

From: "Prof. Peter WH Lee" [REDACTED]
To: "panel_hs@legco.gov.hk" <panel_hs@legco.gov.hk>
Cc: [REDACTED]

Date: Sunday, July 15, 2018 01:07PM
Subject: Re: Accredited Register for Clinical Psychologists.

History: ↗ This message has been forwarded.

Dear Chairman and Panel members

I understand that the Panel will be holding its meeting soon. I would be grateful if Panel members could kindly review my comments in relation to the above in making their wise decisions:

A formal and duly recognized accredited register for clinical psychologists is long overdue in Hong Kong, for stringent quality control, training and nurturing of clinical psychologists as well as providing a more trustworthy protection by public users of such psychological services.

I am further of the opinion that the following basic provisions need to be fulfilled by aspiring candidates to be included in the register:

1. Solid foundation in psychological sciences: clinical psychological practice is not simply a technical application of hard and fast knowledge. Effective practice demands fluid applications of the clinical aspects of psychology (formally trained and practiced in Masters or Ph.D programs in clinical psychology), PLUS a solid foundation in basic psychological sciences to enable the clinical psychologist to form an in-depth understanding of the individual client/patient's developmental background, his/her underlying psychodynamics, preferred perceptual style, best route to nurturing effective learning and retention of therapeutic suggestions, as well as the most acceptable way to conduct therapy that fits in with the individual personality and needs. Very much similar to pre-medical sciences training, a truly competent clinical psychologist has to be equally competent in basic psychological sciences, which habitually must be acquired through formal undergraduate study majoring in psychology. Understanding of normal psychological processes is the cornerstone to understanding and changing abnormal psychological processes.
2. Validated and high quality clinical supervision and placements: the essence of being a reliable and effective clinical psychologist rests on five pillars of personal resources, regardless of theoretical orientation or therapeutic preferences, comprising firstly, personal qualities, values, and integrity; secondly, willingness, devotion, commitment and effective use of self as resources; thirdly, respectable and respectful clinical interpersonal skills; fourthly, realistic and well considered clinical reasoning and diagnostic skills; and fifthly, effective applications and delivery of clinical wisdoms. Extended clinical placements of validated high quality throughout training are prerequisites to be fulfilled before a clinical psychologist could be accredited and recognized. Such clinical placements must be both in-depth and broad based and tutored by qualified and recognized clinicians in the field of clinical psychology, who served not only as clinical tutors but also as important role models. Each placement setting should provide in-depth exposure for clinical practice and observations on the selected clinical population. The aspiring clinical psychologist must also be exposed to a broad based spectrum of clinical placements, covering adult, children, psychiatric, non-psychiatric, social and hospital settings.

3. The accreditation of local clinical psychologists should be validated and accredited in accordance with local standards and clinical practice which are deemed most appropriate for the clinical setting in Hong Kong. While one must be sympathetic and encouraging of foreign trained clinical psychologists who would be able to strengthen the manpower of local clinical psychologists, all such candidates (regardless of whether holding a basic Masters degree or Ph.D degree) must be fully considered on a case by case basis. The quality, intensity, and adequacies of "clinical psychologist's" training from outside of Hong Kong vary widely. Some programs admittedly are even superior to that of the local training, and the Hong Kong community must be able to capitalize and help such professionals so trained to be fully accepted and integrated in their practice in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, some programs can be clearly inadequate both in breadth and depth. It should therefore be one of the key roles of the Accreditation team to be able to differentiate between the able and the not so able, fulfilling two important outcomes of ultimate benefit to the recipients of clinical psychological services in Hong Kong, namely, firstly, accommodate and recruit able clinical psychologists trained from abroad to enhance the professional manpower for better efficiency and availability to the public, and secondly, to protect the public from ineffective and sometimes downright harmful "professional" practices. Setting up clearly defined standards of what constitutes adequate professional training acceptable for practice in Hong Kong is thus of vital importance to enable a fair and open consideration for candidates trained from abroad.

I would be grateful if the committee would consider the above views from a clinical psychologist who has been active both in training and clinical work for more than 30 years in Hong Kong.

Professor Peter W.H. Lee, J.P.

Hon. Professor, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Hong Kong

Hon. Professor, Department of Psychology, The University of Hong Kong

Adjunct Professor, Department of Psychology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Director, Clinical Health Psychology Centre, Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital

Chartered Clinical Psychologist, HKPS(H.K.), BPS & HPC(U.K.)

Chartered Health Psychologist, BPS & HPC(U.K.)

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