

International Project on Competence in Psychology (IPCP)

Competence as a Common Language for Professional Identity and International Recognition

IPCP Conference 2023

An Invited Meeting of International Leaders to be Held in Conjunction

with the European Congress of Psychology (ECP)

Brighton, England

July 2023

Statement of Purpose and Objectives

This document provides a brief description of the background and objectives for the upcoming meeting of the International Project on Competence in Psychology in July 2023. The IPCP Conference 2023 will be held on July 3, 2023, in Brighton, England in advance of the European Congress of Psychology (ECP). This event will be the continuation of a multi-year project to develop, refine and promote the International Declaration on Core Competences in Psychology (The Declaration). The Declaration was created by a small group of international volunteers who worked together since 2013 to draft a set of core competences that capture the essential skills, abilities and attitudes that define what it means to be a psychologist anywhere around the globe. The goal of creating such a set of core competences is to promote a more unified and coherent professional identity for psychologists that can enhance consistency in the quality of psychological services around the world, and to identify mechanisms that can facilitate professional mobility, despite significant international differences in how psychologists are educated, trained and evaluated/credentialed for delivering competent professional psychological services. And take into account the mobility of psychologists and clients. The IPCP Conference 2023 is intended to advance development and use of the Declaration towards achieving these goals by identifying critical next steps and establishing an action plan to guide the project in years ahead. Members of the IPCP Work Group have been working since 2020 to organize a meeting at a major international psychology congress to advance development of the Declaration. The Work Group is pleased to announce that such a meeting will take place in July 2023 in conjunction with the European Congress of Psychology (ECP) to be held July 4-7, 2023 in Brighton, England. Like the highly successful conference in Stockholm, July 2013. (See Part 2) , this meeting will also be a working event where invited participants will participate in continued efforts to refine and expand the International Declaration on Core Competences in

Professional Psychology, and to promote its adoption and use to establish recognition and credentialing mechanisms where appropriate.

Part 1: Purpose and Objectives for the IPCP Conference 2023

The overarching goal of the IPCP Conference 2023 remains the same as it was from the project's start: to promote the development of a global agreement on identifying the benchmark competences that define professional psychology, that will promote mutual recognition and facilitate international mobility for competent psychologists.

Specifically, the Project seeks to

1. Identify

- The common standards that frame core competences which reflect the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that define professional psychology around the world.
- The essential common denominators across various fields of applied psychology in terms of foundational and functional competences.

2. Why?

Because a global agreement on a common core of professional competences across the various fields of applied psychology could form the basis for:

- Establishing common and consistent criteria for the accreditation/recognition of quality educational programs preparing professional psychologists.
- Licensing/credentialing and regulation of professional psychologists.
- Promoting a consistent and cohesive description of the competences of professional psychologists as well as a defense against misconceptions about psychologists.
- Enhancing psychologists' professional self-identity and cohesion.
- Facilitating mobility for individual psychologists across various jurisdictions and ease the processes for the receiving countries/communities.
- Promoting more global consistency in the quality of psychological services.
- Promoting the wide range of applications for the practice of psychology.
- Enhancing the public perception and promotion of psychology's role in advancing personal health, well-being and productivity.

Anticipated Work Activities for IPCP conference 2023

Participants in the conference will work in groups and plenary sessions on specific aspects of advancing the Declaration including:

1. Reviewing the strengths and limitations of the current Declaration and its use and impact since July 2016.

This Congress will provide an opportunity to review the progress made from 2016, when the Declaration was endorsed by IAAP, IUPsyS, and other associations, to the present and to identify issues that have arisen which may require resolution. The following activities and goals form the anticipated next steps suggested by IPCP WG members:

- a. **Detailing or extending the core competences:** describing each of them in more detail, developing a larger document in which each competence in the current model would have an expanded description to include behavioural anchors. Extending the list of competences with several optional or supplementary ones (e.g., supervision, training and research).
 - b. **Detailing how these competences might be applied in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner in different cultures:** reviewing/revising the Declaration to improve recognition of gaps in existing models of regulation and recognition that affect marginalized peoples within a culture.
 - c. **Exploring possible barriers to implementation:** the process for ensuring quality evaluations that are user informed and holistic. How to support countries that are struggling for professional recognition.
 - d. **Exploring possible mechanisms to assess each competence:** identifying assessment strategies and methods that could form the basis for using competences in professional recognition and credentialing.
 - e. **Exploring and articulating how these core competences might be applicable in different work settings (e.g., clinical, work and organizational, educational, forensic).**
- 2. To clarify the differences between required (minimal) and optional competences and discuss whether and how to add optional competences to the Declaration.**

One issue that has arisen during development of the Declaration is whether we should include definitions of competences that are considered important, but possibly not essential for practice in some practice arenas or cases. The criterion for inclusion in the current Declaration is that each competence must be demonstrated. Thus, anyone who meets the standard of practice implied by the Declaration must be able to demonstrate competence in *all* the contents. This should define a necessary condition for qualification, though it may not necessarily be a sufficient basis for qualification. Other areas of competence that are important have been suggested: notably in the areas of carrying out research, providing training and providing supervision.

3. To discuss the relationship between international and national standards.

To articulate the need to contextualize international standards for use in local settings in terms of areas of practice, existing local requirements for inclusion of competences and existing local mechanisms for assessment and regulation/credentialing.

4. To agree on the goals for the next three years and the desirability or otherwise of:

- a. Surveying IUPsyS member associations and IAAP members on their views regarding potential uses of the Declaration.
- b. Developing a handbook/toolkit for use with the Declaration in auditing or benchmarking professional qualifications in psychological practice.
- c. Expanding the Declaration into International Guidelines and 'Good Practice' Standard

A FINAL OBJECTIVE

An important outcome anticipated for the IPCP Conference 2023 will be to check the support of continuing the work of the Project. Many Work Group members have volunteered and served over many years to bring the Project to its current state. The response to the creation of the International Declaration of Core Competences in Psychology has been both promising and gratifying. Members of the IPCP Work Group currently will need to discuss both membership and leadership of the Project going forward, and the interest among our colleagues to join and/or support the IPCP WG and the Reference Group.

PART 2: Brief History of the International Project on Competence in Psychology (IPCP)

The IPCP Congress 2023 builds on the work of five previous congresses, sponsored or co-sponsored by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) in the USA, that sought to identify international variations in the regulation of psychological practitioners. The first four congresses were held in New Orleans, USA (1995), Oslo, Norway (2000), Montreal, Canada, (2004) and Sydney, Australia (2010). These early congresses fostered opportunities to understand international similarities and differences in psychological training, credentialing and practice. Substantial variation was identified and the significant impediments to international practice and mobility created by these variations were also discussed.

Following the 4th Congress in 2010, a decision was made to hold the 5th International Congress in Stockholm, prior to ECP2013, organized by ASPPB and the Norwegian Psychological Association (NPA). An organizing committee was formed, consisting of the leadership in international, regional and national psychology associations. When this organizing committee held its first meeting in Istanbul 2011, it was decided that this time we should focus on one important issue: Mobility. The main issue is that mobility is limited by various views on what constitutes competence. Which then hinders the right to be qualified for work in another country. Based on this assumption "Competence" became the theme the 5th International Congress on Licensure, Certification and Credentialing of Psychologists, Stockholm, July 2013. The organizers took the position that identification of such core competences would achieve

these objectives better than trying to reconcile or mandate the global social, cultural, educational and legal variations in preparation and evaluation of professional psychologists.

The 5th Congress was different from previous such congresses in being by invitation only. Representatives and leaders from psychology organizations around the world who were interested in exploring the development of a set of core competences in professional psychology, were identified and invited to participate. The main goal of this efforts was to start a process “To promote the development of a global agreement on identifying the benchmark competences that define professional psychology”. The focus on competence was employed to use these statements of knowledges, skills and abilities to define psychology practice in order to overcome the wide variations around the world in how psychologists are educated, credentialed and engaged in providing psychological services.

Prior to the Congress a foundation document, a statement of purpose, and documents on existing models on competence for psychologists had been distributed to delegates. A draft summary competence model had also been produced prior to the Congress through content analysis of a range of current national models and the international EuroPsy model. This draft was used as a stimulus for the group discussions. At the 5th Congress in Stockholm in 2013, work commenced on defining the essential elements of competence in psychological practice and exploring the feasibility of creating a set of core competences.

You can read more about this in here

[ICP-Report-5th-International-Congress-Stockholm-Part-1-Appendices.pdf](https://www.psychcompinternational.org/ICP-Report-5th-International-Congress-Stockholm-Part-1-Appendices.pdf)
([psychcompinternational.org](https://www.psychcompinternational.org))

The 5th Congress was successful as an opening conversation about the guiding concept and intended goal, and it ended in an agreement to establish “The International Project on Competence in Psychology” (IPCP) as a multi-stakeholder international project. There was a willingness of all the planners and participants to move beyond discussing regional and national differences and to begin efforts to create a set of core competences in psychology. An IPCP Work Group was established which consisted of ten volunteers from nine different countries and six different continents and was supported by the major international professional organizations in psychology in 2013. In addition, a Reference Group was established that consisted of 275 persons from 77 countries. This Reference Group included individuals who would be willing to provide virtual input and feedback to the work of the IPCP.

The IPCP Work Group met both in person and virtually several times a year from 2013 until 2016 when a final draft of the core competences was created and named the **International Declaration of Core Competences in Professional Psychology**. In 2016, this Declaration was submitted to and endorsed by many international psychology organizations including the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS).

When the Declaration was endorsed by IAAP and IUPsyS in June/July, 2016, it was believed this was the end of the project. However, the IPCP Work Group continued to receive requests for information about the Declaration. Users informed us of suggestions for how the Declaration could be improved, how it had been used in various countries to establish a credentialing or recognition system, and requests to present at various regional psychology conferences. At the European Congress of Psychology (ECP) in Amsterdam 2017, Work Group members learned that the Declaration has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Romanian and Ukrainian with even more translations underway. Several countries reported using the Declaration for establishing regulations in professional psychology or for benchmarking current standards. Also evident from the sessions in Amsterdam was an expectation to take the process forward. A need to continue work to advance development and use of the Declaration to help address these issues was apparent. With this response from the international community, all the members of the IPCP Work Group committed themselves to support continuation of the IPCP process and to explore what the next steps should be.

Based on the feedback in 2017 and the discussions and activities surrounding use of the Declaration since 2016, the IPCP WG continued to work on making the Declaration more relevant and useful to a wide range of audiences. From 2017 until early 2020, Work Group members made appearances at various national and regional psychology conferences to present and receive feedback about the applicability and usefulness of the Declaration for that audience. Unfortunately, the work of the IPCP was hampered by the COVID pandemic starting in Spring 2020. Plans to hold a 6th Congress in 2020, 2021 and 2022 all had to be cancelled due to restrictions on international travel due to COVID.

IPCP Work Group members have continued to meet virtually between 2020 and the present. But significant progress has been impeded by the lack of any in person meetings or opportunities to hold another congress to advance the Declaration.

Tentative program for IPCP events in Brighton 02. – 6. July 2023:

- Sunday 2nd July 19:30/7:30pm – 21:00/9:00pm: Welcome reception, registration and opening session.
- Monday 3rd July 09:00/9:00 – 16:00/4pm: The IPCP Conference. Participation by invitation only.
 - Venue for these two events will be the Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel.
- Tuesday 4th – Thursday 6th: ECP2023. IPCP will organize 1 talk, 5 symposia, 5 panel discussions.

- NOTE: On Thursday the 6th IPCP will have two panels, back-to-back, that will be organized as an open meeting. Conclusions and eventual mandate and timeline for a new IPCP WG will be discussed.
