



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

Standards for coaching psychology (Level 8)

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AIMS AND FEATURES

These standards have been established by the Society to set out the standards of knowledge, conduct and practice required by those wishing to gain Chartered membership of the Society, Full membership of the coaching psychology domain of practice and become a BPS Registered Coaching psychologist. The main features of these standards are that candidates:

- develop and demonstrate competencies in relation both to the underpinning knowledge base of coaching psychology and professional practice (including research) in coaching psychology;
 - demonstrate that they have progressively taken responsibility for their own learning and professional development as commensurate for an independent applied practitioner;
 - are provided with detailed information about the knowledge, conduct and practice they are required to develop and the means by which this will be assessed; and
 - are supported in their development by supervisors with expertise in coaching psychology.
- be effective, reflective, ethically sound, resourceful and informed practitioners able to work in a variety of contexts with a variety of individual, group and organisational clients;
 - be able to make informed, autonomous judgements on complex issues, often in unpredictable environments and in the absence of complete data;
 - embody the imaginative, interpretive, personal and innovative aspects of coaching psychology, including detailed understanding of applicable perspectives and techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
 - demonstrate and commit to ongoing personal and professional development and inquiry, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches;
 - understand, develop and apply models of psychological inquiry for the creation and interpretation of new knowledge and professional practice of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
 - appreciate the significance of the wider social, cultural and political domains in which Coaching psychologists operate; and
 - adopt a questioning and evaluative approach to the philosophy, practice, research and theory that constitutes coaching psychology.

The key aim of these standards is to produce Chartered psychologists in coaching psychology who will:

DEMONSTRATING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STANDARDS IN COACHING PSYCHOLOGY

These standards are at a Doctoral level award (Level 8) which conforms to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) D-level descriptors and describes the level of achievement which can be expected for doctoral level training. In order to ensure that successful candidates meet the level required, the Doctoral level descriptors are embedded in the competencies which underpin the standards¹.

People who have reached Level 8 are able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and / or understanding in coaching psychology, have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems. Specifically, they:

¹ These standards cover all of the competencies required for recognition as a Chartered Coaching psychologist. They therefore incorporate the knowledge and skills required at Masters level, as well as the additional knowledge and skills required at Doctoral level. The D level standards are embedded in the competencies where relevant.

Demonstrate –

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems; and
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Will be able to –

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the

absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences; and

- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

Will have –

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Although D level is often perceived to relate to PhD research, the descriptors are also relevant to developing and demonstrating knowledge and practice at the forefront of the discipline within professional practice.

THE STANDARDS

In order to gain Chartership, Coaching psychologists must successfully demonstrate that they have achieved the Standards described here. The standards underpin all activities undertaken by a competent, independent coaching psychology practitioner who can clearly demonstrate development of ever-increasing levels of autonomy within their work.

The core competencies underpinning each standard provide guidance about what needs to be achieved in order to demonstrate the standards. Standard 1 should underpin all work. Any failure to properly consider ethical principles and codes in any section of a portfolio of evidence could result in a decision not to award Chartership, even if ethical practice has been demonstrated elsewhere.

STANDARD 1

Develop, implement and maintain personal and professional autonomy, accountability and ethical maturity.

- 1.1** Practice within legal, ethical and professional boundaries of the profession.
 - 1.1.1** Demonstrate an understanding of, compliance with, and personal commitment to the BPS *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, *Practice Guidelines*, and *Code of Ethics of Human Research Ethics*.
 - 1.1.2** Demonstrate an understanding of, compliance with, and personal commitment to current legislation, and relevant statutory and moral responsibilities of working as a Coaching psychologist.
 - 1.1.3** Be aware of the limits of the concept of confidentiality, and be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard clients of the wider public.
 - 1.1.4** Provide evidence of the keeping of accurate, comprehensive and comprehensible client records ensuring compliance with information governance and demonstrating awareness of the safe and effective use of personal or other relevant information.
 - 1.1.5** Work in the best interests of clients at all times, exercising a professional duty of care, recognising your personal and professional limitations and boundaries, understanding limits of practice and utilising referral mechanisms as appropriate.
 - 1.1.6** Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics present in working relationships, including dual relationships and dynamics of power, as well as the potential impact on clients and how this can be minimised.
 - 1.1.7** Ensure the utmost respect of individuals we serve, and uphold their rights, privacy, dignity, autonomy and welfare and practice in a non-discriminatory manner.
 - 1.1.8** Understand the impact of differences such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, religion and age on psychological wellbeing or behaviour.
 - 1.1.9** Understand the importance of, and be able to provide service users with the necessary information to enable them to make informed decisions and provide informed consent, usually through contracting.
 - 1.1.10** Maintain relationships based on mutual respect and trust, and maintain high standards of practice even in situations of personal incompatibility.
 - 1.1.11** Demonstrate a knowledge of and practical experience in ethical reasoning and decision-making and seek guidance when problems or dilemmas arise.
- 1.2** Practice as an autonomous professional, exercising one's own professional judgement.
 - 1.2.1** Appropriately define and contract work as a Coaching psychologist.
 - 1.2.2** Assess the feasibility of the proposed consultancy by considering human resources, possible constraints, role relationships and limits of confidentiality.
 - 1.2.3** Demonstrate the ability to make informed, professional judgements and / or find resolutions to complex issues, often in unpredictable environments and in the absence of complete data, in accordance with current codes of professional, legal and ethical conduct, and calling upon required knowledge and experience where necessary.
 - 1.2.4** Take personal responsibility for and justify decisions.

- 1.2.5** Adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups and individuals.
- 1.2.6** demonstrate consideration of organisational and systemic issues of relevance to the practice of Coaching psychologists and adapt practice accordingly including but not limited to:
- the organisational context of practice;
 - the structures and functions of service providers applicable to the work of coaching psychology; and
 - any current legislation applicable to coaching.
- 1.3** Take personal responsibility for own continuing personal and professional development as an applied Coaching psychologist.
- 1.3.1** Engage in ongoing critical reflection of practice, record the outcome and consider alternative ways of working based on such reflection.
- 1.3.2** Identify and evaluate new and emerging evidence relating to best practice in coaching psychology, demonstrating how psychological literature and other information sources are interrogated and critically applied in within coaching practice.
- 1.3.3** Provide comprehensive opportunities to give and receive feedback, and demonstrate how this has been acted upon accordingly.
- 1.3.4** Engage in regular supervision with an appropriately qualified and experienced supervisor.
- 1.3.5** Monitor and evaluate practice and impact through supervision, reflection and feedback, and have a clear, ongoing strategy for continuing professional development based on this.
- 1.3.6** Identify, assess and monitor personal and work-related challenges to one's physical and emotional wellbeing and fitness to practice.
- 1.3.7** Manage own workload, resources and health effectively and develop strategies to cope with challenges and unforeseen circumstances including seeking and using appropriate supervision and professional support.

STANDARD 2

Demonstrate a systematic, substantial and critical applied understanding of psychological knowledge at the forefront of coaching psychology, and create or interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of the discipline.

- 2.1 Demonstrate a broad, holistic understanding of the structure and function of the human body as is relevant to knowledge of mental and psychological health and wellbeing.
- 2.2 Be able to recognise signs and symptoms of common mental health and wellbeing issues, support a person in distress, and guide them to further support where necessary.
- 2.3 Demonstrate an applied critical understanding of the philosophy, theory and practice of more than one evidence-based model of coaching psychology.
- 2.4 Demonstrate an applied critical understanding of human cognition, emotion, and behaviour (including behaviour change) and consistently draw from a broad range of relevant theory and evidence to underpin and enhance coaching practice.
- 2.5 Demonstrate an applied critical understanding of the structure and function of the brain and the wider biological basis of cognition, emotion and behaviour, and how this knowledge and understanding underpins and enhances coaching practice.
- 2.6 Demonstrate an applied critical understanding of lifespan development and consistently draw on a broad range of relevant psychological theory, evidence and understanding in these areas to underpin and enhance your coaching effectiveness.
- 2.7 Demonstrate an applied critical understanding of social psychology, group dynamics and systems theories relevant to coaching and consistently draw on a broad range of relevant psychological theory, evidence and understanding in these areas to underpin and enhance your coaching effectiveness.
- 2.8 Critically evaluate the application of psychological theory, evidence and understanding to your coaching practice and adjust in the light of this evaluation.
- 2.9 Synthesise existing or create robust new evidence, based on psychological theory and understanding, to develop and evaluate new techniques, ideas or approaches in coaching practice.

STANDARD 3

Demonstrate the ability to utilise a range of coaching and psychological skills, techniques and frameworks with a range of clients on a variety of topics, and demonstrate the ability to adopt a flexible, innovate approach and make informed judgements when faced with complex or unpredicted issues or professional situations.

- 3.1** Demonstrate sufficient professional experience of coaching a range of clients on a variety of topics to practice as an autonomous practitioner².
- 3.2** Demonstrate the ability to work flexibly with a range of coaching models applicable to performance and / or wellbeing outcomes (e.g. cognitive- behavioural, solution-focused, humanistic, motivational interviewing), and make informed, evidence-based judgements regarding their efficacy in different situations.
- 3.3** Competently manage a coaching conversation including where appropriate, contracting, re-contracting, rapport building, objective setting, insight / awareness building, empowering personal responsibility, action planning, identifying barriers, contingency planning, commit to action.
- 3.4** Be able to initiate, develop and end a coaching relationship.
- 3.5** Critically evaluate and use a range of evidence-based psychological skills, techniques and strategies of relevance to coaching which may include (but is not limited to): goal setting; arousal control (relaxation and activation); reframing; use of language and metaphors; visualisation; self-talk; cognitive restructuring; reinforcement, self-monitoring; feedback.
- 3.6** Demonstrate core coaching skills including: development of rapport and trust; creating a learning environment; coaching presence; active listening; use of effective questions; summarising; paraphrasing; reflection of content and feeling; use of appropriate non-verbal communication; refocusing attention; managing the emotional content of sessions; understand the client's perspective or 'worldview'.
- 3.7** Make informed judgements about the appropriateness of the use of psychometrics or other standardised assessment tools in coaching practice, including the ability to critically evaluate the reliability and validity, selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of tests, as well as professional boundaries around their use.
- 3.8** Demonstrate competence in the incorporation of the relevant psychological factors important in the understanding of the client's perspective and behaviour.
- 3.9** Co-construct formulations with the client in order to form a shared framework of understanding which has implications for change.
- 3.10** Demonstrate evidence-based knowledge and understanding of behaviour change and transition processes at the individual, group and organisational level, and implement an evidence based coaching approach to affect change / transition.
- 3.11** Identify and assess clients' expectations, needs and requirements, negotiating clients' priorities to maximise potential effects.

² A total of 690 days of coaching psychology relevant work / training comprising 160 days of applied work with clients (including preparatory work, data collection, needs analysis, observation work, session design, reflections on practice and so on); and up to 530 days of planning training activities, independent study, planning research, research data collection, analysing research data and writing up research, and other appropriate training activities identified by the trainee and their co-ordinating supervisor as being necessary (for example, short courses, seminars, conferences, visits, secondments, shadowing and observation, team / joint working and networking).

STANDARD 4

Demonstrate the ability to conceptualise, design and conduct independent, original research in coaching psychology or a closely related discipline that is of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication.

Conduct an empirical research investigation or academic case study:

- 4.1** Design psychological research activities.
 - 4.1.1** Generate relevant and testable research questions and / or hypotheses, related to quantitative, qualitative or mixed research methods.
 - 4.1.2** Provide and justify a sound rationale for the research through critical analysis of theoretical models and previous research findings relevant to proposed research question(s).
 - 4.1.3** Define the resources and constraints relevant to the conduct of the research.
 - 4.1.4** Understand and reflect on ethical issues, and design research accordingly.
 - 4.1.5** Identify, describe and justify chosen research methods, ensuring appropriateness to proposed research.
 - 4.1.6** consider use of validated psychometric tests and ensure that new measures are adequately assessed in relation to their psychometric properties, and / or appropriate qualitative techniques.
 - 4.1.7** Develop, present and revise the research design as appropriate.
 - 4.1.8** Conduct pilot testing where appropriate.
 - 4.1.9** Conduct research in accordance with the BPS *Code of Human Research Ethics*.
 - 4.1.10** Collect data as specified by research protocols;
 - 4.1.11** Select, justify and carry out appropriate data analysis techniques as specified by research protocols;
 - 4.1.12** Report and interpret the results of data analysis accurately and appropriately;
 - 4.1.13** Critically discuss and evaluate the findings in the context of the existing body of research / practice;
 - 4.1.14** Critically evaluate the potential impact of new developments for coaching practice;
 - 4.1.15** Critically review the research process and make recommendations for future research and / or practice.
 - 4.1.16** Identify appropriate pathways for dissemination.

STANDARD 5

Communicate effectively and bring psychological influence to bear; for example, through consultancy, training or leadership, and by working effectively with other professionals.

- 5.1** Communicate effectively.
 - 5.1.1** Demonstrate the ability to use appropriate verbal and non verbal skills to communicate information, advice, ideas, conclusions and professional opinions clearly and effectively, to clients, colleagues, specialist and non-specialist audiences, including complex psychological concepts or techniques.
 - 5.1.2** Demonstrate an awareness of how communication can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, capacity, learning ability and physical ability, and of the potential impact of this on assessment of and engagement with coaching.
 - 5.1.3** Modify forms of verbal and non-verbal communication accordingly and where appropriate.
- 5.2** Promote coaching psychology, it's principles, practices, services and benefits, and provide appropriate professional advice and guidance based on evidence in coaching psychology.
 - 5.2.1** Be able to provide opinion and advice on coaching psychology in formal settings as appropriate.
 - 5.2.2** Recognise, and where appropriate offer up to date, relevant advice on psychological issues relating to coaching practice and outcomes, aiding organisational or policy decision-making as appropriate.
 - 5.2.3** Be able to support the learning of others in the application of coaching psychology skills, knowledge, practices and procedures.
- 5.3** Demonstrate the ability to build and sustain collaborative working relationships with others, and to contribute effectively as part of an inter-professional team.
- 5.4** Demonstrate substantial leadership and influence in coaching psychology.
 - 5.4.1** Demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge, practice or understanding at the forefront of the discipline through the generation of a significant new technique, idea or approach that merits publication.
 - 5.4.2** Demonstrate appropriate dissemination in order to influence and enhance the profession of coaching psychology.
 - 5.4.3** Demonstrate leadership qualities in dissemination and knowledge transfer in coaching psychology.
 - 5.4.4** Disseminate information that is accurate, comprehensive and in an appropriate style and format consistent for the intended audience.
 - 5.4.5** Gain feedback and evaluate results of dissemination activities to assess implications.



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