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## Introduction

The formation of the Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology within the British Psychological Society represents a significant step forward for the professional status of sport and exercise psychology in Great Britain. As our profession continues to evolve the Division is faced with a number of tasks and challenges. However, these challenges are not unique to Britain. The purpose of this article is to give insight into the procedures in place in Australia and USA for certifying and training sport and exercise psychologists, so that we can learn lessons from these countries.

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) has 13,000 members and includes nine Colleges of speciality, including sport psychology. The American Psychological Association (APA) has over 150,000 members and 53 Divisions. Professor Peter Terry (President of the APS College of Sport Psychologists) and Professor Judy Van Raalte (President of the APA's Division 47 Exercise and Sport Psychology) kindly agreed to be 'interviewed' via e-mail on a number of issues that are particularly pertinent to the future activities of the fledgling Division of Sport and Exercise.

*Q 1. Does your organisation have procedures in place for Accrediting or Certifying Sport and Exercise Psychologists? If so, what are the requirements to become an Accredited or Certified Sport and Exercise psychologist?*

JVR: The American Psychological Association does not have procedures in place for Accrediting or Certifying Exercise and Sport Psychologists. Exercise and Sport Psychology has been identified by APA as a proficiency within the greater field of psychology, which is a first step toward accreditation/certification. Recognition as a proficiency means that exercise and sport psychology is now recognized as a particular aspect of psychology practice. The recognition of this designation does not, however, apply at the individual level (APA Division 47, 2003).

PT: The term 'psychologist' is restricted by legislation in Australia. Anyone wishing to advertise as a psychologist or function in the capacity of a psychologist in any field (including sport and/or exercise) must meet strict requirements. First and foremost, a psychologist must be registered in the state or territory in which they work.

Therefore, sport psychologists are psychologists first and specialists second. A sport psychologist must be able to demonstrate a broad range of generic competencies plus specialist competencies associated with the sport and/or exercise domain. The procedures may be broken down into two steps:

I. An applicant must be eligible for full membership of the APS (although not necessarily actually be a member). The requirements for full membership of the APS include four years of university training in psychology (or equivalent) plus at least two years of higher-level training with supervision, often in a specialist area such as sport and exercise psychology. The generic competencies required of an APS psychologist fall into 8 areas including knowledge, research, service implementation (APS, 1996)

II. Becoming a full member of the APS does not automatically qualify a psychologist to become a member of the College of Sport Psychologists (CoSP). Members of APS Colleges are seen as specialists who have undergone additional specialist training. The specific competencies of CoSP fall into three areas including Body of Knowledge, Skills in Psychological Assessment and Interpretation, and Application (Intervention Skills) (APS, 1997).

The preferred route to CoSP membership is to have completed a four-year honours programme in psychology followed by a two-year professional masters or three-year professional doctorate in sport and exercise psychology.

*Q2. Does your Division/College recognise specific undergraduate or postgraduate courses as providing a basis for Accreditation or Certification? What are the requirements of these courses?*

PT: The APS accredits university programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level. All accredited programmes are scrutinised in detail by representatives of the APS for content, resourcing, and standards of delivery. Specialist post-graduate university programmes in sport and exercise psychology are accredited by the APS. At present, they are offered at the University of Queensland, the University of Western Sydney, Victoria University, and the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). Typically, Master of Psychology (MPsych) programmes include about 8 – 10 taught courses, a research thesis, plus 1000 hours of supervised psychology practicum. Doctor of Psychology (DPsych) programmes include additional courses, an extended research thesis and 1500 practicum hours.

Practicum hours within a postgraduate programme are usually completed in at least three different organisations. For example, at USQ our MPsych or DPsych students complete their first practicum under close supervision from a senior psychologist, on campus in either our psychology clinic or student services. Typically, their second practicum would be in a sport or exercise domain, with a local or state organisation. This may also be the type of setting for their third practicum or they may work in a more clinically-oriented setting, perhaps at a hospital. Typically, an advanced (doctoral) practicum is completed in a state or national institute of sport, such as the Australian Institute of Sport, or sometimes overseas.

Having completed an undergraduate psychology degree and an MPsych over a minimum of six years full-time, eligibility for full membership of the APS and full registration as a psychologist is normally achieved. At present, an additional two

years of supervised experience is required for full CoSP membership although this requirement is under review, as is the present list of competencies.

*Q3. Do you have 'grandparenting' criteria to Accredited or Certified experienced individuals who have not followed the typical training route? What are the procedures involved in this?*

PT: Other routes to APS membership and full registration are possible but applicants need to demonstrate equivalence of training and include considerable supervised experience. A PhD in psychology would qualify someone for full membership of the APS, but is not considered sufficient for registration because it does not include practicum hours, although many PhD candidates complete the supervised experience requirements simultaneously. The APS offers a formal assessment of qualifications and once eligibility for full membership of the APS is established, registration boards will consider applications on their individual merits.

*Q4. Is Supervision a requirement for gaining Full Membership of APS and CoSP? What have been the main challenges to implementing this?*

PT: There are strict supervision requirements. The APS requires supervisees to receive one hour of supervision for every day of practicum. Traditionally, this is one-on-one, face-to-face, although the use of group supervision and other methods of delivery are becoming more common. Supervisees must document all supervision sessions. For supervisees on a specialist masters or doctoral programme, supervision is provided either by a university supervisor, a community supervisor from the practicum site, or usually by both. It is normal for a supervisee to have experience of several supervisors during the course of their supervised experience.

Given the relative dearth of supervisors especially in rural and remote areas of Australia, the APS is reviewing strategies for facilitating the supervision

requirements. Registration boards require a minimum numbers of supervision hours. This is about 160 hours in Queensland, although this figure includes research supervision.

*Q5. Are Supervisors formally trained to supervise? If so, what does this training involve?*

PT: The training of supervisors is a topical issue. Currently in Queensland, Supervisors must have undertaken recognised training in Supervision Skills within the last 3 years to be registered with the State as a recognised supervisor

*Q6. How are applications for Accreditation/ Certification assessed (e.g., submission of portfolio, interview, etc.)? Do you think this procedure is satisfactory?*

PT: The assessment process is a relatively simple one. Anyone completing an APS-approved programme becomes eligible for APS membership. All APS-accredited specialist MPsych or DPsych programmes address the competencies necessary for registration and therefore upon successful completion graduates are eligible for registration.

*Q7. What are the requirements for remaining an Accredited or Certified Sport and Exercise Psychologist? Is Supervision a requirement?*

PT: CoSP members are required to maintain a log of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, which must be submitted at the end of each CPD cycle (2 year period). A sample (about 10%) is selected for closer scrutiny. College members are required to attain a number of generic and specialist points for various CPD activities, the specifics of which are currently under review. Supervision is not a requirement for maintaining registration.

*Q8. What type of CPD activities does APA/ APS offer?*

JVR: APA offers continuing education opportunities for all licensed psychologists, including several CPD activities in sport and exercise psychology. For example, there are independent study programmes offered by the APA (APA, 2004,) and Virtual Brands (Virtual Brands, 2004). People seem to enjoy the home study book and video approach. I know that a "sport psychology cruise" that included continuing education study while on a cruise was also a hit. Shane Murphy was one of the presenters for that venture.

PT: The APS promotes generic and specialist CPD opportunities via conferences, workshops, etc. CoSP has a CPD representative on its National Executive whose role is to help promote CPD activities at national and state levels, often in conjunction with institutes of sport. CPD activities are provided in many forms, for example the APS holds an annual conference, which includes an extensive workshop programme.

CoSP-endorsed CPD activities are also included at the conferences of the Australian Association of Exercise and Sports Science (AAESS), and Sports Medicine Australia (SMA). In addition, institutes of sport around the country host CPD events. In the past year these have addressed topics such as eating disorders, old way/new way coaching, and working with client groups such as athletes with disabilities, professional teams, and Olympic athletes.

*Q9. What criteria do you use to determine the appropriateness of non-Association CPD activities?*

PT: Broadly speaking, 75% of the content of a PD activity must be psychological in nature and 50% of the presenters must be psychologists.

*Q10. How many Accredited or Certified Sport and Exercise Psychologists do you have?*

PT: As of December 2003, there were 90 members of CoSP, of which 53 were full members. However, not all psychologists who work in the sport and/or exercise domain are members of CoSP. Under the APS Code of Ethics, however, psychologists are required to work within their range of competence.

*Q11. Does your country have statutory registration for psychologists (i.e., only individuals Accredited or Certified by the Association can call themselves psychologists)?*

PT: (see response to Q1).

JVR: The only people who may use the term "psychology" or any derivative thereof in their title in applied practice settings are those individuals who have gained credentialing as psychologists. Use of the term "psychology" is regulated by individual state boards. APA policy on the use of the title "psychologist" is contained in the General Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services, which define the term "Professional Psychologist" as follows: "Psychologists have a doctoral degree in psychology from an organized, sequential program in a regionally accredited university or professional school."

*Q12. Do you think that the ethical guidelines of the APA/APS are fully relevant for sport and exercise psychologists? Has your Division/ College identified additional ethical issues specific to sport and exercise psychology?*

JVR: Speaking for myself, I believe that there are a number of ethical issues specific to sport and exercise psychology. APA Division 47 has been addressing some of these issues in a series of brochures that are posted on the website. There is one brochure titled How Can a Psychologist Become a Sport Psychologist? We are working on another brochure on supervision in exercise and sport psychology.



PT: All psychologists in Australia are bound by the ethical codes of their respective registration boards and the APS. CoSP has not identified additional ethical issues.

*Q13. Has your Division/College faced any credibility issues from other psychologists? How have you sought to resolve these?*

JVR: Credibility issues do not seem to have been a problem.

PT: As a college of the APS, sport psychology has equal standing with other psychology specialisms. Having the same generic requirements for membership of the APS and registration as a psychologist plus specialist training provides credibility for sport psychologists in the eyes of the broader psychology profession.

#### Commentary

The procedures and guidelines in the APA and APS provide insight into some of the issues and challenges that the newly-formed Division will face in helping to establish a credible profession of sport and exercise psychology. The APS appear to be particularly progressive and have in place a number of guidelines that are also standard in the BPS (e.g., accredited undergraduate degrees), and some that are now becoming evident. For example, the eight generic competencies required of an APS psychologist have similarities with the National Occupational Standards for applied psychology currently being developed in Britain (BPS, 2004a). Additionally, the requirement for mandatory CPD is also currently being replicated in the BPS (BPS, 2004b). From these interviews it may be suggested that three main priority areas to target and issues to consider are as follows:

1. *Post-graduate training.* The establishment of APS accredited post-graduate programmes in sport and exercise psychology serves as a mechanism of quality assuring training routes. Indeed, the APS system mirrors the training procedures of the other Divisions in the BPS (e.g., Clinical and Occupational). A challenge facing

the Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology will include the development and accreditation of new and/or current specialist Masters programmes. This will involve establishing the curriculum content of a specialist MSc in Sport and Exercise Psychology and determining whether current MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology programmes are appropriate.

*2. Continuing Professional Development.* Another major challenge the new Division faces is developing, maintaining and endorsing a programme of appropriate CPD activities. As noted above, evidence of CPD activities is now mandatory for maintaining chartered status. Interesting ideas from the APA and APS include distance learning opportunities using multi-media, collaborating with sister organisations (e.g., BASES, BOA) and cruises!

*3. Practical experience and supervision.* As with the APS and other BPS Divisions, supervised practical experience will be a necessary component of postgraduate training. However, we need to ascertain the required number of hours of practice and supervision. The BASES' accreditation process could offer a working model. Additionally, the APS model provides trainees with the opportunity of working in areas outside sport, and we need to consider whether this is appropriate and worthwhile for Britain.

Supervision in sport psychology is a new area that has plenty of room for development and improvement (Van Raalte & Andersen, 2000), and both the APS and APA are currently addressing this issue. Initial supervision of trainees may come from academic staff on one year MSc programmes, however continuing supervision once the student has left the institution could be problematic and issues of payment will need to be addressed. A further task facing us is identifying and providing opportunities for training the skills and competencies of supervisors. From this,

regulations on eligibility to supervise trainee sport and exercise psychologists can be developed. It is possible that in the early stages of the profession there will be a limited number of eligible supervisors, which could be problematic.

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