



Psychotherapy & Counselling  
Federation of Australia

# Psychotherapy Working Party

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Introduction

The PACFA Board has established a Working Party to consider the future of psychotherapy as a profession in Australia with a focus on psychotherapy training. A key aim is to reduce any adverse impacts on psychotherapy training from the introduction of the PACFA Training Standards 2018.

The Working Party will undertake a range of activities in relation to competencies and standards for psychotherapy training and supporting the retention of existing psychotherapy training programs and the development of new training pathways for psychotherapy.

The Working Party's considerations will be informed by recognition of a psychotherapist formational process that requires a distinct training approach.

It is intended that the Working Party's activities will support the advancement of psychotherapy as a distinct profession within PACFA and in Australia more broadly.

### Responsibilities

#### Working Party Members

Members of the Psychotherapy Working Party will be responsible for:

1. Reviewing the development of the psychotherapy profession in Australia in comparison with other countries and identifying the future direction for the development of psychotherapy in Australia.

The review will:

- Consider standards, training and regulation of psychotherapy internationally
- Focus particularly on developments in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Europe

2. Consulting and engaging with psychotherapy training providers in order to inform the Working Party's activities and to develop strategies to support the retention and development of high quality psychotherapy training in Australia.

Options to be considered include:

- Supporting psychotherapy training providers to seek and achieve accreditation as a PACFA-Accredited Specialist Training;
- Supporting psychotherapy training providers to seek accreditation of their training by TEQSA or ASQA at level 7 to 9 of the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF);

- Identifying opportunities to build collaboration between psychotherapy training providers to retain existing psychotherapy training programs and develop new programs through articulation arrangements from non-accredited psychotherapy training into TEQSA or ASQA-accredited training; and
  - Any other appropriate options.
3. Developing competencies and standards for psychotherapy training that will articulate standards for psychotherapy training that are separate from the minimum standards in the PACFA Training Standards (2018), in order to support the professional identity of psychotherapists as a distinct profession. The competencies and standards for psychotherapy will be developed in collaboration with the PACFA Professional Standards Committee and the PACFA Board for future consideration by the PACFA Council.

The Working Party's process will include:

- Developing a proposed framework for the competencies and standards for psychotherapy, building on the Entry Requirements for the College of Psychotherapy and all of the learning from the review, for approval by the PSC and the PACFA Board.
- Ensuring the framework for the competencies and standards for psychotherapy is focused on the specific requirements for training as a psychotherapist.
- Based on the agreed framework, preparing a draft document setting out the recommended competencies and standards for psychotherapy. A consultant may be engaged to draft this document if required.

#### **Working Party Chair**

1. In consultation with the PACFA Board and members of the Working Party, developing the vision for the Working Party and facilitating the process of implementing these Terms of Reference.
2. Setting Working Party meeting agendas and chairing meetings.
3. Liaising with Working Party members and other stakeholders as required.
4. Reporting to the PACFA Board regularly on progress and outcomes from the Working Party's activities.

#### **PACFA CEO and Board**

The PACFA Board is responsible for:

1. Overseeing the development of strategies to support the retention and development of quality psychotherapy training programs including:
  - Providing guidance and feedback via the CEO on the proposed strategies, and decisions on these when required.
2. Overseeing the development of the new competencies and standards for psychotherapy including:
  - Reviewing and approving the proposed framework for the competencies and standards for psychotherapy;

- If a Consultant is required to draft the competencies and standards for psychotherapy, identifying a suitable consultant, in consultation with the Working Party, to prepare the draft based on the framework prepared by the Working Party as approved by the Board. The Board will tender for a suitable consultant if no suitable consultant can be identified.
- Reviewing and endorsing the competencies and standards for psychotherapy, once drafted, and presentation of these to the PACFA Council for approval.

The CEO is responsible for:

1. Providing high level executive support to the Working Party;
2. If a Consultant is required to draft the competencies and standards for psychotherapy, operationalising the consultancy in the required format, including:
  - Advertising the Tender for a consultant (if a Tender process is required);
  - Preparing contract documentation to engage the consultant;
  - Contract monitoring to ensure timely completion of the contract deliverables;
  - Liaising with the consultant in relation to any edits to the draft which may be required.
3. Operationalising strategies to support the retention and development of quality psychotherapy training programs including:
  - Liaising with Training Providers to negotiate and implement the agreed strategies.

### **Membership of the Working Party**

There shall be a minimum of six people appointed to the Psychotherapy Working Party who are subject-matter experts in psychotherapy. The subject-matter experts will contribute diverse viewpoints as practising psychotherapists and educators involved in psychotherapy education. In addition, three PACFA representatives will be appointed to the Working Party to represent PACFA policy and operational perspectives to ensure that outcomes from the Working Party align with PACFA's mission and priorities.

Subject matter experts:

- The Chair - A Psychotherapist belonging to PACFA or a PACFA MA
- At least four other psychotherapists who belong to PACFA or PACFA Member Associations, including psychotherapists who are engaged in the education of psychotherapists.

The psychotherapy subject matter experts will represent diverse approaches to psychotherapy and psychotherapy training.

Other Psychotherapy experts may be consulted on an ad hoc basis as Advisers to the Working Party in order to consider diverse perspectives on psychotherapy, including international perspectives.

PACFA Representatives:

- The PACFA CEO
- The Chair of the PACFA Professional Standards Committee or the Chair's nominee
- The PACFA Board Psychotherapy Representative

The PACFA President may also attend meetings in an ex-officio capacity as and when required.

### **Meetings**

The Working Party will generally meet monthly, at a regular time to be determined in consultation with the Working Party, via Zoom teleconference. Additional meetings, including face to face meetings, will be scheduled as required.

Working Party members will participate in most meetings with allowance being made for reasonable absences due to other commitments.

Responsibility for taking brief minutes of Working Party meetings will be shared by the Working Party members, documenting all Working Party decisions and agreed actions.

Working Party discussions may take place via email in between meetings.

### **Outcomes and Timeline**

The Working Party will prepare their draft of the proposed competencies and standards for psychotherapy, together with a final report and recommendations for the PACFA Board within 12 to 18 months.