

National Report Hungary

Psychologist profession

1. Definition

Please explain briefly how the profession is defined in your country. In particular, provide a succinct list of the activities covered by the profession, those activities exclusively reserved to the holders of the relevant professional qualification and those reserves of activities shared with other professionals. Where similar professions also exist within the same sector, list those professions and eventually describe how they differ from the profession in question.

The profession of psychologist (in Hungarian: pszichológus) is not defined from the perspective of the activities (there is no set definition for the profession) but rather, from the view of the training.

At the same time, there are three domains where the profession is viewed differently: first, in the business sector (counselling individuals and companies), secondly, in some specific sectors, like education, where psychologists help to resolve conflicts in schools and kindergartens, thirdly, there are particular rules for psychologists who work in the health sector and provide health services. Only psychologists with a specialisation in clinical psychology are entitled to deliver health care services independently.

Generally speaking, the psychologist profession is not regulated as such in Hungary, neither there is a regulatory body.

Nevertheless, there are regulated professional activities which can be practised only with chartered psychologist (in Hungarian: okleveles pszichológus) qualification. Having said that we must conclude, that the domains of psychology are regulated from the perspective of the training.

The following specializations are offered by universities as a master's level specialization:

- 1 Cognitive Psychology
- 2 Social and Organizational Psychology
- 3 Work and Organizational Psychology
- 4 Clinical and Health Psychology
- 5 Counselling and Educational Psychology
- 6 Developmental and Clinical Child Psychology
- 7 Interpersonal and Intercultural Psychology

In spite of the numerous specializations, the holders of chartered psychologist (in Hungarian: okleveles pszichológus) qualifications are trained as generalists.

The health sector must be handled separately because professional activities in this field are usually regulated. For instance, clinical psychologist is a regulated profession under Hungarian law. Clinical psychologist (and other professions for which the training criteria are regulated in the legislation on health training laws) can be considered as an independent profession, for which holding a qualification in general psychology (“okleveles pszichológus”) is a prerequisite for entering the training (so it is not the above mentioned master level specialization Clinical and Health Psychology, which is part of the general training in psychology). Psychologists who do not hold a qualification in clinical psychology can participate in healthcare-related activities only under the supervision of a clinical psychologist and only if they are committed to enter into the specialisation training within a certain time period.

The following specializations exist for clinical psychology:

- 1 Applied health psychology (“alkalmazott egészségpszichológiai szakpszichológia”)
- 2 Adult clinical and mental health psychology (“felnőtt klinikai és mentálhigiéniai szakpszichológia”)
- 3 Children and youth clinical psychology (“gyermek- és ifjúsági klinikai és mentálhigiéniai szakpszichológia”)
4. Neuropsychology (“neuropszichológiai szakpszichológia”)

The duration of the training programmes varies between 36-48 months for the specialisations mentioned above.

Clinical psychology has the following sub-specializations:

1. Clinical addictology (“klinikai addiktológiai szakpszichológia”)
2. Psychotherapy (“pszichoterápia”)

For clinical addictology and psychotherapy holding a specialisation in one of the fields of clinical psychology is also a prerequisite. The duration of the training programmes varies between 24-36 months depending on the basic specialisation. Specialist physicians can also obtain a specialisation in psychotherapy.

2. Historical background

Please give us a brief introductory outline of the historical background of the regulatory framework for this profession considering, for example, such topics as issues the profession faced at a given time and how the regulatory framework emerged and evolved to meet these challenges. Please also explain if challenges have disappeared over time and address in section 4 what you did to adapt the legal framework in this case.

The training of psychologists (thus the profession of psychologist) came into being in 1958 when a standard university level training was introduced.

The training has been changed with the Bologna process, thus presently it is offered as a 3+2 year curriculum.

There was an initiative from the practitioners to establish a chamber for psychologists in Hungary and to regulate the profession.

The initiative was mainly motivated by the market presence of underqualified or non-qualified professionals and it aimed to make a clear distinction between qualified practitioners of psychology and those whose activities have less to do with science and more with not scientifically proven or esoteric domains. This initiative was however not supported by the decision-makers.

The clinical psychologist training was introduced in 1999 with the specialisations “Adult clinical and mental health psychology”, “Children and youth clinical psychology” and the current sub-specialisations. Neuropsychology was introduced as a sub-specialisation in 1999, and became a “basic” specialisation in 2012. Applied health psychology was added to the specialization list in 2012.

3. Economic data

Where possible, provide economic figures related to the sector, as defined at national level by each country.

It would be in particular useful to obtain the following information: level of employment, average wage (in euro), sector specific data (so for construction for example you may include data on building permits, construction costs) and importance of the sector in the economy. Both recent data and trends may help capture the relative importance of the profession and the sector at national level as well its evolution over time.

Having no regulations there is only limited economic data available concerning the profession of psychologist.

The number of graduates from the training of psychology is estimated to 10 000, but no data is available on the ratio of the professionals who actually work in the field and of those who are employed in a related or unrelated field.

Unfortunately, there is no data available on the unemployment rate or employment level and there is no such economic data for the profession as average wage.

The number of registered clinical psychologists is 2207, the number of clinical psychologists licensed to practise is 1361.

4. Internal screening and recent reforms

(a) Profession, selected for in-depth discussions

Please give us a brief resume of internal screening processes you have conducted into this profession. It would be interesting to include any issues you uncovered as well as the conclusions you reached. Have you recently adopted reforms (or are in the process of)? If yes provide a brief explanation of the process you have used (stakeholder consultation, impact assessment, scope of the reform).

Have you carried out internal screenings into similar professions covered under this sector? It would be interesting to include any issues you uncovered as well as the conclusions you reached. Have you recently adopted reforms (or are in the process of) in this sector for selected professions? If yes please list the professions concerned and provide a brief explanation of the process you have used (stakeholder consultation, impact assessment, scope of the reform).

There have not been recent reforms or internal screening to report but the plan to establish a chamber for psychologists (see point 2).

5. System in place to protect general interest objective

Explain by way of which mechanism (reserves of activities, protection of title, mandatory or voluntary certification, ex-post control checks, rules of conduct, professional liability insurance etc.) the State has a control/view over the protection of the general interest objective? Explain the key principles and functioning of this system. Please also explain how these sector specific measures interlink with general legislation aimed at protecting the relevant public interest such as consumer or health and safety legislation.

As there is no specific regulatory or supervisory body for psychologists, the general measures are applicable for fair and legal activities on the given market.

The Hungarian academic titles referring to the profession like chartered psychologist (in Hungarian: okleveles pszichológus) or clinical psychologist (in Hungarian: klinikai szakpszichológus) are protected, but there is no specific professional title.

Since the psychologist profession is not regulated, there are no specific rules in place to protect general interest, only the rules of general market behaviour are applicable. The Hungarian Authority for Consumer Protection (in Hungarian: Nemzeti Fogyasztóvédelmi Hatóság) supervises fair market presence, while in the health sector – with regards to patient safety – the National Public Health and Medical Officer Service (in Hungarian: Állami Népegészségügyi és Tisztiorvosi Szolgálat) is the regulatory body.

There is a compulsory registry and a licensing mechanism for clinical psychologists. They are included in the Basic and Operational Registry of health professionals, which is led by the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures (in Hungarian: Egészségügyi Engedélyezési és Közigazgatási Hivatal, EEKH). Clinical psychologists are obliged to fulfil

Compulsory Professional Development (CPD) requirements, which is a criterion for the license renewal in every five years.

6. Institutional organisation

How is this regulatory framework/ control mechanism organised between the different entities, i.e. is this a centralised or rather a decentralised one? In the case of decentralised organisation can you provide additional information on the degree of independence of these regional/local entities and how the coordination is ensured? Who are the key entities involved in your national system described in the previous question? Please describe briefly their respective role.

The Minister of Human Capacities is in charge of the training of psychologists and clinical psychologists. Within this setting however the regulation on psychologists belongs to the Minister of State responsible for Higher Education, while the regulation on clinical psychologists belongs to the Minister of State responsible for Health.

There is no regulatory or supervisory body generally for the profession, but there are associations of practitioners (of voluntary nature), like the Hungarian Psychological Association (in Hungarian: Magyar Pszichológiai Társaság), member of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations. Clinical psychologists, who deliver healthcare services are obliged to be a member of the clinical psychologist platform of the Hungarian Medical Chamber.

Other important stakeholders are the Scientific Committee of Psychology of the Hungarian Academy of Science (in Hungarian: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Pszichológiai Tudományos Bizottsága) and the Clinical Psychologist Council and Division of the Professional Board in Health (in Hungarian: Egészségügyi Szakmai Kollégium Klinikai Szakpszichológia és Pszichoterapeuta Klinikai Szakpszichológus Tagozata és Tanácsa).

7. Certification systems

Are there voluntary certification systems within (a) the profession and (b) the sector under review in your country? If yes please explain their main characteristics, what proportion (approximate) of the professionals is certified and what is your general assessment of this system, in particular as regards the effects of such a scheme on market access?

There are no specific voluntary certification systems for psychologists in Hungary. Nevertheless, the Hungarian Psychological Association is a member of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA), which approves the EuroPsy European Psychological Certificate. EuroPsy maintains a sophisticated online database of all current certificate holders.

8. Additional information

Please use the following to include any additional information or data you consider helpful. You may also wish to include any particular challenges or opportunities you uncovered that could inform group discussions as well as support other countries during their own evaluation process. Any particular recommendation you would like to address to other countries?

Not applicable.