

LOPsy GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Prepared by:

Marc Barakat, PhD (clinical neuropsychologist)
Boutros Ghanem, PhD (clinical psychologist)
Gizele Kazour, PhD (clinical psychologist)
Pauline Nadjarian, PhD (educational psychologist)

I- RATIONALE

The below guidelines aim to guide psychologists in the best practices for assessments and evaluations. These guidelines emphasize the essential knowledge and skills psychologists, including those in specialized fields, should have to provide competent assessment services. They also aim to inform examinees, the public, collaborating professionals, regulatory bodies, and training programs about the qualifications necessary for achieving and maintaining professional competency according to the LOPsy Code of Ethics, ensuring high standards of practice.

The guidelines cover standardized tests and procedures measuring/evaluating various domains such as ability, aptitude, achievement, attitudes, interests, personality, cognitive functioning (i.e. attention, memory, executive skills, language and communication skills, mental health, and other constructs). They also cover non-standardized approaches (e.g. semi-structured assessments) that can be done in specific settings. They help clarify the prerequisites for assessments, focusing on assessment procedures, professional competencies in assessment and evaluation, and assessment knowledge competencies. These guidelines are consistent with the current LOPsy Code of Ethics.

II-AUDIENCE

These guidelines are important for those directly involved in the process of testing, assessment, and evaluation, including but not exclusive to the following:

- Clinical psychologists, clinical neuropsychologists, and educational psychologists who directly conduct assessments.
- Psychology students pursuing a higher degree.
- Psychologists who supervise and train others in conducting psychological assessment, testing, and evaluation.
- Legislative and regulatory bodies that make decisions about or monitor psychological assessment and evaluation.

III- DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION:

- 1- Assessment:** The term *assessment* refers to a complex activity integrating knowledge, clinical judgment, reliable collateral information (e.g., observation, semi-structured or structured interviews, third-party report), and psychometric constructs with expertise in an area of professional practice or application. Psychological assessment is a problem-solving process of identifying and using relevant information about individuals, groups, or

institutions for the purpose of decision-making and recommendations (APA, 2001). This includes sensitivity toward the inclusion of diverse and underserved populations.

- 2- **Psychological testing:** *Psychological tests* are defined as any psychometrically derived measurement instruments that assess the psychological constructs in which a structured sample of an examinee's behavior in a specified domain is obtained and subsequently quantified, scored, interpreted, and synthesized using a standardized process for the purpose of evaluative conclusion or recommendation (AERA et al., 2014).
- 3- **Assessment types and specific aims:** assessment types can vary depending on the examinee's needs and the assigned mandates. They can target psychological, cognitive and/or educational aspects. They can have different aims, depending on the assessment type and nature:
 - Psychological assessments: aim to explore the psychoemotional functioning and the defense mechanisms, as well as determine personality traits, diagnose personality, behavioral or intellectual disorders and determine the need for psychotherapy.
 - Psychoeducational assessments: aim to assess and diagnose cognitive, educational, behavioral and socio-emotional difficulties in school and university-aged students which contributes to understanding them as a whole individual and planning specific instructional and behavioral interventions for them.
 - Neuropsychological assessments: aim to assess and diagnose cognitive, educational, behavioral and socio-emotional functioning for all ages in the context of medical, neurological, neurodevelopmental, or psychiatric disorders, to establish the diagnoses and determine the needed support/interventions.
- 4- **General structures of assessments:** although their contents may vary depending on contexts and aims, assessments typically consist of the following:
 - Information gathering through previous reports, interviews with informants, and questionnaires/scales.
 - Selection of tests and measures
 - Administration and scoring of tests and measures
 - Interpretation of results and diagnosis using a conceptualization approach
 - Provision of feedback
 - Report writing
- 5- **Assessment qualification:** The term *assessment qualifications* refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, training, experience, and practice credentials that are deemed desirable for the use of psychological tests and assessment materials. However, the term describes three types of qualifications: (a) a solid knowledge of diagnostic criteria and psychological constructs, (b) a generic assessment knowledge and skills necessary for typical uses of tests and (c) a specific qualification for the responsible use of tests in specific settings and for specific purposes. Any psychologist who provides assessments must fulfill both types of qualifications.

IV- GUIDELINES FOR COMPETENCE

1. Psychologists who conduct psychological testing, assessment, and evaluation strive to develop and maintain their own competence. This includes competence with selection and use of tests/measures, interpretation of results, integration of findings, communication of results, and application of measures. It also includes updated knowledge of diagnostic criteria and psychological constructs.
2. Psychologists who conduct psychological testing, assessment, and evaluation seek appropriate training and supervised experience in relevant aspects of testing, assessment, and psychological evaluation.
3. Psychologists who conduct psychological testing, assessment, and evaluation should confine their testing and related assessment activities to their areas of competence, as demonstrated through education, training, experience, and appropriate credentials.
4. Psychologists who conduct psychological testing, assessment, and evaluation strive to be mindful of the potential negative impact and subsequent outcome of those measures on examinees, supervisees, other professionals, and the general public.
5. Psychologists strive to consider the multiple and global settings (e.g., forensic, education, integrated care) in which services are being provided.
6. Psychologists who conduct psychological testing, assessment, and evaluation endeavor to select (a) assessment tools that demonstrate sufficient validity evidence for their uses, sufficient score reliability, and sound psychometric properties and (b) measures that are fair and appropriate for the evaluation purpose, population, setting, and context at hand.
7. Psychologists who conduct psychological testing, assessment, and evaluation aspire to ensure awareness of individual differences, various forms of biases or potential biases, cultural attitudes, population appropriate norms, and potential misuse of data.
8. Psychologists who conduct psychological testing, assessment, and evaluation seek to consider the unique issues that may arise when test instruments and assessment approaches designed for specific populations are used with diverse populations.
9. Psychologists who educate and train others in testing, assessment, and evaluation strive to maintain their own competence in training and supervision and competency in assessment practice.
10. Psychologists who supervise individuals who lack training in testing, assessment, and evaluation strive to ensure that supervision ultimately provides examinees with testing, assessment, and evaluation that meets the ethical and professional standard of care and scope of practice.
11. Psychologists who use technology when testing, assessing, or evaluating psychological status strive to remain aware of technological advances; of the influence of technology on assessment; and of standard practice, laws, and regulations in telepsychology.
12. Psychologists who use technology-based assessment instruments are encouraged to take reasonable steps to ensure the security, transmission, storage, and disposal of data. Psychologists also strive to ensure that security measures are in place to protect data and information related to their examinees from unintended access, misuse, or disclosure.

V- PRE-REQUISITE KNOWLEDGE FOR PROVIDING ASSESSMENTS:

Psychologists who provide assessments should be regular members of the LOPsy. Psychology students can also provide assessments, but only under the supervision of a recognized supervisor. In addition, psychologists or psychology students providing assessments should have an appropriate knowledge of the below, depending on the type of assessment they provide:

1- Core knowledge:

- Statistics and methodology
- Psychopathology based on DSM or ICD criteria
- Psychometric theory and practice
- Interview and assessment techniques
- Report writing
- Feedback techniques
- Different intervention approaches
- Ethics and deontology

2- Specific knowledge for psychological assessments:

- Knowledge of personality tests, including projective tests and scales (e.g. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), etc), as well as intellectual functioning tests.
- Knowledge of personality and psychoanalytical theories.
- Knowledge of neurobiology and psychopharmacology: interactions between biology and psychology.

3- Specific knowledge for psychoeducational assessments:

- Knowledge of psychoeducational tests and techniques
- Knowledge of human behavior and performance, learning and motivation, instructional methods.
- Knowledge and understanding of mental health disorders and their relationship to child and adolescent development.
- Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and intervention of cognitive, learning, information processing, behavioral and social-emotional difficulties.

4- Specific knowledge for neuropsychological assessments:

- Knowledge of neuropsychological tests and techniques
- Knowledge of neuropsychology of behavior
- Knowledge of neurological and related disorders
- Knowledge of non-neurological conditions affecting Central Nervous System functioning

VI- MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERVISED TRAINING IN ASSESSMENTS:

The minimal training hours required by the LOPsy applies to all psychologists. The below training can be included in or added to the LOPsy training requirements. Trainees are expected to complete the below assessments themselves (i.e. shadowing of cases is not part of the below requirements although trainees are encouraged to shadow professionals before completing their own assessments)):

- 1- Requirement for psychological assessment
 - a. The training for personality assessment (using projective tests or personality scales) should include the completion of 5 full assessments under supervision.
 - b. The training for intellectual functioning assessment should include the completion of 5 full assessments under supervision.
- 2- Requirement for psychoeducational and neuropsychological assessment
The training should include at least 20 full assessments under supervision:
 - a. 5 assessments completed under direct supervision (i.e. in the presence of the supervisor)
 - b. 15 assessments completed under indirect supervision (i.e. case discussion under supervision)
- 3- Each supervised assessment should cover all aspects of a typical assessment (c.f. III-4).
- 4- All psychologists who are allowed to use psychometric tools that require a specific training (e.g. ADOS) should abide by all requirements from the authors/publishers, which could require additional training and supervision.
- 5- Psychologists who are involved in forensic assessments should have a relevant training in the field of assessments with a minimum of 10 years of experience.
- 6- Depending on the purpose of their training, psychologists should be exposed and trained to use different categories of tests, and more importantly those that fall under qualifications B and C requirements (see appendix). Those include but are not limited to:
 - Personality tests and psychoemotional scales (e.g. Rorschach, Thematic Apperception Test (T.A.T.), Family Apperception Test (FAT), Children Apperception Test (CAT), Patte Noire, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Symptom Checklist (SCL-90-R), etc)
 - Intelligence tests (e.g. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS), Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children's (WISC), Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Avilities (WJ), Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales (SB), etc)
 - Achievement tests (e.g. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT), Woodcock Johnson (WJ), etc)
 - Cognitive Tests (e.g. Test of Everyday Attention (TEA), Test of Variables of Attention (TOVA), Delis Kaplan Executive Function System (D-KEFS), NEPSY, California Verbal Learning Test (CVLT), Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Beery VMI), etc)

VII- REPORT STRUCTURE AND CONTENT:

All reports should include the following sections:

- Type of assessment (*i.e. psychological, psychoeducational, neuropsychological assessment depending on the psychologist's credentials and previous training*)
- Date(s) of the assessment sessions
- Examinee identification
- Reason for referral
- Pertinent history/Background Information
- List of tools/ Procedures
- Behavioral observations during testing
- Results with their interpretation
- Conclusion with specific diagnosis if any
- Recommendations if needed (including intervention plan and referrals).

Depending on needs, a summary report can also be provided. This should include minimally all pertinent information, including diagnosis if any.

VIII- SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS:

Supervisors must have a solid background in assessments and testing, supported by relevant prior training. They should have at least five years of experience, during which they have conducted a minimum of 50 assessments annually in the type of assessment they will be supervising. Additionally, holding a PhD is recommended.

IX- MENTORSHIP:

Similarly to the practice of psychotherapy, newly graduating psychologists should seek mentoring in assessment for one year post-graduation.

X- TESTS SECURITY, COPYRIGHTS AND DATA SHARING

Test users are responsible for safeguarding the security of tests, including previous editions, and respecting test copyrights, including those for tests administered electronically. They should remind all test takers and others with access to test materials that copyright policies may prohibit the unauthorized disclosure of test items. Additionally, raw data generated from assessments should never be shared with examinees. Such data can only be shared with other certified clinicians in a secure manner (e.g. through a sealed envelope) and only after obtaining proper consent from the examinee. Finally, generated reports should be protected and only shared according to the LOPsy Code of Ethics.

REFERENCES:

- American Psychological Association, APA Task Force on Psychological Assessment and Evaluation Guidelines (2020), *APA Guidelines for Psychological Assessment and Evaluation*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/guidelines-psychological-assessment-evaluation.pdf>

- LOPsy Code of ethics (2023)

APPENDIX

PEARSON

Qualification Level A

There are no special qualifications to purchase these products.

Qualification Level B

Tests may be purchased by individuals with:

- A master's degree in psychology, education, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, social work, counseling, or in a field closely related to the intended use of the assessment, and formal training in the ethical administration, scoring, and interpretation of clinical assessments.

OR

- Certification by or full active membership in a professional organization (such as ASHA, AOTA, AERA, ACA, AMA, CEC, AEA, AAA, EAA, NAEYC, NBCC, CVRP) that requires training and experience in the relevant area of assessment.

OR

- A degree or license to practice in the healthcare or allied healthcare field.

OR

- Formal, supervised mental health, speech/language, occupational therapy, social work, counseling, and/or educational training specific to assessing children, or in infant and child development, and formal training in the ethical administration, scoring, and interpretation of clinical assessments.

OR

- Work for an accredited institution

Qualification Level C

Tests with a C qualification require a high level of expertise in test interpretation, and can be purchased by individuals with:

- A doctorate degree in psychology, education, or a closely related field with formal training in the ethical administration, scoring, and interpretation of clinical assessments related to the intended use of the assessment.

OR

- Licensure or certification to practice in your state in a field related to the purchase.

OR

Certification by or full active membership in a professional organization (such as APA, NASP, NAN, INS) that requires training and experience in the relevant area of assessment.

PAR

Qualification Level: A

(Can purchase only Level A products.)

No special qualifications are required, although the range of products eligible for purchase is limited.

Qualification Level: S

(Can purchase level A and S products.)

A degree, certificate, or license to practice in a health care profession or occupation, including (but not limited to) the following: medicine, neurology, nursing, occupational therapy and other allied health care professions, physician's assistants, psychiatry, social work; plus appropriate training and experience in the ethical administration, scoring, and interpretation of clinical behavioral assessment instruments.

Qualification Level: B

(Can purchase Level A, S, and B Level products.)

A degree from an accredited 4-year college or university in psychology, counseling, speech-language pathology, or a closely related field plus satisfactory completion of coursework in test interpretation, psychometrics and measurement theory, educational statistics, or a closely related area; or license or certification from an agency that requires appropriate training and experience in the ethical and competent use of psychological tests.

Qualification Level: C

(Can purchase all products available from PAR.)

All qualifications for level B plus an advanced professional degree that provides appropriate training in the administration and interpretation of psychological tests, or license or certification from an agency that requires appropriate training and experience in the ethical and competent use of psychological tests.