

THE COLLEGE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS OF ONTARIO  
L'ORDRE DES PSYCHOLOGUES DE L'ONTARIO

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**CONSULTATION – Ontario Boards of Education**

**Use of the Title *Psychologist* by all Psychological Service Providers in Ontario**

The College of Psychologists of Ontario (College) is the regulatory body for the profession of Psychology in Ontario. As such, the College regulates the registration of, and services provided by, *Psychologists* and *Psychological Associates*. Our members work in hospitals, school boards, universities, agencies, correctional services, clinics and in private practice, and provide a variety of psychological services to clients of all ages and backgrounds. There are currently about 3925 members granted the title *Psychologist* and 485 with the title *Psychological Associate*.

The route to registration as a *Psychologist* is a doctoral degree and the route for *Psychological Associates* is a Masters degree plus four years post-Masters supervised experience. Once registered, all members, regardless of title, have the same scope of practice, access to the same controlled acts and can practice autonomously.

The College is requesting feedback, as part of a broad consultation being undertaken, regarding a decision taken by the Council of the College to permit all members of the College, regardless of their qualifying academic degree, to use the title *Psychologist*. This decision was seen to be in the public interest, in keeping with the College's statutory mandate.

We are requesting feedback from the Boards of Educations of Ontario as school boards regularly utilize the services of *Psychologists* and *Psychological Associates*.

**Background**

Currently, the College awards two titles to qualified psychological practitioners; *Psychologist* and *Psychological Associate*. The academic route to registration is different for these two groups. At the September 2018 meeting, the College Council passed a motion to pursue using only the title *Psychologist* for all current and future members of the College. This would include both Doctoral trained individuals, who are currently granted the title *Psychologist*, as well as those registered with a Masters degree plus four years post-Masters supervised experience who currently receive the title *Psychological Associate*.

Through this change all registered psychological service providers in Ontario would have access to the one title, *Psychologist*. This change would not alter the scope of practice for members, the services they provide, or the requirements for College registration.

**Rationale**

The mandate of the College is the protection of the public and to act in the public interest. It is through this lens that the College Council views all issues before it, including this matter. In making this decision, the Council considered several factors including:

- The misunderstanding among the public of the title Psychological Associate and whether those registered with this title are authorized as independent, autonomous psychological practitioners;

- Recognition that the Ontario requirement for eligibility to register at the Masters level includes four years of post-Masters supervised experience followed by an additional one year of supervised practice undertaken by all members of the College. This is in contrast to other Canadian jurisdictions which grant the title Psychologist at the Masters level, but without the four years post-Masters supervised experience requirement;
- Members registered with a Masters degree plus 4 years supervised experience have satisfied the College that they are qualified to practice autonomously in their authorized areas of practice as they have met the College's academic requirements and, like their Doctoral colleagues, have successfully completed an additional year of College authorized supervised practice, the North American Examination of Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP), Ontario's Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination (JEE), and an Oral Examination;
- Members registered with a Masters degree plus 4 years supervised experience have the same scope of practice and access to the same authorized acts as their Doctoral colleagues. As well, these members must maintain the same professional responsibilities and accountability, and are held to the same professional standards;
- The Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), formerly the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), requires that the College grant the title Psychologist to individuals with Masters level training who receive this title in another Canadian jurisdiction; and,
- As a result of the CFTA, Ontario now has three types of autonomous practitioners, all with identical scopes of practice; Psychologists with a Doctoral degree (3,574 members), Psychologists with a Masters degree (332 members), and Psychological Associates with a Master degree (481 members). This is seen to further increase the lack of clarity among the public.

In approving this change, the College Council is not suggesting that members with a Masters degree have the same academic background and experience as their Doctoral trained colleagues. Rather, the Council is recognizing that either a Doctoral degree or the combination of a Masters degree plus four years post-Masters supervised experience qualify an individual to apply for autonomous, independent practice of psychology in Ontario.

The College would appreciate any feedback on this change you might wish to provide. Specifically, it would be helpful to know:

1. Are there other reasons you believe this change is in the public interest?
2. Are there reasons you believe this change is not in the public interest?
3. Will this change impact on the provision of psychological services to school boards in Ontario?  
If so, please describe the impact.
4. Are there any other comments you wish to offer as we value your feedback?

If you wish to provide feedback to us, your reply by April 12, 2019 would be appreciated.

Yours truly,



Rick Morris, Ph.D., C.Psych.  
Registrar & Executive Director