



ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Considerations for UK-Qualified
Clinical Psychologists
Intending to Work in Ireland
(Republic of Ireland)

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Clinical psychologists who are registered with the HCPC are entitled to practise in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. However, when it comes to the Republic of Ireland, further steps are required before one can practise there (particularly if one wants to practise within the Irish equivalent of the NHS, which is called the Health Service Executive [HSE]).

At present, people who have obtained their professional psychology qualifications outside the Republic of Ireland (hereafter called "Ireland") must have these qualifications recognised by the Validation Unit of the Department of Health under Directive 2005/36/EC before they can practise their profession in the publicly funded healthcare system in Ireland (or an HSE funded service).

As clinical psychology training in Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is similar, a person who has qualified in the UK should find the process of having their qualifications recognised in Ireland to be relatively straightforward. However, there are important things to note.

Evidencing clinical psychology training completed outside of Ireland

The following are the clinical experiences and competencies that a trainee must have acquired during clinical psychology training. For equivalence with the training in Ireland, one should have a minimum of 60 clinical days per placement, inclusive of annual leave. Over the three years of training, a minimum of 390 days should have been on clinical placement, inclusive of annual leave. Applicants must show evidence of completion of placements in each of the following areas:

- Child And Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Adult Mental Health Services
- Services For People with Intellectual Disability (across the lifespan) *
- A Specialist Service

**Intellectual Disability Services:* For equivalence with the training in Ireland, placement(s) should have provided experience with a mix of presenting problems and service settings.

An intellectual disability placement should have provided core supervised experiences in at least two of the following three areas; one of the areas must be within adult services:

- Early Intervention Services (0-6 years)
- School Age Services
- Adult Services

In addition, a minimum of three days observational experience should have been completed in an area not chosen for supervised experience as part of the placement. If this specific formal observational experience was not possible, it would be useful to highlight any observations that occurred within placements, such as conducting (under close supervision) neurodevelopmental assessments/observed assessments (e.g., ADOS, Bayley, DISCO, WPPSI), case consultations etc, in one's training log or record.

Disability casework that was accessed in other pathways such as CAMHS, primary care and paediatrics can be included but it is important not to double count experiences (such casework involving child disability can be verified by Doctorate in Clinical Psychology course director or referees).

The HSE Validation Process

- You need to submit several documents, including ID, HCPC registration, transcripts and diplomas from both your undergraduate and doctoral programmes, thesis abstracts, course syllabus and your logbook. Not all courses use formal logbooks, so do note that a logbook can be any formal record of clinical experience on placement.
- These documents need to be officially witnessed by a Commissioner for Oaths, member of the Garda Síochána, a practising solicitor, Justice of the Peace, your training establishment or Public Notary.
- Anticipate that it will take at least 6 months to complete this process (during which time you will not be able to work in the HSE).
- If the Validation Unit determines that you lack experience in a certain area, they will tell you that you must gain this experience within the Republic of Ireland. However, they are likely to allow a window of time (1 or 2 months) for you to provide evidence that you do in fact have experience in this area. This means you may have the opportunity to gain this in your current location before moving to Ireland. Please consult with the Validation Unit regarding this.
- It is important to be specific on the training you have completed (e.g., "I have observed an ADOS with a 4-year-old child. I was involved in the formulation and consultation with XXXX". Or "I have had XXX training with XXX age group").
- Add in any training provided from your course (e.g., MAPA training, MCA training).
- In addition, add in any extra training gained outside of your course (if you have this). This does not include anything you did prior to starting training.
- You can submit a letter with your application with any extra information that you think is relevant.

The list of documents / evidence to be submitted for validation can be found here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/6fc457-psychologist/>

Applying for Clinical Psychology Positions in Ireland (Health Service Executive)

Many HSE positions use a recruitment panel system (National Recruitment Panel). This is usually an annual event (around May of each year for Staff Grade level, and September/October for Senior grades). You apply to be interviewed and select areas you wish to be interviewed on. You may choose up to 4 areas considered to cover the “core” mental health areas: child mental health; adult mental health, child disability; adult disability.

You will need to complete an application form (factual data and essay response style are required to demonstrate competencies). It is not a requirement to be interviewed for all 4 areas. If you are certain that you do not wish to be eligible to apply for a role in certain areas, then you may choose to exclude them from your application.

Once selected for interview, allow an interview duration of 15-20 minutes per area selected, up to 1 hour maximum if all 4 areas are interviewed for. As these are generic interviews designed to screen for overall competency rather than for a specific job, these interviews are likely to feel very different to those that you have experienced before. They follow very rigid patterns and rely heavily on rote learning. Candidates who have completed their clinical training in Ireland will typically study the “Handbook” series of textbooks by Prof Alan Carr in preparation. If it is your first panel interview, you would be well advised to speak with someone familiar with the process, as it is a steep learning curve. Expect questions regarding the diagnostic criteria and intervention protocols for specific mental health conditions, for example.

If you have applied to the National Recruitment Panel, you will be “dormant” until you have achieved validation. Once you receive your letter of confirmation, send this to the recruitment team and you will become “Active” on the panel and start receiving job adverts.

Be aware that these recruitment panels only happen once a year. When you accept a permanent post from the panel, you will be removed from the panel and will not be notified of any further vacancies. In order to be considered for future vacancies, you need to re-interview for the panel the following year, unless local arrangements exist.

Many of the hospitals in Ireland do not recruit through the panel. These posts are more like a typical application and interview process in the UK (i.e., the hospital will advertise the position and you apply directly). These roles are typically advertised through normal channels, such as www.irishjobs.ie

Top Tips:

- It is not compulsory to have completed a specific Older Adults placement, but you will need to show evidence of working with at least two older adult (65 years+) clinical cases, with at least one involving an intervention and one involving an assessment.
- You should evidence that during training you have worked with presentations across the lifespan, including with young children (for children under 6 years, this may be observational or indirect working).
- Keep signed copies of your logbooks or training record as you go (they are needed as supporting documentation).
- Senior posts are only open to those with a minimum of 5 years' experience, including a maximum of 3 years in training.
- For those who have trained in the UK, it may prove very helpful to stay in the UK for at least one or two years following training to gain experience in the area you want to specialise in (e.g., you could gain experience in paediatric clinical psychology if you intend to work in a children's hospital).
- There is a Facebook group called 'Irish Trainee Clinical Psychologists' that can be useful for advice about the validation process.
- If you would like to work in Ireland in the future, or even just have the opportunity to do so, it is best to start thinking about it as soon as you can. If you are in training, you could consider speaking with your course director in order to achieve the necessary competencies to practise in Ireland while you are in training. However, it is important to recognise that the priority of a course in the UK is to provide training in order for you to register and practise in the UK, and most courses may ideally wish that trainees after they qualify will work in the nation/region where the course is based.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/6fc457-psychologist/>