

Office of the
fairness
commissioner

Bureau du
commissaire à
l'équité



Study of Registration Practices of the

COLLEGE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS OF ONTARIO, 2007

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The Office of the Fairness Commissioner is an arm's-length agency of the Ontario government, established under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006. Its mandate is to ensure that certain regulated professions have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) undertook a study of registration practices of Ontario’s regulated professions during the fall and winter of 2007–2008. The purpose of the study was to understand each regulated profession’s 2007 registration practices and to establish baseline data and information to enable the OFC to measure progress as it fulfills its mandate under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006.

This report reflects the registration practices of the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO), as of December 31, 2007. Information in this report was gathered from:

- face-to-face meetings with registration staff of the regulatory body
- additional documentation provided by the regulatory body
- relevant websites
- career maps for the profession posted on the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration’s website (where applicable).

The College of Psychologists of Ontario also provided registration information and statistics for 2005, 2006 and 2007 through a standard spreadsheet designed by the OFC.

An analysis and summary of the findings for all of the regulated professions is contained in the OFC’s *Ontario’s Regulated Professions: Report on the 2007 Study of Registration Practices*.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE REGULATORY BODY

A. Legislation

The College of Psychologists of Ontario operates in accordance with the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 and the Psychology Act, 1991.

B. Protected Titles

The CPO regulates psychologists and psychological associates in Ontario. Unless they are registered with the CPO, individuals cannot call themselves a “psychologist” or “psychological associate” or use the terms “psychology” or “psychological” in any description of services offered or provided. To practise the profession of psychology in Ontario, a person must hold a current certificate of registration from the CPO (a certificate of supervised practice, a certificate of autonomous practice or a certificate of interim autonomous practice).

C. Definition of the Profession

According to the Psychology Act, “The practice of psychology is the assessment of behavioral and mental conditions, the diagnosis of neuropsychological disorders and dysfunctions and psychotic, neurotic and personality disorders and dysfunctions and the prevention and treatment of behavioral and mental disorders and dysfunctions and the maintenance and enhancement of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and interpersonal functioning.”

Psychologists and psychological associates are trained in the assessment, treatment and prevention of behavioural and mental conditions. They diagnose neuropsychological disorders and dysfunctions as well as psychotic, neurotic and personality disorders and dysfunctions. In addition, psychologists and psychological associates use a variety of approaches directed toward the maintenance and enhancement of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and interpersonal functioning.

Psychologists and psychological associates usually focus their practice in specific areas such as clinical psychology, counselling psychology, clinical neuropsychology, school psychology, correctional/forensic psychology, health psychology, rehabilitation psychology or industrial/organizational psychology. Within these areas, psychologists or psychological associates may work with a variety of individual client populations, such as children, adolescents or adults, or may focus their attention on families, couples or organizations. They work in a range of settings including schools, hospitals, industry, social service agencies, rehabilitation facilities and correctional facilities. Many psychologists and psychological associates have their own private practices.

D. Labour Market/Economic Trends

There is a continuing demand for psychologists, particularly in the areas of education, social services and corrections. Areas of employment include education, hospitals, industry, social service agencies, rehabilitation facilities and correctional facilities. There is a trend away from permanent full-time positions toward short-term contract positions. A growing number of psychologists and psychological associates are working in private practice.

Cuts to hospital budgets have reduced the number of positions for psychologists and psychological associates. School boards in Ontario are in need of psychologists; however, limited school budgets and a lack of francophone psychologists often prevent this need from being met.

Psychological services are not covered by OHIP. Psychological services provided within hospitals, schools boards and correctional facilities may be publicly funded if the provider is an employee of the facility and the program is publicly funded. Self-employed members rely on third-party payments

(for example, extended health care insurance, employee assistance plans, automobile insurance, long-term disability insurance) or direct payment from the recipient of the service. Psychological services may also be covered for eligible claimants under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

E. New Developments Within the Profession

The profession of psychology in Canada and the United States is now documenting the competencies required to practise the profession, the level of competencies to be achieved at various stages in the sequence of training and the means of assessing those competencies. The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB), of which the CPO is a member, is participating in these meetings and discussions. The ASPPB is also conducting a practice analysis to identify entry-to-practice competencies and appropriate ways to assess those competencies. The Registrar of the CPO is participating on the advisory committee for the practice analysis.

The Health System Improvements Act, 2007 (Bill 171) created a new college, called the College of Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario, and designated new controlled acts for the provision of psychotherapy services. Registered psychologists will not have to move to the new college in order to provide psychotherapy services. The title “psychotherapist” will now be restricted and will be governed by the new college.

Ryerson University received approval from the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies to launch a master’s degree program in psychology in the fall of 2007, and a doctoral degree program in 2009. Laurentian University is developing a new graduate program in psychology.

F. Staffing

The CPO has 12 full-time employees and one part-time employee. Three employees are involved in the registration process.

3. REGISTRATION PRACTICES

A. Registration Requirements and Application Process

i. Basic Requirements for Registration

To practise psychology in Ontario, an applicant must be a registered member of the CPO.

A **psychologist** must hold a doctoral degree from a program of study that is primarily psychological, as required in the guidelines published by the CPO.

A **psychological associate** must hold a master's degree from a program of study that is primarily psychological, as required in the guidelines published by the CPO. After completing the master's degree, the associate must also complete four or more years of full-time (1,500 hours/year) work experience, or equivalent part-time experience.

In addition, every applicant applying for registration as either a psychologist or a psychological associate must meet the following requirements:

- Be legally entitled to work in Canada
- Be fluent in English or French
- Meet the CPO's requirement for supervised practice hours
- Complete any further professional training or experience that the CPO requires
- Pass the examinations approved by the CPO
- Have professional liability insurance.

Registration requirements are the same for domestic applicants and internationally trained individuals.

ii. Steps in the Application Process

Following are the basic steps in the application process for psychologists and psychological associates.

Step 1 – Application

Applicants send application documents to the CPO. Applicants can contact the CPO for the appropriate Application for Certificate of Registration Authorizing Supervised Practice form. (There are separate supervised practice forms for psychologists and psychological associates.) Applicants also can find the form online. Applicants should complete the form and attach the required documentation and fees.

CPO has developed a questionnaire (available online) to help applicants decide the appropriate certificate of registration to apply for.

Step 2 – Supervised Practice, Additional Work Required and Written Examinations

Applicants complete supervised practice, pass the two written examinations and complete any additional training or supervised experience required by the CPO.

Step 3 – Oral Examination

After satisfactory completion of the required supervised experience and the two written examinations, the candidate is invited to the oral examination, which is normally the last requirement to be met for the certificate of registration authorizing autonomous practice.

B. Documentation Required from Internationally Trained Individuals

i. Standard Documentation

The following documentation must be included with the application:

- *Psychologist*: Official transcripts of a doctoral-level program of study with content that is primarily psychological in nature from the applicant's educational institution. Applicants must arrange for all institutions to send the transcripts directly to the college. For degrees earned outside of Canada or the United States, applicants must have the credential evaluated by the University of Toronto's Comparative Education Service (CES) or by World Education Services (WES). The credential evaluation must show that the degree is equivalent to a Canadian doctoral degree.
- *Psychological Associate*: Official transcripts of a master's-level program of study with content that is primarily psychological in nature from the applicant's educational institution. Applicants must arrange for all institutions to send the transcripts directly to the college. For degrees earned outside of Canada or the United States, applicants must have the credential evaluated by the CES or WES. The credential evaluation must show that the degree is equivalent to a Canadian master's degree.
- *All applicants*: References from three members of the profession. Referees may reside within or outside of Canada. Forms are available online.

If a university outside Canada or the United States is unable to send a transcript directly to the CPO, the CPO may accept a certified copy of the transcript the university issued to the applicant. An applicant cannot take the examinations without proof of credentials.

If the transcript and official university documents are in a language other than English or French, the applicant must arrange to have these documents translated by an official translator. The CPO website does not specify who qualifies as an official translator.

ii. Options for Applicants with Unavailable/Destroyed Documents

If official documents are unavailable, the CPO will accept certified photocopies.

C. Credential Assessment (Third Party and/or Internal)

An internationally trained applicant must have his or her credentials evaluated by either CES or WES to determine if they are comparable in academic level to degrees from a Canadian university. The CES or WES evaluation must be submitted to the CPO with a completed application.

The CPO reserves the right to make the final determination regarding the level of the degree, and will evaluate whether the content of the degree is primarily psychological in nature. Applicants must provide the CPO with valid course descriptions, including the course titles, contents and hours, in addition to transcripts.

The CPO informs applicants in writing whether their application has met the initial registration requirements. This will confirm whether the academic credentials have been accepted and whether the applicant has been approved to proceed to one of the following:

- *for psychologists:* supervised practice
- *for psychological associates:* the work experience requirement (if they have not already completed it), followed by supervised practice.

If the application is refused, then applicants may appeal to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board.

D. Academic/Program Requirements

A psychologist must hold a doctoral degree, and a psychological associate must hold a master's degree, from a program of study with content that is primarily psychological in nature, as required in the guidelines published by the CPO.

E. Work Experience Requirements

All candidates must complete a minimum of 1,500 hours (12 months) of supervised practice in Ontario, under the supervision of two members of the CPO. The CPO website has an online directory of members with information about who is practising and their contact information. This information may help applicants to find members to supervise their practice. Applicants must be issued a certificate of supervised practice by the CPO. This certificate, along with completion of the supervised work, is a normal prerequisite in order to be eligible for a certificate of autonomous practice.

A certificate of supervised practice may be held for only two years. During supervised practice, applicants are considered to be members of the CPO and may use the title “psychologist (supervised practice)” or “psychological associate (supervised practice).”

i. Psychologist

In order to receive a certificate for supervised practice as a psychologist, an applicant must:

- Have an acceptable doctoral degree
- Name two members who agree to supervise the applicant’s practice for the required term, using a signed agreement form supplied by the CPO.

ii. Psychological Associate

In order to receive a certificate for supervised practice as a psychological associate, an applicant must:

- Have an acceptable master’s degree
- Have at least four years of acceptable experience after completion of the master’s degree (this experience can be anywhere in the world)
- Name two members who agree to supervise the applicant’s practice for the required term, using a signed agreement form supplied by the CPO.

iii. Additional Training or Experience Requirements

Applicants may be required to take additional professional training or obtain further experience during their supervised practice and before qualifying for a specific area of practice. During the initial review of the applicant’s registration package, the Registrar may identify areas where the applicant’s training does not appear to support his or her declared practice area. In these cases, the Registration Committee will review the applicant’s training and experience in relation to his or her declared practice area. In cases where the CPO thinks that an applicant’s training or experience should be enhanced, it will work with the individual to identify an appropriate training plan.

F. Examinations

All applicants who want to become authorized for autonomous practice as psychologists or psychological associates in Ontario must pass two written examinations and one oral examination.

Exemptions from exams are not granted under any circumstances.

i. Written Examinations

Applicants may attempt the required written examinations while in supervised practice. Either of the written examinations may be attempted up to four times, as long as both examinations are successfully completed within a two-year period.

The two written examinations are:

- The Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP). This is a computer-administered test that can be written at any of approximately 300 testing centres in Canada and the United States. The EPPP consists of 200 multiple-choice questions, testing core knowledge of psychology. The examination is four hours and 15 minutes long. It is available in English or in a bilingual French/English version. The EPPP is a standard examination.
- The Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination (JEE) is administered by the CPO. It can be written at several sites across Ontario, and is offered twice a year. It is a paper-and-pencil test that consists of 60 multiple-choice questions. The JEE tests knowledge of the following: legislation relevant to the practice of psychology in Ontario; standards of professional conduct; and ethical principles of the profession. The examination is two hours long. It is in a bilingual English/French format. The JEE is a standard examination.

ii. Oral Examination

Applicants must complete their supervised practice before taking the final oral examination.

The oral examination is administered in Toronto twice a year by the CPO. Applicants are invited to take the oral examination once they have completed all the other requirements. This examination is available in English and French.

The examination is intended to ensure that applicants are ready and able to enter autonomous practice. It is administered by a panel made up of three members of the profession. Applicants can expect to address their area of intended practice, and demonstrate their knowledge of assessment, diagnosis and treatment. The examination also requires applicants to demonstrate their interpersonal skills and apply their knowledge of the profession's ethics and standards.

If members of the profession wish to change their area of practice, they must apply to the CPO and demonstrate the appropriate level of experience and training.

G. Language Requirements

An applicant must be fluent in English or French, but the CPO does not administer any language assessments. Language fluency is indirectly assessed by the required examinations.

H. Fees¹

Fee	
Application for certificate of supervised practice	\$230
Application for certificate of interim autonomous practice	\$100
Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP)	\$400 USD
Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination (JEE)	\$270
Oral examination	\$740
Autonomous practice members — annual fee	\$795
Supervised practice members — annual fee	\$795

The fees for credential assessment reports from WES or CES may vary, and are payable directly to the assessment agency.

I. Third Parties

Name of Third Party	Relationship to Regulatory Body
Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards	Administers the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP).
Comparative Education Services (CES) — University of Toronto	Evaluates the level of academic credentials.
World Education Services (WES)	Evaluates the level of academic credentials.

J. Typical Length of the Registration Process

The average length of the registration process — from the application stage to autonomous practice — is 18 months. Applicants can log in online and check the status of their application in the registration process.

The CPO currently keeps files open for an indefinite period.

¹ Fees are in Canadian dollars unless otherwise indicated.

K. Accredited Programs

The following universities in Ontario have graduate programs in psychology:

- Brock University, St Catharines (MA and Ph.D.)
- Carleton University, Ottawa (MA and Ph.D.)
- Lakehead University, Thunder Bay (MA and Ph.D.)
- McMaster University, Hamilton (MA and Ph.D.)
- Queen's University, Kingston (MA and Ph.D.)
- Ryerson University, Toronto (MA; proposed Ph.D. program approved for 2009)
- University of Guelph (MA and Ph.D.)
- University of Ottawa (MA and Ph.D.)
- University of Toronto (MA and Ph.D.)
- University of Toronto — Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE/UT) (MA and Ph.D.)
- University of Waterloo (MA and Ph.D.)
- University of Western Ontario, London (MA and Ph.D.)
- University of Windsor (MA and Ph.D.)
- Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo (MA only)
- York University, Toronto (MA and Ph.D.)

Individuals who are considering entry to a graduate psychology program should contact the university directly regarding the focus and content of the particular program.

L. Internal Review/Appeal Process

CPO staff perform the initial review of all applications. If necessary, staff communicate with the applicant, who then has the opportunity to provide further submissions.

If it is not clear that the applicant has met the requirements for registration, the Director of Registration and the Registrar review the file before it is referred to the Registration Committee. The Registration Committee has the exclusive right to refuse to register an applicant.

A candidate whose file is referred to the Registration Committee has 30 days to make further submissions regarding the application.

The Registration Committee is composed of:

- at least three members of the CPO Council who are members of the CPO
- at least two members of the council who were appointed to the council by the Lieutenant Governor in Council
- at least two members of the CPO who are not members of the council.

If the application is rejected or if there is further discussion, the applicant can appeal the Registration Committee's decision to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB). New material can be provided to the HPARB.

The applicant is entitled to a copy of the registration file. At the applicant's request, the Registrar must give the applicant all the information (including a copy of each document the CPO has) that is relevant to the application. The Registrar may refuse to give an applicant anything that may, in the Registrar's opinion, jeopardize the safety of any person.

Each year, approximately 11 referrals are made to the Registration Committee for review of academic credentials. Four or five of these referrals are for internationally trained applicants.

Information about the appeal process is available on the CPO website.

4. BRIDGING PROGRAMS

The CPO does not offer a bridging program for internationally trained individuals.

5. MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

The CPO has a reciprocity agreement with the province of Manitoba and 10 American states, and it has a mutual recognition agreement with the other nine provinces and the Northwest Territories. An eligible applicant coming from one of these jurisdictions may be issued a certificate of interim autonomous practice, which is valid for six months. During that time, the applicant must pass the Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination and attend an interview to determine the applicant's readiness for his or her proposed practice in Ontario.

However, if applicants are planning to practise in an area of expertise other than that in which they have been practising, they must demonstrate training in this specific area.

The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards can issue a certificate of professional qualifications (CPQ). This certificate speeds up the process for applicants coming from provinces or states without a mutual recognition agreement. The CPQ is for individuals who have a doctoral degree in psychology, have passed the required examinations and have five years of practical experience in the profession with no disciplinary history.

6. APPLICANTS' INTERACTIONS WITH REGULATORY BODY

A. Nature and Frequency of Communication

The CPO has frequent written contact with applicants throughout the registration process. In the future, applicants will be able to log in to the CPO website and find out the status of their file.

B. Backlogs

The CPO has no backlogs in the registration process. The CPO receives approximately 150 applications per year.

C. Complaints Regarding the Registration Process

The CPO has no reported complaints about the registration process. Any questions or concerns about the registration process are addressed promptly by registration staff.

7. CHANGES SINCE THE 2005 SURVEY

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration conducted a survey in 2005 to collect information about occupational regulatory bodies in Ontario.

Since 2005, the CPO has created the online application feature on the CPO website. The CPO also updated the career map in collaboration with the Labour Market Integration Unit, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, and included a specific section for internationally trained individuals on the CPO website.

8. REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

Definitions used in these tables:

Alternative class of licence: a class of licence that enables its holder to practise with limitations; additional registration requirements must be met in order to be fully licensed. Alternative classes of licence granted by the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO) are specified under the tables below.

Applicant: a person who has applied to start the process for entry to the profession.

Applicant actively pursuing licensing: an applicant who has begun the application process but who has not received any type of certificate of practice. The CPO may be waiting for some of the applicant's documents to arrive, or the applicant may be awaiting a decision by the Registration Committee regarding issuing a certificate to the applicant.

Inactive applicant: an applicant who had no contact with the CPO within the year specified. The CPO does not track this information.

Member: a person who is currently able to use the protected title or professional designation "psychologist" or "psychological associate" without limitation. Members hold a certificate of autonomous practice.

Languages in which application information materials were available

Language	2005	2006	2007
English	Yes	Yes	Yes
French	No	No	No
Other(s)			

Countries where internationally educated applicants were initially trained in psychology

Applications Received	2005	2006	2007
Largest number	United States	United States	United States
Second-largest number	India	India	India
Third-largest number	Russian Federation	Pakistan	Colombia
Fourth-largest number	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Fifth-largest number	Australia	Israel	Poland

Staff employed by the College of Psychologists of Ontario

Number of Staff	2005	2006	2007
Involved in registration process	3	3	3
Involved in appeals process	1	1	1

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in psychology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)¹

Members	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL
Total members	1,998	322	371	109	2,800
Non-practising members	90	37	33	5	165

¹ All numbers in this table include both psychologists and psychological associates.

Applicants processed by the College of Psychologists of Ontario in 2005¹

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in psychology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)						
In 2005 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL	
New applications received	84	18	36	11	149	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	9	2	4	3	18	
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members ²	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who became members ³	86	18	20	7	131	
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence ⁴ but were not issued a licence ⁵	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence ⁴	74	16	31	7	128	

¹ All numbers in this table include both psychologists and psychological associates.

² All who are authorized enter the profession.

³ Applicants who received a certificate of autonomous practice.

⁴ Certificate of registration authorizing supervised practice and certificate of registration authorizing interim autonomous practice.

⁵ All who are authorized receive a licence.

Applicants processed by the College of Psychologists of Ontario in 2006¹

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in psychology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)						
In 2006 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL	
New applications received	87	32	26	14	159	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	8	4	7	6	25	
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members ²	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who became members ³	73	21	29	7	130	
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence ⁴ but were not issued a licence ⁵	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence ⁴	79	28	19	8	134	

¹ All numbers in this table include both psychologists and psychological associates.

² All who are authorized enter the profession.

³ Applicants who received a certificate of autonomous practice.

⁴ Certificate of registration authorizing supervised practice and certificate of registration authorizing interim autonomous practice.

⁵ All who are authorized receive a licence.

Applicants processed by the College of Psychologists of Ontario in 2007¹

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in psychology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)						
In 2007 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL	
New applications received	73	27	45	10	155	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	21	11	18	3	53	
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members ²	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who became members ³	80	17	18	10	125	
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence ⁴ but were not issued a licence ⁵	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence ⁴	50	16	27	5	98	

¹ All numbers in this table include both psychologists and psychological associates.

² All who are authorized enter the profession.

³ Applicants who received a certificate of autonomous practice.

⁴ Certificate of registration authorizing supervised practice and certificate of registration authorizing interim autonomous practice.

⁵ All who are authorized receive a licence.

9. SOURCES

College of Psychologists of Ontario website. <http://www.cpo.on.ca>. Last accessed: February 4, 2008.

College of Psychologists of Ontario and Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. “Access to the Psychology Profession in Ontario.” Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration website.

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Representatives of the College of Psychologists of Ontario met with staff of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner on September 28, 2007, to provide further information for this study.

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