase the availability of developing research competences for practitioners was also identified.

4. Due to the economic crisis, which is reducing job opportunities for practitioners, it could be convenient to consider 5 of the 15 past years as work experience for grand parents, or some other method to compensate the effects of the crisis.

5. It is also important to consider periods in which women do not work, mainly because of maternity leave, in order to not place them in a disadvantageous position, especially in the case of self-employed women.

6. A last suggestion is to give applicants an example of a correct filled in application, possibly available on a webpage.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

*Stephen A. Wood*

### **Background**

A Provisional Specialist National Awarding Committee (PSNAC) was convened comprising professionals and academics from the field:

- Dr. Elinor O'Connor (P-SNAC Chair)
- Helen Baron (Practitioner)
- Prof. Rosalind Searle (Academic)
- Dr. Stephen Fisher (Academic and Past Chair of the UK OccPsych Training Committee)
- George Delafield (Practitioner)
- Janet Vaughan (BPS Administrative Support)
- Adjunct Member: Dr. Stephen Woods (UK SEAC Representative)

The British Psychological Society (BPS) Division of Occupational Psychology (DOP) provided funding of £16,671 to support the pilot, covering meeting facilities, travel and other expenses.

The PSNAC met in January, April, June, July and October 2012, and in January and February 2013. Dr. O'Connor attended meetings of the SEAC in February and June 2012, and February 2013. Dr. Woods attended all the meetings of the SEAC.

The main objectives for the P-SNAC were to understand the alignment and correspondence of the EFPA-EAWOP proposals for the criteria for the Specialist Certificate in WOP and the UK training route, and to conduct assessments of pilot participants.

### **Route to Basic Europsy**

The UK route to the Basic Europsy for Occupational (i.e. Work and Organizational) psychologists is straightforward and comprises the completion of the Qualification in Occupational Psychology (currently provided exclusively by the BPS), or registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a Practitioner Occupational Psychologist.

### **Route to National Qualifications in the UK**

The recognized and regulated title for Work and Organizational Psychologists in the UK is Occupational Psychologist. In order to qualify as an Occupational Psychologist, an accredited programme of study must be completed that comprises:

- Accredited Bachelors Degree in Psychology (3 Years; 180 ECTS)
- Accredited Masters Degree in Occupational Psychology (1 Years; 90 ECTS)
- Qualification in Occupational Psychology
  - Supervised Practice (3 Years)
  - Completion of an Assessed Portfolio (Logbook)/Evidence of Competence

- Register with the Health Professions Council
- Complete auditable CPD

Regarding the specialist training in Occupational Psychology it is important to understand:

- Stage 1: Accredited Masters – accredited MSc programmes comprise a core curriculum of Work and Organizational Psychology, and a 30 ECTS research dissertation.
- Stage 2: Supervised Practice – this comprises two elements, Breadth and Depth of Practice. This ensures completion of relevant supervised practice in several areas on Work and Organizational Psychology. The minimum duration is 2 years, but the expectation is for 3 years (assessment is on quality rather than quantity). The Depth component represents particularly significant or advanced project work.
- Assessment of the supervised practice is done via a written portfolio (logbook) that documents and reflects on work undertaken. Assessors review material against a competency and skills framework ensuring that all elements are covered.

### UK National Qualifications and Basic EuroPsy

The association of the UK national qualification and the Basic EuroPsy is a convenience administratively. However, it is clear from comparison that achievement of the UK national qualification in Occupational Psychology exceeds the requirement of the Basic EuroPsy (see comparison in Table 1).

**Table 1.** Comparison of the UK Route to Occupational Psychology and the Basic EuroPsy

<b>Basic EuroPsy</b>	<b>UK Route</b>
Bachelors Degree – 180	Bachelors Degree – 180
Masters Degree – 120 Typically Includes 30 Credits of W&O Psych, plus Research and Internship	Masters Degree – 90 (Includes 60 Credits of W&O Psych <b>and</b> 30 Credits of Research)
Supervised Practice (1 Year) – 60	EuroPsy awarded on basis of 2 years – 120 Expected for QOP (3 Years) – 180
Total: 360	Total: 390 – 450

### Education and Training after Basic EuroPsy

The UK specialisation in Work and Organizational Psychology (i.e. the Masters Degree plus the QOP) is completed prior to the awarding of Basic EuroPsy. This means that formal University-based education is seldom completed after the attainment of the QOP, and by extension, the Basic EuroPsy.

UK Occupational Psychologists do have access to BPS CPD training courses, and accredited training in psychological testing. Most Occupational Psychologists follow their own programme of CPD however, which is required and auditable by the HCPC.

### **How Applicants Might Meet Requirements for the SCWOP**

The key requirements for the SCWOP are:

1. 90 ECTS of specialist study, comprising 60 ECTS of taught courses, and 30 ECTS of research/applied project work.
2. Demonstration of the EAWOP professional and enabling competencies.
3. Completion of 3 years of supervised practice, at least 400 hours per year, with 50 hours of supervision.

The P-SNAC examined these requirements in the context of the UK national situation, (also summarised in Table 2):

- 60 ECTS of taught input can be accumulated through double-counting 30 ECTS (from the masters programme) and then accrediting CPD activity. We recommend a formula for accrediting ECTS as 1 ECTS = 4 hours of learning in training courses, or 1 ECTS = 16 hours of learning in other activity<sup>1</sup>.
- 30 ECTS of research or applied project work can be accumulated by removing the Depth component of the UK qualification from the Basic Europsy requirement. This requires approval by the UK NAC, but is justified given the “surplus” content of the UK route to Basic Europsy (i.e. Table 1).
- Competencies are assessed for the national qualification, and we perceive key overlap with the EAWOP model. Competencies may therefore be assessed by reassessment of the submission for the UK qualification. A mapping of the UK competency framework onto the SCWOP competency model showed an almost complete overlap.
- Removal of the Depth component of the UK qualification (as noted above) would provide 1 year of supervised practice for the SCWOP. We propose that post-eligibility for Basic Europsy, UK applicants show 2 years of mentored practice as an Occupational Psychologist to fulfil the further supervised practice requirement.

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<sup>1</sup> British Universities use a metric that 1ECTS = 20 hours of learning. In the case of formal training or learning activities, as is assumed in University training, 20% of learning happens during training “contact hours” (i.e. 80% of learning happens outside of the training). For other learning activity (e.g. conference attendance), we reason that contact hours represent 80% of the learning.



**Table 2.** Summary of Specialist Certificate in Work and Organizational Psychology Requirements and UK Proposed Route.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>UK Route</b>
60 ECTS Inputs (Courses and University)	30 ECTS Double-counted from Masters (Basic Europsy) 30 ECTS from CPD Activity
30 ECTS Research	Propose to remove a component of the Basic Europsy
Competencies	Assessed through Competency Submissions for National Registration
Supervised Practice (3 Years)	Propose to remove 1-year supervised practice from Basic Europsy PLUS further 2 years of full-time Mentored Practice with CPD

### **Grandparent Route**

The grand-parenting route to the Specialist Certificate in Work and Organizational Psychology in the UK could be fulfilled as below:

- Registration with the DOP or HCPC as an Occupational Psychologist (thereby demonstrating previous assessment of competencies, and enrolment in the national list)
- Experience of 5 years out of the previous 10 years practice as a Work and Organizational Psychologist
- Evidence of CPD of a form that is specified for the Basic Europsy, and which is equivalent to national requirements.

Because many applicants will not already hold the Basic Europsy, and it is expected that grandparenting route for the Basic EuroPsy will finish in July 2013, it is important that the Grandparenting period for Basic Europsy to be extended to enable applicants to obtain the SCWOP. This is particularly important for UK applicants because the current training route is relatively new and most practicing occupational psychologists would not be able to meet the requirements of the standard route.

### **Pilot Applicants**

The PSNAC organized for pilot applicants to complete applications at the DOP conference in January 2013. We examined applications of 18 Occupational Psychologists, all applying through the grandparent route.

We also assessed the logbook submissions of 4 recently qualified Occupational Psychologists to examine the competency content of those written portfolios.

## Positive Results of the Pilot

Our review of the pilot applications was generally positive, and informed our proposals and recommendations for the SCWOP in the UK. We were able to find relevant evidence of experience, qualifications and CPD for most applicants, who ranged in their backgrounds and experiences.

Our examination of the four recent logbook submissions was also informative. We reviewed the Depth entries to these logbooks and assessed them against the EAWOP competency framework. All submissions showed evidence of 17 or 18 of the 20 EAWOP Professional Competencies, fulfilling requirements, and 7 out of 8 Enabling Competencies (note that all competencies were covered across the 4 submissions).

## Problems and Improvements from the Pilot

Our review of the pilot applications and UK training requirements highlighted the following issues/problems, which we present here with recommendations for improvement:

1. Some application forms did not provide sufficient detail about past experience as a Work and Organizational Psychologist. **Recommend** to improve this part of the application.
2. Many grandparent applicants are unable to locate/submit original portfolio submissions for assessment of competencies. The UK PSNAC also strongly feel that the assessment of competencies through interview is unsatisfactory and impractical. **Recommend** to review and assess a selection of portfolios from various years to provide further support for the equivalence of the UK competency requirements to the EAWOP model. By doing this, we will be able to demonstrate that completion of the national qualification fulfils the competency requirement of the SCWOP. We propose an audit of applications as a quality check if the qualification goes ahead.
3. It is essential for regular applicants to be able to count the Depth component of the national qualification for the SCWOP. This means removing it from the Basic Europsy requirement, or recognizing it as “useable” for the SCWOP. Similar problems may arise in other countries. **Recommend** that the regulations for the SCWOP contain provision as follows: “Acknowledgment that the rules for the Basic Europsy within countries established prior to the introduction of Specialist Certificates may need to be revisited in light of needs and requirements of new Specialist Certificate application routes”
4. The major challenge of the SCWOP requirement is the 50 hours of direct supervision, which the UK PSNAC believe to be inconsistent with the training model for most Work and Organizational Psychologists. **Recommend** that this requirement is clarified to reflect cumulative mentoring and interaction that may occur during or as part of jointly working together on tasks and projects while in a mentor-mentee relationship.
5. CPD is a core part of the proposed UK route to the SCWOP because it represents the means by which applicants accumulate the necessary ECTS credits. This is likely to be similar in some other countries. **Recommend** that a guide is produced to explain the equivalence of CPD to ECTS, and to make easier the process of providing evidence of CPD on the application form, and the assessment of that evidence.