AUBURN UNIVERSITY

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY BENCHMARK GUIDEBOOK

Year 2 and Beyond

# Introduction and Instructions:

This guidebook contains descriptions and examples (i.e.”behavioral anchors”) of the Competency Benchmarks on which students will be rated using the Professional Competency Benchmark Evaluation Short Form. Depending on the placement, some categories may not apply (e.g., particularly 12. Teaching; 15. Management-Administration). In addition, the emphasis placed on either Assessment or Intervention may preclude rating the student one of these dimensions. In this case, please use “N/A” to distinguish from situations in which you have not had an opportunity to observe the training activity.

Please use the following rating levels, which take into account the student’s level of training and competency.

## COMPETENCY LEVEL RATINGS:

0 = Unacceptable for a student at this level of training; remedial action required

1 = Below expectations for a student at this level of training; needs extra supervision

2 = Meets expectations for a student at this level of training; benefiting from usual supervision

3 = Exceeds expectations for a student at this level of training; only minimal supervision required

N/O = No Opportunity to Observe

On the Professional Competency Benchmark Evaluation Short Form, please be sure to provide a thoughtful narrative on the student’s overall performance, particular strengths and potential growth areas.

*Updated May 2025*

# FOUNDATIONAL CLUSTERS AND COMPETENCIES

## I. PROFESSIONALISM

### 1. Professional Values and Attitudes: as evidenced in behavior and comportment that reflects the values and attitudes of psychology.

#### 1A. Integrity – Honesty, personal responsibility, and adherence to professional values

* Adherence to professional values infuses work as psychologist-in-training; recognizes situations that challenge adherence to professional values

Examples:

* Identifies situations that challenge professional values, and seeks faculty/supervisor guidance as needed
* Demonstrates ability to discuss failures and lapses in adherence to professional values with supervisors/faculty as appropriate

#### 1B. Deportment

* Communication and physical conduct (including attire) is professionally appropriate, across different settings

Examples:

* Demonstrates awareness of the impact behavior has on client, public and profession
* Utilizes appropriate language and demeanor in professional communications

#### 1C. Accountability

* Accepts responsibility for own actions

Examples:

* Completes required case documentation promptly and accurately
* Accepts responsibility for meeting deadlines
* Acknowledges errors
* Utilizes supervision to strengthen effectiveness of practice

#### 1D. Concern For the Welfare of Others

* Acts to understand and safeguard the welfare of others

Examples:

* Displays respect in interpersonal interactions with others including those from divergent perspectives or backgrounds
* Determines when response to client needs takes precedence over personal needs

#### 1E. Professional Identity

* Displays emerging professional identity as psychologist; uses resources (e.g., supervision, literature) for professional development

Examples:

* Has membership in professional organizations
* Attends colloquia, workshops, conferences
* Consults literature relevant to client care

### 2. Individual and Cultural Diversity: Awareness, sensitivity and skills in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups and communities who represent various cultural and personal background and characteristics defined broadly and consistent with APA policy.

#### 2A. Self as Shaped by Individual and Cultural Diversity (e.g., cultural, individual, and role differences. Including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status) and Context

* Monitors and applies knowledge of self as a cultural being in assessment, treatment, and consultation.

Examples:

* Uses knowledge of self to monitor effectiveness as a professional
* Initiates supervision about diversity issues

#### 2B. Interaction of Self and Others as Shaped by Individual and Cultural Diversity and Context

* Applies knowledge of others as cultural beings and the role of culture in interactions in assessment, treatment, and consultation of diverse others

Examples:

* Demonstrates understanding that others may have multiple cultural identities
* Initiates supervision about diversity issues with others
* Understands the role that diversity may play in interactions with others
* Initiates supervision about diversity issues in interactions with others

#### 2C. Applications based on Individual and Cultural Context

* Applies knowledge, sensitivity, and understanding regarding ICD issues to work effectively with diverse others in assessment, treatment, and consultation

Examples:

* Demonstrates knowledge of ICD literature and APA policies, including guidelines for practice with diverse individuals, groups and communities
* Works effectively with diverse others in professional activities
* Demonstrates awareness of effects of oppression and privilege on self and others

### 3. Ethical Legal Standards and Policy: Application of ethical concepts and awareness of legal issues regarding professional activities with individuals, groups, and organizations.

#### 3A. Knowledge of Ethical, Legal and Professional Standards and Guidelines

* Demonstrates intermediate level knowledge and understanding of the APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct and other relevant ethical/professional codes, standards and guidelines, laws, statutes, rules, and regulations

Examples:

* Identifies ethical dilemmas effectively
* Actively consults with supervisor to act upon ethical and legal aspects of practice
* Addresses ethical and legal aspects within the case conceptualization
* Discusses ethical implications of professional work
* Recognizes and discusses limits of own ethical and legal knowledge
* Demonstrates intermediate knowledge of typical legal issues, including child and elder abuse reporting, confidentiality, and informed consent

#### 3B. Awareness and Application of Ethical Decision Making

* Demonstrates knowledge and application of an ethical decision-making model; applies relevant elements of ethical decision making to a dilemma

Examples:

* Uses an ethical decision-making model when discussing cases in supervision
* Identifies ethical implications in cases and understands the ethical elements present in ethical dilemma or question
* Discusses ethical dilemmas and decision making in supervision, staff meetings, presentations, practicum settings

#### 3C. Ethical Conduct

* Integrates own moral principles/ethical values in professional conduct

Examples:

* Is able to articulate knowledge of own moral principles and ethical values in discussions with supervisors and peers about ethical issues
* Is able to spontaneously discusses intersection of personal and professional ethical and moral issues
* **Others specific to rater’s context**

### 4. Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment/Self-Care: Practice conducted with personal and professional self-awareness and reflection; with awareness of competencies; with appropriate self-care.

#### 4A. Reflective Practice

* Displays broadened self-awareness; utilizes self- monitoring; engages in reflection regarding professional practice; uses resources to enhance reflectivity

Examples:

* Is able to articulate attitudes, values, and beliefs toward diverse others
* Recognizes impact of self on others
* Self-identifies multiple individual and cultural identities
* Is able to describe how others experience him/her and identifies roles one might play within a group
* Responsively utilizes supervision to enhance reflectivity
* Reviews own professional performance via video or audiotape with supervisors
* Displays ability to adjust professional performance as situation requires.

#### 4B. Self-Assessment and Self-Care (Attention to personal health and well-being to assure effective professional functioning)

* Demonstrates broad, accurate self-assessment of competence; consistently monitors and evaluates practice activities; works to recognize limits of knowledge/skills, and to seek means to enhance knowledge/skills; monitors issues related to self-care with supervisor; understands the central role of self-care to effective practice

Examples:

* Self-assessment comes close to congruence with assessment by peers and supervisors
* Identifies areas requiring further professional growth
* Writes a personal statement of professional goals
* Identifies learning objectives for overall training plan
* Systemically and effectively reviews own professional performance via videotape or other technology
* Takes action recommended by supervisor for self-care to ensure effective training
* Maintains/alters weekly schedule to allow for self-care activities

#### 4C. Participation in Supervision Process

* Effectively participates in supervision

Examples:

* Seeks supervision to improve performance; presents work for feedback, and integrates feedback into performance
* Initiates discussion with supervisor of own reaction to client/patients in session
* Seeks supervisor's perspective on client progress

## II. RELATIONAL

### 5. Relationships: Relate effectively and meaningfully with individuals, groups, and/or communities.

#### 5A. Interpersonal Relationships

* Forms and maintains productive and respectful relationships with clients, peers/colleagues, supervisors and professionals from other disciplines

Examples:

* Forms effective working alliances with most clients
* Engages with supervisors to work effectively
* Involved in departmental, institutional, or professional activities or governance
* Demonstrates respectful and collegial interactions with those who have different professional models or perspectives

#### 5B. Affective Skills

* Negotiates differences and handles conflict satisfactorily; provides effective feedback to others and receives feedback non-defensively

Examples:

* Demonstrates active problem-solving
* Makes appropriate disclosures regarding problematic interpersonal situations
* Acknowledges own role in difficult interactions
* Initiates discussion regarding disagreements with colleagues or supervisors
* Efforts to resolve disagreements do not escalate negative affect among the parties involved
* Seeks clarification in challenging interpersonal communications
* Demonstrates understanding of diverse viewpoints in challenging interactions
* Provides feedback to supervisor regarding supervisory process
* Provides feedback to peers regarding peers’ clinical work in context of group supervision or case conference
* Accepts and implements supervisory feedback non-defensively
* Maintains affective equilibrium and focus on therapeutic task in face of client distress
* Tolerates ambiguity and uncertainty

#### 5C. Expressive Skills

* Communicates clearly using verbal, nonverbal, and written skills in a professional context; demonstrates clear understanding and use of professional language

Examples:

* Uses professional terms and concepts appropriately and clearly in discussions, case reports, etc.
* Understands terms and concepts used in professional texts and in others’ case reports
* Communication is understandable, consistent across expressive modalities
* Prepares clearly written assessment reports
* Presents clinical process to supervisor in a succinct, organized, well-summarized way
* Provides verbal feedback to client regarding assessment and diagnosis using language the client can understand
* Presents clear, appropriately detailed clinical material

## III. SCIENCE

### 6. Scientific Knowledge and Methods: Understanding of research, research methodology, techniques of data collection and analysis, biological bases of behavior, cognitive-affective bases of behavior, and development across the lifespan. Respect for scientifically derived knowledge.

#### 6A. Scientific Mindedness

* Values and applies scientific methods to professional practice

Examples:

* Uses literature to support ideas in case conferences and supervision
* Formulates appropriate questions regarding case conceptualization
* Generates hypotheses regarding own contribution to therapeutic process and outcome

#### 6B. Scientific Foundation of Psychology

* Demonstrates intermediate level knowledge of core science (i.e., scientific bases of behavior)

Examples:

* Critically evaluates scientific literature
* Demonstrates understanding of intersections across core areas of psychological science

#### 6C. Scientific Foundation of Professional Practice

* Demonstrates knowledge, understanding, and application of the concept of evidence-based practice

Examples:

* Applies EBP concepts in case conceptualization, treatment planning, and interventions in consultation with supervisor
* Works with supervisor to compare and contrast EBP approaches with other theoretical perspectives and interventions in the context of case conceptualization and treatment

### 7. Research/Evaluation: Generating research that contributes to the professional knowledge base and/or evaluates the effectiveness of various professional activities

#### 7A. Scientific Approach to Knowledge Generation

* Demonstrates development of skills and habits in seeking, applying, and evaluating theoretical and research knowledge relevant to the practice of psychology

Examples:

* Demonstrates understanding of research methods and techniques of data analysis
* Demonstrates research and scholarly activity, which may include presentations at conferences; participation in research teams; submission of manuscripts for publication
* Demonstrates being a critical consumer of research

#### 7B. Application of Scientific Method to Practice

* Demonstrates knowledge of application of scientific methods to evaluating practices, interventions, and programs

Examples:

* Describes how outcomes are measured in each practice activity
* Demonstrates knowledge of program evaluation

# FUNCTIONAL CLUSTERS AND COMPETENCIES

## IV. APPLICATION

### 8. Evidence-Based Practice: Integration of research and clinical expertise in the context of patient factors.

#### 8A. Knowledge and Application of Evidence-Based Practice

* Applies knowledge of evidence-based practice, including empirical bases of assessment, intervention, and other psychological applications, clinical expertise, and client preferences

Examples:

* Demonstrates knowledge of interventions and explanations for their use based on EBP
* Demonstrates the ability to select interventions, assessment tools, and consultation methods for different problems and populations related to the practice setting
* Investigates existing literature related to problems and client issues
* Writes a statement of own theoretical perspective regarding intervention strategies
* Creates a treatment plan that reflects successful integration of empirical findings, clinical judgment, and client preferences

### 9. Assessment: Assessment and diagnosis of problems, capabilities and issues associated with individuals, groups, and/or organizations.

#### 9A. Knowledge of Measurement and Psychometrics

* Selects assessment measures with attention to issues of reliability and validity

Examples:

* Identifies appropriate assessment measures for cases seen at practice site
* Consults with supervisor regarding selection of assessment measures

#### 9B. Knowledge of Assessment Methods

* Demonstrates awareness of the strengths and limitations of administration, scoring and interpretation of traditional assessment measures as well as related technological advances. Guards against decision-making biases, distinguishing aspects of assessment that are subjective from those that are objective.

Examples:

* Demonstrates intermediate level ability to accurately select, administer, score and interpret assessment tools with client populations
* Collects accurate and relevant data from structured and semi-structured interviews and mini-mental status exams

#### 9C. Application of Assessment Methods

* Selects appropriate assessment measures to answer diagnostic question

Examples:

* Selects assessment tools that reflect awareness of patient population served at a given practice site
* Demonstrates ability to adapt environment and materials according to client needs (e.g., lighting, privacy, ambient noise)

#### 9D. Diagnosis, Conceptualization, and Recommendations

* Applies concepts of normal/abnormal behavior to case formulation and diagnosis in the context of stages of human development and diversity; utilizes systematic approaches of gathering data to inform clinical decision-making; demonstrates current knowledge and application of diagnostic classification systems; considers client strengths and psychopathology.

Examples:

* Articulates relevant developmental features and clinical symptoms as applied to presenting question
* Demonstrates ability to identify problem areas and to use concepts of differential diagnosis
* Presents cases and reports demonstrating how diagnosis is based on case material
* Makes clinical decisions based on connections between diagnoses, hypotheses and recommendations

#### 9E. Communication of Assessment Findings

* Writes assessment reports and progress notes and communicates assessment findings verbally to client

Examples:

* Writes complete psychological reports
* Works with supervisor to prepare and provide feedback regarding findings
* Reports reflect data that has been collected via interview

### 10. Intervention: Interventions designed to alleviate suffering and to promote health and well-being of individuals, groups, and/or organizations.

#### 10A. Intervention planning

* Formulates and conceptualizes cases and plans interventions utilizing at least one consistent theoretical orientation. Demonstrates ability to modify and adapt evidence-based approaches effectively when a clear evidence base is lacking.

Examples:

* Articulates a theory of change and identifies interventions to implement change, as consistent with the AAPI
* Writes case conceptualization reports and collaborative treatment plans incorporating evidence-based practices

#### 10B. Skills

* Displays clinical skills

Examples:

* Develops rapport with clients
* Develops therapeutic relationships
* Demonstrates appropriate judgment about when to consult supervisor

#### 10C. Intervention Implementation

* Implements evidence-based interventions

Examples:

* Case presentations demonstrate application of evidence-based practice
* Discusses evidence based practices during supervision

#### 10D. Progress Evaluation

* Evaluates treatment progress and modifies treatment planning as indicated, utilizing established outcome measures

Examples:

* Describes instances of lack of progress and actions taken in response
* Demonstrates ability to evaluate treatment progress in context of evidence based interventions

### 11. Consultation: The ability to provide expert guidance or professional assistance in response to a client’s needs or goals.

#### 11A. Role of Consultant

* Demonstrates knowledge of the consultant’s role and its unique features as distinguished from other professional roles (such as therapist, supervisor, teacher)

Examples:

* Is able to compare and contrast consultation, clinical, and supervision roles
* Is able to describe a consultant's role in a hypothetical professional activity

#### 11B. Addressing Referral Question

* Demonstrates knowledge of and ability to select appropriate means of assessment to answer referral questions

Examples:

* Implements systematic approach to data collection in a consultative role
* Identifies sources and types of assessment tools

#### 11C. Communication of Consultation Findings

* Identifies literature and knowledge about process of informing consultee of assessment findings

Examples:

* Identifies appropriate approaches and processes for providing written and verbal feedback and recommendations to consultee
* Carries out a mock presentation of findings

#### 11D. Application of Consultation Methods

* Identifies literature relevant to consultation methods (assessment and intervention) within systems, clients, or settings

Examples:

* Identifies appropriate interventions based on consultation assessment findings
* Demonstrates ability to identify collaborative methods across systems, clients, or settings

## V. EDUCATION

### 12. Teaching: Providing instruction, disseminating knowledge, and evaluating acquisition of knowledge and skill in professional psychology.

#### 12A. Knowledge

* Demonstrates awareness of theories of learning and how they impact teaching

Examples:

* Observes differences in teaching styles and need for response to different learning skills
* Is able to articulate awareness of body of knowledge to inform teaching and learning

#### 12B. Skills

* Demonstrates knowledge of application of teaching methods

Examples:

* Demonstrates example of application of teaching method
* Organizes and presents information related to a topic

### 13. Supervision: Supervision and training in the professional knowledge base of enhancing and monitoring the professional functioning of others.

#### 13A. Expectations and Roles

* Demonstrates knowledge of, purpose for, and roles in supervision

Examples:

* Identifies roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and supervisee in the supervision process
* Demonstrates understanding of supervisor and supervisee roles in relation to client
* Demonstrates understanding of vicarious liability of the supervisor

#### 13B. Skills Development

* Demonstrates knowledge of the supervision literature and how clinicians develop to be skilled professionals

Examples:

* Successfully completes coursework on supervision
* Demonstrates formation of supervisory relationship integrating theory and skills including knowledge of development, educational practice

#### 13C. Supervisory Practices

* Provides helpful supervisory input in peer and group supervision

Examples:

* Identifies core skills on which to provide feedback to peers
* Demonstrates ability to provide constructive criticism to peers

## VI. SYSTEMS

### 14. Interdisciplinary Systems: Knowledge of key issues and concepts in related disciplines. Identify and interact with professionals in multiple disciplines.

#### 14A. Knowledge of the Shared and Distinctive Contributions of Other Professions; Functioning in Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Contexts

* Demonstrates beginning, basic knowledge of the viewpoints and contributions of other professions/ professionals; demonstrates beginning knowledge of strategies that promote interdisciplinary collaboration vs. multidisciplinary functioning

Examples:

* Articulates the roles of other professions in patient care
* Awareness of various levels of education and training required for other professions involved in patient care
* Compares and contrast multidisciplinary functioning and interdisciplinary collaboration
* Describes a hypothetical case involving both interdisciplinary collaboration and multidisciplinary functioning

#### 14B. Understands how Participation in Interdisciplinary Collaboration/Consultation Enhances Outcomes

* Demonstrates knowledge of how participating in interdisciplinary collaboration/consultation can be directed toward shared goals

Examples:

* Identifies common challenges in delivering collaborative care
* Articulates examples from the literature or direct experience on benefits of delivering collaborative care

#### 14C. Respectful and Productive Relationships with Individuals from Other Professions

* Develops and maintains collaborative relationships and respect for other professionals

Examples:

* Communicates effectively with individuals from other professions
* Demonstrates knowledge of mechanisms necessary to maintain collaborative relationships

### 15. Management-Administration: Manage the direct delivery of services (DDS) and/or the administration of organizations, programs, or agencies (OPA).

#### 15A. Appraisal of Management and Leadership

* Forms autonomous judgment of organization’s management and leadership

Examples:

* Applies theories of effective management and leadership to form an evaluation of organization
* Identifies specific behaviors by management and leadership that promote or detract from organizational effectiveness

#### 15B. Management

* Demonstrates awareness of roles of management in organizations

Examples:

* Articulates understanding of management role in own organization(s)
* Responds appropriately to direction provided by managers

#### 15C. Administration

* Demonstrates knowledge of and ability to effectively function within professional settings and organizations, including compliance with policies and procedures

Examples:

* Articulates approved organizational policies and procedures
* Completes reports and other assignments promptly
* Complies with record-keeping guidelines

### 16. Advocacy: Actions targeting the impact of social, political, economic or cultural factors to promote change at the individual (client), institutional, and/or systems level

#### 16A. Empowerment

* Uses awareness of the social, political, economic or cultural factors that may impact human development in the context of service provision

Examples:

* Identifies specific barriers to client improvement, e.g., lack of access to resources
* Assists client in development of self-advocacy plans

#### 16B. Systems Change

* Promotes change to enhance the functioning of individuals

Examples:

* Identifies target issues/agencies most relevant to specific issue
* Formulates and engages in plan for action
* Demonstrates understanding of appropriate boundaries and times to advocate on behalf of client