

# Supporting the Work of Psychologists

## *-The Assistant Practitioner Workforce*

In the UK, Canada and the United States, there are well-established pathways for individuals who have completed at least an undergraduate degree in psychology to contribute to the delivery of psychological services. These roles can be broadly split into those that can be undertaken without additional post-graduate study (Assistant Psychologists and Psychometrists) and those that require additional formal training (Psychology Wellbeing Practitioner, Clinical Associate Psychologist, Certified Psychometrist).

### **Without further training: Assistant Psychologists and Psychometrists**

In the UK, the role of Assistant Psychologist has been established for more than 40 years and forms a core element of the [psychology training pathway](#). An assistant psychologist is essentially a [paraprofessional](#), undertaking work that has been directly delegated to them by a qualified psychologist, who retains overall responsibility for their work. Assistant psychologists frequently undertake such activities as:

- Delivering ‘manualised’ cognitive-behavioural and other therapies, either in a group or individual format.
- Undertaking structured/manualised history-taking or developmental assessments.
- Completing psychometric and/or cognitive assessments.
- Undertaking behavioural observations for clients with challenging behaviours.
- Undertaking service audit, research or resource development.
- Completing file reviews, where the client has an extensive medical record.

In 2022, the Association of Clinical Psychologists (ACP) released its [guidelines for the employment of assistant \(clinical\) psychologists](#), which including recommendations for supervision/oversight and appropriate client workload. The majority of assistant psychologists will either go on to formal training as a psychologist but many will go on to study to be an Associate Psychologist (see below).

In the USA and Canada, the role of [the psychometrist](#) is commonly undertaken by psychology graduates. This role is typically restricted only to the completion of psychometric/cognitive assessments under the supervision of a registered psychologist.

### **With Additional Training: the Psychology Wellbeing Practitioner, Clinical Associate Psychologist and the Certified Psychometrist.**

In the UK, as part of the NHS Talking Therapies service (formerly IAPT), many psychology graduates go on to work as a [Psychology Wellbeing Practitioner](#) (PWP). The role of the PWP is to deliver low-intensity<sup>1</sup> Cognitive-Behavioural Therapies, which typically involving the provision of guided self-help materials online or in paper form. PWPs must complete a 1-year Postgraduate Certificate, which

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<sup>1</sup> The NHS Talking Therapies service also trains [High Intensity Therapists](#), who deliver evidence-based therapies. However, to train as a High Intensity Therapist, [you must already be a qualified health professional](#).

typically involves one day per week of lectures/teaching, alongside 4 days per week working under supervision in an NHS Talking Therapies service.

The [Clinical Associate in Psychologist](#) (CAP) is a relatively newly-established role as part of the [NHS Psychology Training Pathway](#), and has been developed to bridge the gap between unqualified assistant psychologists and formally trained clinical psychologists. CAPs undergo [an 18-month Masters-level training](#), which includes, supervised practice (typically 3 days per week), teaching and private study (2 days per week). CAPs continue to be supervised by clinical psychologists but have a higher degree of autonomy than Assistant Psychologists or PWPs.

In the USA and Canada, [psychometrists](#) who go on to complete 2000+ hours of supervised practice and meet the necessary educational standards may undertake a rigorous Certified Specialist in Psychometry (CSP) examination, allowing them to be recognised by the [Board of Certified Psychometrists](#).

*The New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists is a professional association that represents the interests of more than 1800 Clinical Psychologists registered in Aotearoa. Clinical Psychologists are experts in mental wellbeing, behaviour and neurodiversity, working across a large range of specialties and employers- including Te Whatu Ora, ACC, Oranga Tamariki, Corrections, NGOs, PHOs and as private practitioners.*

*This submission was prepared by members of the College's Executive Committee, with support from experts in the field and with the direct support of our members.*