



MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

ORDER ON APPROVAL OF THE DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY

24 October 2023 No V-1401

Vilnius

In accordance with Paragraph 11 of Article 53 of the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania:

1. I approve the Descriptor of the Study Field of Psychology (enclosed).
2. I determine that the higher education institutions have to adjust their study programmes to the Descriptor of the Study Field of Psychology approved by Clause 1 hereby until 1 September 2023.
3. I recognize Order No V-923 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of July 27 2015 “On Approval of the Descriptor of the Study Field of Psychology” as invalid.

Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministrė

Jurgita Šiugždinienė

APPROVED BY
 Order No V-1401 of the Minister of
 Education, Science and Sport
 of the Republic of Lithuania 24
 of October 2023

DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER I **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Descriptor of the study field of Psychology (hereinafter referred to as the “Descriptor”) regulates the special requirements for the study programmes in the study field of Psychology (J07) that belongs to the group of study fields of social sciences (J). The Descriptor regulates the study field of Psychology (hereinafter referred to as the “field of Psychology ”) in the scope not covered by the General Requirements for the Provision of Studies approved by Order No V-1168 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016 “On Approval of Descriptor of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies”.

2. The Descriptor is based on the 2019 European Federation of Psychological Associations' document “European Certificate in Psychology: EFPA EuroPsy Regulations and Appendices” (En. *European Certificate in Psychology: EFPA Regulations on EuroPsy and Appendices*, <http://www.europsy-efpa.eu/>) (hereafter referred to as the European Certificate in Psychology).

3. The requirements of the Descriptor shall apply to first and second cycle university study programmes in psychology. These programmes can be either full-time or part-time, but as university-based study programmes.

4. General aims of study field of Psychology:

4.1. provide knowledge of the science of psychology, the links between psychology and other sciences, and the specific features of the application of psychology in practice;

4.2. develop knowledge of research methodology and the ability to carry out research independently and to analyse and evaluate research carried out by others;

4.3. develop the capacity to select and implement psychological assessments and interventions appropriate to the needs of the individual, group or society through individual, group or educational activities;

4.4. develop the skills and abilities needed to present the results of psychological research and the activity of a psychologist, to collaborate with professionals in other fields, and to provide education on a wide range of psychological issues;

4.5. develop the ability to observe with the requirements of professional ethics, to analyse and critically evaluate their professional decisions, and to develop an attitude of continuous improvement and professional competence through lifelong learning.

5. Studies involving direct participation of lecturers and students ("not distance contact work") must account for at least two-thirds of the contact work in the study programme.

6. There are no specific requirements established in the Descriptor for admission to the first cycle study programmes.

7. The recommended candidates for admission to the second cycle study programmes are those who have completed their first cycle studies in psychology and meet the requirements set by the higher education institution.

8. Upon completion of the studies in the field of Psychology, the bachelor's /master's degree in social sciences that is in conformity with the sixth/seventh level of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, and first/second cycles of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, attested by the

diploma of bachelor's/ master's degree and its supplement issued by the higher education institution, is awarded.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPT AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY FIELD

9. Psychology is the study of the human mind and behaviour. Knowledge of the science of psychology enables the understanding, and provides ways or means to change, the functioning of individuals, groups, organisations and society.

10. The science of psychology is closely related to other social sciences (education, economics, political science, sociology, law, management, etc.), the humanities (philosophy), the sciences of nature (biology, biochemistry, mathematics, etc.), and the sciences of medicine and health (medicine, public health, nursing, etc.).

11. During the psychology studies integrates theoretical and applied aspects of psychology. The studies provide students with research-based, reliable knowledge of psychology science and acquire the skills to apply this knowledge ethically.

12. The content of university degree programmes shall include the following fields:

12.1. a theory of psychology covering the main theories and directions of psychological science;

12.2. the ethical application of psychological knowledge, methods and basic skills, including psychological assessment, counselling, prevention, intervention and education;

12.3. research methodology in psychology, including research methods and their applicability;

12.4. the study of other sciences whose advances are integrated into psychology to understand human mental processes and behaviour.

13. The focus of first cycle programmes of study should be on providing knowledge of psychology at the individual, group and societal level and the basic skills necessary for all specialisations in psychology.

14. Requirements for the first cycle content of study programme:

14.1. the programme should include a foundation in the basics of psychology, introducing the branches of psychology, the main methods of psychology and the history of psychology. The study of the major theories and methods of psychology should study the biological, cognitive, emotional and social bases of behaviour at the individual, group and societal levels;

14.2. Time should be allocated to develop basic skills in observation, surveying, testing, assessment, interviewing, counselling and other psychological techniques. An introduction to the professional ethics of the psychologist is also provided;

14.3. at least 125 study credits shall be allocated to the subjects in the theoretical foundations of psychology and the development of basic skills;

14.4. Methodology studies should develop competences in research skills, while at the same time developing academic skills (e.g. research methodology, academic literacy, mathematical statistics, etc.). At least 30 study credits (including both methodology-specific subjects and the methodology part of other subjects in the programme) should be allocated to the study of methodology;

14.5. Non-psychology subjects such as philosophy, sociology and other sciences should also be studied. Non-psychology subjects should be at least 15 study credits;

14.6. internships of at least 15 study credits should be provided;

14.7. at least 15 credits of study time should be allocated for the preparation of the bachelor thesis.

15. The second cycle study programmes should be specialised, designed to prepare the person to work in a specific field of psychological practice (e.g. clinical psychology, health psychology, educational psychology, work and organisational psychology, etc.). Each programme should be balanced to ensure sufficient attention to the study of the individual, the group and society.

16. Requirements for the second cycle content of study programme shall be:

16.1. at least 60 credits of study should consist of theoretical and applied subjects focused on the specialised field;

16.2. methodological, statistical analysis and academic skills should be enhanced;

16.3. theoretical or practical subjects relevant to the psychologist's specific professional practice, such as medicine, law, business, economics, etc., are also recommended for study in other fields of study;

16.4. internships of between 15 and 30 study credits should be provided;

16.5. at least 30 credits of study time should be allocated for the preparation of the master's thesis.

17. Graduates of the first cycle university study programme, supervised by a professional psychologist, can work in accordance with the acquired competences, carry out educational activities, apply the skills and knowledge acquired during the psychology studies in the workplace by working as a psychological assistant, or continue the psychology studies in the second cycle, but does not have sufficient competences to engage in an independent professional activity of a psychologist.

18. Graduates who have completed postgraduate studies in the field of psychology (educational, organisational, clinical, health, etc.) can continue studies in the third cycle of psychology by independently carrying out psychological assessment and testing, psychological expertise, counselling, interventions, educational and preventive activities.

19. The knowledge and skills acquired during the years of study enable psychology graduates to pursue lifelong independent learning and improve their professional competence.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL AND SPECIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

20. The following learning outcomes must be achieved by the graduates upon completion of first cycle studies:

20.1. knowledge and its application. The person:

20.1.1. has the knowledge of psychological science of mental phenomena and processes and is able to apply it to explain patterns in the functioning of an individual, group or society;

20.1.2. is able to integrate the ideas of various sciences with ideas of psychological science, understands the object of psychological science in the context of other sciences, recognises the fields of psychology and the main directions of the psychologist's activity;

20.2. research skills. The person:

20.2.1. is able to analyse research data based on knowledge of research methodology;

20.2.2. is able, with the advice of a professional psychologist, design and conduct a research study using appropriate basic (quantitative and/or qualitative) data analysis methods, formulate and present research results and conclusions;

20.3. special abilities: The person:

20.3.1. understands the features of individual and group psychological assessment;

20.3.2. is able, supervised by a professional psychologist, to apply psychological assessment methods and procedures to assess an individual or group in specific situations, but does not make independent decisions about the choice of assessment method or procedure;

20.3.3. is able, supervised by a professional psychologist, to design, develop and implement interventions or educational activities tailored to the needs of the individual, the group or the society;

20.4. social abilities. The person:

20.4.1. is able to carry out educational activities in the field of psychology independently, presenting achievements in psychological science, the profession of psychology, its activities and results to the society;

20.4.2. is able to communicate effectively, work as part of a team and collaborate with a wide range of professions and institutions;

20.5. personal abilities. The person:

20.5.1. is able to comply with the professional standards of ethics in the practice of psychology;

20.5.2. is able to take personal responsibility for the activities carried out and knows the limits of their competences, being able to distinguish between activities that can be carried out independently and those that can be carried out supervised by a professional psychologist;

20.5.3. is able to update and develop the knowledge and skills acquired.

21. The following learning outcomes must be achieved by the graduates upon completion of second cycle studies:

21.1. knowledge and its application. The person:

21.1.1. has up-to-date knowledge of psychology and other sciences relevant to the specific professional field;

21.1.2. is able to draw on knowledge of psychology and other sciences in explaining the characteristics of an individual, group or society;

21.2. research skills. The person:

21.2.1. has the knowledge of psychology science research methodology and is able to independently plan and carry out research, as well as apply quantitative and qualitative research methods, collect and analyse data;

21.2.2. is able to analyse and interpret research data in the field of psychology, present the results of the research in an appropriate manner and make practical recommendations;

21.3. special abilities: The person:

21.3.1. is able to identify the client's personal issue and needs and counsel the client using appropriate counselling techniques (strategies);

21.3.2. is able to carry out psychological assessment of an individual, group or organisation independently, interpret the results of psychological assessment, and independently draw conclusions and recommendations;

21.3.3. is able to design, develop and implement psychological interventions in their professional field that are appropriate to the needs and goals of the individual, the group and the organisation, using research-based methods;

21.3.4. is able to evaluate the effectiveness of psychological interventions using scientifically valid methods;

21.3.5. is able to analyse the demand for psychological services as well as to design and develop psychological services;

21.4. social abilities. The person:

21.4.1. is able to communicate with clients, provide information on the results of psychological assessment and/or intervention, and present advances in psychological science;

21.4.2. is able to work in a multidisciplinary team, collaborating with various professions and institutions, exchanging information and sharing experience;

21.4.3. is able to present knowledge of psychological science to the wider public and/or reports on the psychologist's work to clients and a range of institutions in a fluent manner;

21.5. personal abilities. The person:

21.5.1. is familiar with and has knowledge of the legislation and other documents governing the activities of psychologists in the specific professional field. Is able to comply with the ethical requirements of a professional psychologist in their professional activities, and continuously develops and enhances the professional competences of their profession;

21.5.2. is able to research, critically evaluate and analyse information using a variety of information sources;

21.5.3. is able to grow independently and to expand their knowledge and skills.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

22. Choosing the methods of studying psychology must take into account the objectives of the study programme and the results to be achieved: the aims of the study programme (from the teacher's perspective) and what graduates will gain (from the student's perspective), the content of the course, and the student's preparation.

23. The study programmes apply student-centred study methods.

24. Study programmes must include, among other methods, methods of study that enable the development of the core competences required by psychologists:

24.1. methods based on observation and self-reflection;

24.2. critical analysis and evaluation;

24.3. methods of exploration and experimentation;

24.4. methods for developing interpersonal skills.

25. Teaching at second cycle studies must be oriented towards preparation for independent professional activity. All second cycle study programmes must include the following methods alongside other methods:

25.1. case study methods that reveal the explanatory and technological potential of psychological theories at individual, group and societal levels;

25.2. psychological assessment and counselling exercises, demonstrating the benefits of knowledge and understanding in modelling the most appropriate psychological intervention strategy;

25.3. learning in supervised practice environment to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge and to strengthen the ability to argue for professional judgement in the face of incomplete or contradictory information, to manage the uncertainties arising from the application of psychological knowledge and skills, and to develop, design and implement interventions that meet objectives. At the second cycle of studies, it is important to consolidate the scientific way of solving research questions, and the lecturer must strengthen the student's ability to argue for the chosen strategy and to implement it from the premises to the result with practical value.

26. The assessment system must be valid (linked to the objectives of the study), reliable (independent of the subjectivity of the assessor), clear (equally understood by all participants), useful (positively perceived by those being assessed) and unbiased (no advantage is given to any group of those being assessed).

27. The assessment methods must be aligned with the study methods. The study programmes in the field of Psychology use a variety of assessment methods to test the coherence of the knowledge acquired and the flexibility of the application of the skills, such as reflection, interpretations of psychological assessments, situational analysis, presentations, practice assignment reports and diaries, etc. In the field of psychology studies, criterion-referenced assessment is recommended.

28. Among all types of assessment, cumulative assessment is the best indicator of student progress, as its components must allow for the verification of the level of achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the course or module. The exam is usually only part of the cumulative assessment, other parts may include an essay, a written research report, an individual or group project, etc. During the study period, lecturers must provide feedback to students on their progress and efforts.

CHAPTER V

REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

29. Higher education institutions must ensure that the qualifications of the lecturers who teach the study programmes in the field of Psychology are sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes. In assessing the competence of lecturers, account should be taken of their experience in teaching, research and practice: participation in research and project activities, recognition in professional and scientific communities, ability to communicate in foreign languages, participation in professional development programmes, conferences, training, etc., the use of advanced methods of study, their professional foresight and personal interest in students' problems. The lecturer must know and understand the criteria used for the evaluation of study programmes, and be able to prepare and implement study course outline that is consistent with the relevant study programme in the field of Psychology.

30. Lecturers in psychology subjects must have research and/or practical experience. Lecturers in applied psychology subjects are required to have professional work experience.

31. Information related to the studies must be made available on the higher education institution's website.

32. Practical training is a compulsory part of study programmes in the field of Psychology. The following provisions must be respected when organising it:

32.1. the aim of the practice placement in the first cycle of studies is to introduce students to the specifics of a psychologist's work in various institutions (education, healthcare, recruitment and training companies, NGOs, etc.), the professional requirements, to give them the opportunity to observe the work of a qualified psychologist, and, if possible, to gain practical work experience supervised by a qualified psychologist;

32.2. the aim of the practice placement in the second cycle of studies is to develop and improve students' assessment, counselling, group work, self-analysis, self-reflection and other competences necessary for the work of psychologists. The content of the practice placement must be specialised;

32.3. the content of the practice placement must be in line with the aims of the study programme. The reflective nature of the practice tasks (diary writing, reflective analysis of the practice experience in the practice report, etc.) is recommended during the practice;

32.4. the study practice placement shall be organised in accordance with the higher education institution's procedure and regulations for the organisation of the practice placement in psychology, defining the requirements and specific tasks of the practice placement, the system for assessing the outcomes and the criteria for assessing the skills acquired and tasks performed by the student during the practice placement, as well as the qualification requirements for a practice supervisor in the organisation;

32.5. the Descriptor of the practice placement course must include time for individual or group reflection, consultation and/or case discussions under the guidance of the HEI practice placement supervisor;

32.6. the practice supervisors in the institution are required to have at least a Master's degree in social sciences (with a degree in the study field of Psychology) or an equivalent higher education qualification, and at least two years of professional experience in the field of psychology;

32.7. the higher education institution must offer students a list of possible practice placement. Generally, practice placements at both study levels take place in institutions that HEIs have signed practice agreements with. The practice placement may also be carried out at a location chosen by the student, as long as the suitability of the practice placement is confirmed by the higher education institution's procedures;

32.8. practice supervisor at the HEI must be included in the process of improving the content of practice tasks and practice organization; It is recommended that the practice supervisor of organisation should also be included in this process;

32.9. the studies of both study cycles shall be complete with a final thesis/project: The final thesis/project must demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding acquired during the studies, the ability to analyse the chosen topic, to evaluate the research and work of other researchers, to learn independently and to carry out empirical research on the chosen topic, to

analyse primary or secondary data, to describe own research work and to formulate clear and justified conclusions. The requirements for the final thesis must be described in the HEI's regulations for final theses, and must be publicly available.

33. The final bachelor's thesis/project must be written independently, prepared under the guidance of the supervisor, based on empirical data and existing knowledge. In the final bachelor's thesis/project the student must demonstrate the ability to plan, carry out and describe the research and results of the chosen topic in psychology, to be able to summarise the obtained results, to formulate the conclusions of the thesis in a reasonable manner, and to observe professional ethics. Students are not allowed to independently research samples of vulnerable groups (e.g. minors, persons with disabilities, persons with mental disorders, imprisoned persons, etc.) as part of their Bachelor's thesis/project. Students can use and analyse research data collected by other researchers, as long as it is relevant to the topic of the bachelor thesis.

34. The second cycle final thesis/project shall be based on independent research or applied research, the application of knowledge, or be a project demonstrating competences in line with the programme objectives. In the final thesis/project, the master's student must demonstrate the ability to analyse the chosen topic in a comprehensive and focused manner, to evaluate the previous work of others on the chosen topic, to study and carry out research on the chosen topic in psychology independently, to choose appropriate methods and instruments, statistical methods or qualitative analysis, to describe his/her own research, to present the results of the research and their interpretation, and to formulate clear and justified research conclusions. It is recommended that the research work of the Master's student be organised in a consistent way from the first semester.

35. The final thesis/project must be defended in a public meeting of the final thesis committee and peer-reviewed according to criteria known in advance to the students. The thesis defence committee must have at least 5 members. At least 4 members have to be researchers in the field of psychology and/or lecturers with a scientific degree, including one from another higher education institution, who shall be appointed as the chairperson of the panel. It is also recommended to include one representative of the social partners or a practising psychologist on the defence committee.

36. The organising department of the study in the field of Psychology must have sufficient material and methodological resources to carry out the study programme in a high-quality manner. Successful implementation of the study programme requires:

36.1. the layout, equipment and number of places in the classrooms shall comply with the requirements of hygiene and occupational safety, and shall contain the technical and demonstration equipment necessary for the study process;

36.2. a sufficient number of computers appropriate to the needs of students. All computers must be equipped with standard word processing, quantitative and qualitative research data processing software, Internet access and other software as required;

36.3. laboratory equipment and devices or methodological material needed for the subjects taught, enabling students to learn how to use a wide range of equipment relevant to both scientific and practical work, and apply various methods in making measurements;

36.4. a sufficient number educational resources: legal instruments and protocols are mandatory for the psychological assessment studies;

36.5. specific laboratory and computer software equipment necessary for the psychology practical or laboratory work in the relevant subjects of studies;

36.6. classrooms suitable for the monitoring of the educational process and for ensuring feedback, observation, interviewing, counselling or other training;

36.7. special classrooms suitable for group work to develop communication or other skills;

36.8. library with a sufficient number of psychology literature necessary for the study process: at least one copy of textbooks or other scientific literature for each subject, methodological publications, scientific journals, scientific books in the field of psychology, access to databases of specialised publications, a sufficient number of computers with internet access and appropriate software.

37. Academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support is provided to students using the material, human and other resources of the HEI.

38. The higher education institution must provide opportunities for lecturers and students working in the field of Psychology to take advantage of academic mobility and integrate the international dimension of knowledge and experience into the study process. The crediting of positive study outcomes obtained by the students during academic mobility must be ensured.

39. It is recommended to take into account the recommendations of students, social partners, researchers and practitioners in psychology, educational and scientific institutions, as well as the needs of the state, by following the provisions and recommendations of the European Certificate in Psychology when designing and developing the study programmes in the field of Psychology.
