Standards of proficiency for applied psychologists
Professional Liaison Group (PLG)
25 October 2007

Draft standards

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

At the last meeting on 12 October 2007, the group considered a draft set of standards for each discipline. Following the last meeting, a single draft has been produced, which is attached.

In considering the draft, the group will wish to ensure that the standards are:

- set at a threshold level necessary for safe and effective practice;
- conform to HPC's obligations as a qualifications body; and are
- couched in language appropriate to their primary role in legislation.

In considering whether a standard meets the necessary test, the PLG may wish to consider whether the Council would be justified in denying an applicant registration on the basis that they could not demonstrate that they met the standard.

A short summary of the approach taken in producing the revised draft is included, which also highlights three key areas identified in discussion at the last meeting.

Decision

The PLG is invited to discuss the attached draft.

This is the PLG's last meeting. The standards will be revised in light of the group's discussion today and a consultation document issued in early November.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

18 October 2007

Putting together the draft

The HPC Executive has worked closely with Helen Clark, Qualifications Manager, British Psychological Society (BPS) in producing this draft.

The draft takes into account the discussion at the last meeting, and draws on the drafts submitted by the BPS, which used the relevant training/ accreditation as their basis.

In putting together the draft, we have tried to avoid duplication of the generic standards and some standards have been revised as a result. We have also reworded some of the standards which are outlined in the existing pre-registration education and training criteria for clarity, and to ensure the threshold requirement is met.

In the revising the existing draft, we have tried to ensure that the standards are relevant to each discipline and in doing so have checked that they are a standard part of pre-registration education and training. In doing this, we have tried to highlight those areas which, though arguably implicit for all, are of particular relevance and importance to each discipline.

Research skills

At the last meeting, the PLG discussed research skills, with particular reference to the clinical psychologists standards.

Overall consensus was that descriptors such as 'original' and 'forefront' were problematic in terms of articulating a necessary threshold.

In drafts considered at the last meeting, the alternative phrase 'be able to conduct fundamental research' had been used (this term is used in the existing standards of proficiency for clinical scientists). The PLG may wish to consider whether the term 'fundamental' is similarly problematic, and this description has been removed from the revised drafts.

The sections on research have been substantially revised, using the existing BPS training criteria. The elements which seem common amongst the disciplines have been drawn out. In places some rewording has taken place, as it was noted that sometimes substantially the same concepts were written in the training requirements for individual disciplines, but described differently.

The PLG is invited to consider whether standard 2b.2 ably articulates the research basis for each discipline. Further work may be needed in drawing out those areas which are common for all.

Lists
At the last meeting the PLG discussed the use of lists in the standards. The group concluded that this could be problematic because of the difficulty of being exhaustive.

In producing the draft, we have tried to balance this concern against the need to use terminology which is appropriate and relevant to individual disciplines. Where possible, a list has been replaced with a more inclusive term.

The PLG is invited to consider whether any amendments to the draft in this area need to be made.

Giving expert evidence
Standards relating to giving expert evidence or evidence in formal settings are included for disciplines where this forms an explicit and compulsory part of the pre-registration education and training. The word 'expert' has been removed from the drafts, following the discussion at the last meeting.

However, there is variation in the terms in which these standards are expressed in the existing pre-registration education and training criteria. For example, in clinical psychology, 'understanding' is required: - 'understand the process of providing psychological opinion and advice in formal settings'. However, in forensic psychology, this is expressed as an ability – 'be able to prepare and present evidence in formal settings'.

The PLG is invited to consider this variation in the existing draft.

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Registrant applied psychologists must:

	Professional autonomy and accountability
1a.1	**be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession** - understand the need to act in the best interests of service users at all times - understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council - understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing - be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession
Clinical Psychology	*- understand the power imbalance between practitioners and clients and how this can be minimised* *- understand the complex ethical and legal issues of any form of dual relationship and the impact these may have on clients*
Counselling Psychology	*- be able to recognise appropriate boundaries*
Educational Psychology	*- understand their duty of care with regard to safeguarding children*
1a.2	**be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner**
Educational Psychology	**- be able to take account of the impact and implications of differences on diversity and life opportunities**
1a.3	**understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality**
1a.4	**understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent**
1a.5	**be able to exercise a professional duty of care**
1a.6	**be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement** - be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem

	- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative - know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional - recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions
1a.7	**recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly**
1a.8	**understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise** - understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice - understand the need to maintain high standards of personal conduct - understand the importance of maintaining their own health - understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to manage the physical, psychological and emotional impact of their practice*
Educational Psychology	*- be able to manage the physical, psychological and emotional impact of their practice*

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Ref	Standard
	Professional relationships
1b.1	**be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, service users and their relatives and carers** - understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team - understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals - be able to make appropriate referrals
Clinical Psychology	*- understand the role of the clinical psychologist across a range of settings and services*
Educational Psychology	*- understand the role of the educational psychologist across a range of settings and services* *- be able to develop and maintain effective working relationships with key role partners and work collaboratively, when appropriate to promote effective outcomes* *- be able to engage children, young people and their carers as active participants in the assessment and decision making processes, and in the evaluation of interventions and service delivery*
Counselling Psychology	*- be able to understand therapy from the perspective of the client* *- understand the dynamics present in therapeutic and other relationships*
1b.2	**be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team**
1b.3	**be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction**

	and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and carers - be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5[1] - understand how communication skills affect the assessment of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical ability and learning ability - be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others - be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status - understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions - understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible - recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to design, prepare and deliver teaching and training for staff and carers which takes into account the needs and goals of the participants* *- be able to support the learning of others in the application of psychological skills, knowledge, practices and procedures* *- be able to select the appropriate means for communicating feedback to clients* *- be able to communicate ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences* *- understand the process of providing psychological opinion and advice in formal settings*

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[1] The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests competence in spoken and written English. Applicants who have qualified outside of the UK, whose first language is not English and who are not nationals of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA), have to provide evidence that they reached the necessary standard. We accept a number of other tests as equivalent to the IELTS examination. Please visit our website for more information.

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Counselling Psychology	*- understand creativity and artistry in the use of language and metaphor, in the service of empathetic understanding* *- understanding explicit and implicit communications in a therapeutic relationship*
Educational Psychology	*- be able to plan, design and deliver teaching and training which takes into account the needs and goals of the participants* *- be able to support the learning of others in the application of psychological skills, knowledge, practices and procedures*
Forensic Psychology	*- be able to plan, design and deliver teaching and training which takes into account the needs and goals of the participants* *- be able to support the learning of others in the application of psychological skills, knowledge, practices and procedures* *- be able to plan and implement assessment procedures for training programmes* *- be able to plan and design training and development programmes* *- be able to promote awareness of the actual and potential contribution of psychological services* *- be able to provide psychological advice to aid policy decision making* *- be able to prepare and present evidence in formal settings*
Health Psychology	*- be able to plan, design and deliver teaching and training which takes into account the needs and goals of the participants* *- be able to support the learning of others in the application of psychological skills, knowledge, practices and procedures* *- be able to plan and implement assessment procedures for training programmes*
Occupational Psychology	*- be able to promote psychological principles, practices, services and benefits* *- be able to provide psychological advice to aid policy decision making*
Sport & Exercise Psychology	*- be able to promote psychological principles, practices, services and benefits* *- be able to prepare and present evidence in formal settings*

1b.4	**understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user** - recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users
Counselling Psychology	*- be able to initiate, develop and end a purposeful therapeutic alliance*

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Ref	Standard
	Identification and assessment of health and social care needs
2a.1	**be able to gather appropriate information**
Occupational Psychology	*- be able to establish requirements for and benefits of applications and interventions*
Forensic Psychology	*- be able to establish requirements for and the benefits of applications and interventions*
Sport & Exercise Psychology	*- be able to establish requirements for and benefits of applications and interventions*
2a.2	**be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques** - be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to assess social context and organisational characteristics*
Counselling Psychology	*- be able to conduct psychological assessments and make formulations of a range of presentations*
Educational Psychology	*- be able to develop appropriate psychological assessments based on an appraisal of the influence of the ecology of the learning environment on the experiences of thinking, learning and behaving in a range of educational and other settings for both individuals and groups* *- be able to select, use and interpret a broad range of assessment instruments with due consideration to their relevance to the client, their needs and likely interventions*

Health Psychology	- *be able to assess requests for consultancy*
2a.3	**be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate**
2a.4	**be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected**
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to interpret assessment methods* *- be able to conduct risk assessment*
Counselling Psychology	*-understand the use and interpretation of tests and other assessment procedures* *- be able to critically evaluate the primary philosophical paradigms that inform psychological theory with particular regard to their relevance to, and impact upon, the understanding of the subjectivity and inter-subjectivity of experience throughout human development*
Educational Psychology	*- be able to conduct risk assessment*
Forensic Psychology	*- be able to interpret assessment methods* *- be able to conduct risk assessment*
Sport & Exercise Psychology	*- be able to assess requests for consultancy* *- be able to conduct risk assessment*

Ref	Standard
	Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs
2b.1	**be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions** - recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice - be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures - be aware of a range of research methodologies - be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving - be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice
	- be able to initiate, develop and conduct psychological research *- understand a variety of research designs* *- be able to understand and use applicable techniques for research and academic enquiry, including qualitative and quantitative approaches* *- be able to identify, analyse and evaluate research evidence*
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to design psychological research* *- be able to conduct service evaluation*
Counselling Psychology	*- be able to design psychological research* *- be able to devise and evaluate research questions and select appropriate methodology* *- understand research ethics and be able to apply them*
Educational Psychology	*- be able to design psychological research* *- be able to carry out and analyse large scale data gathering including questionnaire surveys*

	- be able to work with key role partners to support the design, implementation, conduct, evaluation and dissemination of research activities and to support evidence-based research
Forensic Psychology	*- be able to design psychological research* *- be able to research and develop psychological methods, concepts, models, theories and instruments in forensic psychology* *- be able to analyse and evaluate psychological research data*
Health Psychology	*- be able to design psychological research* *- be able to conduct systematic review* *- be able to analyse and evaluate psychological research data*
Occupational Psychology	*- be able to design psychological research* *- be able to research and develop psychological methods, concepts, models, theories and instruments in occupational psychology* *- be able to analyse and evaluate psychological research data* *- be able to conduct systematic review*
Sport & Exercise Psychology	*- be able to analyse and evaluate psychological research data*
2b.2	**be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements** - be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments - be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to generalise and synthesise prior knowledge and experience in order to apply them critically and creatively in different settings and novel situations* *- be able to make informed judgements on complex issues in the absence of complete information* *- be able to work effectively whilst holding alternative competing explanations in mind* *- be able to recognise when (further) intervention is inappropriate, or unlikely to be helpful* *- be able to decide how to assess, formulate and intervene psychological from a range of possible models and modes of intervention with clients, carers and service systems*

	- be able to draw on knowledge of development, social and neuropsychological processes across the lifespan to facilitate adaptability and change in individuals, groups, families, organisations and communities *- understand therapeutic techniques and processes as applied when working with a range of different individuals* *- be able to use clinical and research skills in work with clients based on a scientist-practitioner and reflective-practitioner model that incorporates a cycle of assessment, formulation, intervention and evaluation*
Counselling Psychology	*- be able to contrast, compare and critically evaluate a range of models of therapy* *- be able to critically evaluate theories of mind and personality* *- understand therapy through their own life experience* *- be able to adapt practice where necessary to take account of social and cultural factors and the nature of relationships throughout the lifespan* *- be able to formulate clients concerns within the chosen therapeutic models* *- be able to critically evaluate psychopharmacology and its effects from research and practice* *- be able to critically evaluate theories of psychopathology and change*
Educational Psychology	*- be able to generalise and synthesise prior knowledge and experience in order to apply them critically and creatively in different settings and novel situations* *- be able to formulate interventions that focus on applying knowledge, skills and expertise to support local and national initiatives* *- be able to apply educational psychology across a variety of different contexts that draws creatively and flexibly from a range of theoretical models, frameworks, and psychological paradigms* *- be able to develop and apply effective interventions to promote psychological well-being, social, emotional and behavioural development and to raise educational standards* *- be able to decide, using a broad range of evidence and knowledge, how to assess, formulate and intervene psychologically, form a range of possible models and modes of interventions*
Forensic Psychology	*- be able to evaluate and respond to change in forensic psychology and in consultancy and service delivery contexts*

2b.3	**be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales** - understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to use psychological formulations to plan appropriate interventions that take the client's perspective into account* *- be able to use psychological formulations with clients to facilitate their understanding of their experience*
Educational Psychology	*- be able to demonstrate effective professional management and organisational skills*
Forensic Psychology	*- be able to plan applications and interventions*
Health Psychology	*- be able to plan consultancy*
Occupational Psychology	*- be able to plan applications of occupational psychology*
Sport & Exercise Psychology	*- be able to plan consultancy*
2b.4	**be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully** - understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
Clinical Psychology	*- understand consultancy models and the contribution of consultancy to practice* *- understand the need to implement interventions and care plans in partnership with clients, other professionals and carers* *- be able, on the basis of psychological formulation, to implement psychological therapy or other interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client* *- be able to integrate and implement therapeutic interventions based on a range of evidence-based models of formal psychological therapy*

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Counselling Psychology	*- be able to implement psychological therapy or other interventions appropriate to the presenting problem and to the psychological and social circumstances of the client*
Educational Psychology	*- understand and apply consultancy models of service delivery* *- be able to apply, review and evaluate a range of appropriate counselling and therapeutic skills* *- be able to adopt a pro-active and preventative approach in order to promote the psychological wellbeing of clients*
Forensic Psychology	*- be able to implement applications and interventions* *- be able to direct the implementation of applications and interventions carried out by others*
Health Psychology	*- be able to conduct consultancy*
Occupational Psychology	*- be able to conduct applications* *- be able to direct the implementation of applications*
Sport & Exercise Psychology	*- be able to conduct consultancy* *- be able to direct the implementation of applications*
2b.5	**be able to maintain records appropriately** - be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines - understand the need to use only accepted terminology in making records

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Ref	Standard
	Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions
2c.1	**be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly** - be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care - be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the service user - recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes - be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
Clinical Psychology	*- be able to revise formulations in the light of ongoing intervention and when necessary re-formulating the problem*
Counselling Psychology	*- be able to monitor and evaluate their own therapeutic practice*
Health Psychology	*- be able to monitor the implementation of consultancy*
Occupational Psychology	*- be able to monitor agreements and practices with clients, users, groups and organisations*
2c.2	**be able to audit, reflect on and review practice** - understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance - be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures - be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement - participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate

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	- understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection - recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review
Clinical Psychology	*- recognise the role and value of supervision in a clinical psychology context*
Counselling Psychology	*- recognise the role and value of supervision in a counselling psychology context* *- be able to critically reflect on the use of self in the therapeutic process*
Educational Psychology	*- recognise the role and value of supervision in an educational psychology context* *- be able to audit and review the practice of other professionals*

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Ref	Standard
	Knowledge, understanding and skills
3a.1	**know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to their profession-specific practice** - understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction - be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process - recognise the role of other professions in health and social care - understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention
	- understand the impact of differences such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, religion and age on psychological wellbeing

Clinical Psychology	*- understand theories and evidence concerning psychological development and psychological difficulties across the lifespan and their assessment and remediation*
	- understand more than one evidence-based model of formal psychological therapy
	- understand psychological models related to how biological, sociological and circumstantial or life-event related factors impinge on psychological processes to affect psychological well-being
	- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention
	- understand psychological models related to a range of presentations including:
	   • *clients with presentations from acute to enduring and mild to severe*
	   • *problems with biological or neuropsychological causation*
	   • *problems with mainly psychosocial factors including problems of coping, adaptation and resilience to adverse circumstances and life events, including bereavement and other chronic physical and mental health conditions*
	- understand psychological models related to:
	   • *clients from a range of social and cultural backgrounds*

	• *clients of all ages* • *clients across a range of intellectual functioning* • *clients with significant levels of challenging behaviour* • *clients with developmental learning disabilities and cognitive impairment* • *clients with communication difficulties* • *clients with substance misuse problems* • *clients with physical health problems* *- understand psychological models related to:* • *working with individual clients, couples, families, carers, groups and at the organisational and community level* • *working in a variety settings including in-patient or other residential facilities with high dependency needs, secondary health care, and community or primary care* *- understand change processes in service delivery systems* *- understand social approaches such as those informed by community, critical and social constructivist perspectives* *- understand leadership theories and models, and their application to service delivery and clinical practice* *- understand the impact of psychopharmacological and other clinical interventions on psychological work with clients*
Counselling Psychology	*- understand the philosophical bases which underpin those psychological theories which are relevant to counselling psychology* *- understand the philosophy, theory and practice of more than one model of psychological therapy* *- understand the therapeutic relationship and alliance as conceptualised by each model* *- understand the spiritual and cultural traditions relevant to counselling psychology* *- understand theories of human cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social and physiological functioning relevant to counselling psychology* *- understand different theories of lifespan development* *- understand social and cultural contexts and the nature of relationships throughout the lifespan* *- understand theories of psychopathology and of change* *- understand the impact of psychopharmacology and other interventions on psychological work with clients*

Educational Psychology	- *understand child and adolescent development relevant to educational psychology, including special educational needs and disability* - *understand the structures and systems of a wide range of settings in which education is delivered* - *understand the influence of school ethos and culture, education curricula, communication systems, management and leadership styles on the cognitive, behavioural, emotional and social development of children and young people* - *understand the factors leading to underachievement amongst vulnerable groups, social exclusion and poor behaviour* - *understand the philosophy of research, including alternative epistemological positions, to provide context of theory reconstruction*

Forensic Psychology	- *understand the legal framework of the law and the civil and criminal justice systems*
	- *understand the applications of psychology to processes in the justice system, including:*
	   • *psychology applied to the process of investigation*
	   • *psychology applied to the legal process*
	   • *psychology as applied to the court dispersal system including community and custodial practices*
	- *understand the psychological interventions related to different client groups including victims of offences, offenders, litigants, appellants and individuals seeking arbitration and mediation*

Health Psychology	- *understand context and perspectives in health psychology*
	- *understand the epidemiology of health and illness*
	- *understand the following topics relevant to health psychology:*
	   • *biological mechanisms of health and disease*
	   • *health-related cognitions*
	   • *stress, health and illness*
	   • *chronic illness and disability*
	   • *individual differences in health and illness*
	   • *lifespan, gender and cross-cultural perspectives*
	- *understand applications of health psychology and professional issues*

Occupational Psychology	- *understand the following in occupational psychology:*
	   • *human-machine interaction*
	   • *design of environments and work*

	• *personnel selection and assessment* • *performance appraisal and career development* • *counselling and personal development* • *training* • *employee relations and motivation* • *organisational development and change*
Sport & Exericse Psychology	*- understand the following related to performance:* • *motor skills* • *practice skills* • *cognition* • *learning and perception* *- understand the following related to psychological skills:* • *arousal and anxiety* • *confidence* • *coping and techniques such as relaxation* • *goal setting* • *biofeedback* • *imagery* • *stress* • *inoculation* *- understand the following related to life-span issues and social processes:* • *interpersonal and communication skills* • *team cohesion* • *group identity* • *trust* • *co-operation* • *competence*

		• *leadership*
		- understand the following related to exercise and psychological activity:
		   • *determinants*
		   • *outcomes in relation to mood, self esteem and cognition*
		   • *problems of addiction and injury*
		- understand the influence of individual differences such as personality, motivation, gender and special groups such as the elite, disabled and talented

3a.2		**know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual, groups or communities**
3a.3		**understand the need to establish and maintain a safe a practice environment** - be aware of applicable health an safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these - be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation - be able to select appropriate protective equipment and use it correctly - be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks to service users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control