

Seminar Report ‘The Psychologist – Standards of Training for Psychologists in Poland and Europe’. Lodz, 23 April 2026

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On 23 April 2026, a seminar entitled “**The Psychologist – Standards of Training for Psychologists in Poland and Europe**” was held at the Institute of Psychology, University of Lodz. The event was organised by **the Institute of Psychology at the University of Lodz** as part of the celebrations marking the 35th anniversary of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the ongoing **European Semester of Psychology: Psychology Today – Challenges for Practice and Science**. The event was held under the patronage of: the European Federation of Psychologists’ Associations (EFPA), the Rector of the University of Lodz, the Polish Psychological Association, the Committee on Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Lodz, the Ariadna National Research Panel and the Pollster Research Institute. Among the invited guests were specialists representing Polish academic institutions: Prof. Wojciech Łukasz Dragan, PhD, Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), Jagiellonian University (UJ); Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, PhD, Professor at the University of Warmia and Mazury (UWM), UWM, Polish Psychological Association (PTP); Adam Tarnowski, PhD, Professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK), UMK, Polish Psychological Association (PTP); Dr Marta Znajmiecka, University of Lodz (UŁ), PTP. The aim of the seminar was to provide a forum for discussing the quality of training for psychologists from both a European and a national perspective.

Standards of Training for Psychologists in Poland

The issue of training standards for psychologists in Poland was presented by Prof. Wojciech Łukasz Dragan, PhD. He outlined the current situation, drawing

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attention to the significant increase in the number of psychology students, the diversity of training programmes, the lack of standardised curriculum requirements, and instances of psychology degree programmes with limited coverage of strictly psychological content. He presented a preliminary proposal for new educational standards, covering the standardisation of study programmes in line with European recommendations (including those of the EFPA), the strengthening of graduates' methodological, diagnostic and ethical competencies, the enhancement of professional mobility, and the assurance of consistency between the education system and the legal regulations governing the profession of psychologist. The structure of the proposed standards is intended to cover both general organisational principles and detailed curriculum requirements. **In conclusion, he emphasised that the standards should be viewed as a tool for bringing order to the education market, rather than a mechanism restricting the autonomy of higher education institutions.**

Standards for the Training of Psychologists in Europe

Dr hab. Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, Professor at the University of Warmia and Mazury (UWM) and member of the Polish Psychological Association (PTP), outlined European standards for the training of psychologists and the significance of the EuroPsy system in the context of preparing to practise as a psychologist. The starting point for the discussion was not so much the study programme itself, but rather the question of when a graduate of a psychology degree can be considered truly ready for responsible professional practice. The presentation concerned one of the key issues in the contemporary debate on the training of psychologists: the correlation between obtaining a degree, acquiring competences and the ability to practise the profession independently. The speaker presented the EuroPsy system as a source of inspiration and a point of reference in the discussion on training standards and a common European understanding of a psychologist's competences.

The speech focused on a review of the EuroPsy 5+1 model, described as a 'roadmap to the profession of psychology'. This model comprises 360 ECTS credits, including 300 ECTS of academic study and 60 ECTS of supervised practice, corresponding to at least 1,500 hours of work. In this framework, training does not end with the award of a degree, but encompasses the entire journey towards professional autonomy – from the academic foundation to supervised practice. The path to independent practice as a psychologist consists of three phases. The first stage consists of three years of study forming the foundation of psychological training, covering the main theories, methodology, ethics and the fundamentals of related disciplines. This forms the core of psychological knowledge. The second phase, covering the fourth and fifth years of study, is dedicated to deepening knowledge, developing research skills and gaining initial practical experience. The most crucial distinction seems to be that between a Master's degree and full professional autonomy. Completing one's studies signifies the acquisition of the foundations of knowledge, methodology and ethics, but does not imply full readiness to practise

the profession. This requires undergoing supervised practical training, which constitutes the third phase of education. During this time, a young psychologist can consult on their work and share responsibility with a supervisor, learning their professional role in real-world conditions. Only upon completion of this stage can one speak of readiness for independent practice.

It follows from the arguments presented in this paper that it is crucial in Poland to shift from thinking about the training of psychologists in terms of completing a degree to a holistic pathway leading to responsible professional autonomy. This means, firstly, making a clear distinction between a Master's degree and readiness for independent practice; secondly, separating student placements from the one-year supervised placement; and thirdly, designing study programmes in a way that enables the development of knowledge, competences, ethical attitudes and the ability to act reflectively within the profession.

Dr hab. Adam Tarnowski, Professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK) and member of the Polish Psychological Association (PTP), presented a structured model of professional competences, based on the premise that a psychologist's professionalism stems from the synergy of theoretical knowledge, practical skills and ethical attitudes. He divided competences into two main categories. Functional competences relate to specific actions undertaken by a psychologist (what a psychologist does). These encompass the problem-solving cycle – from identifying needs and establishing a contract, through planning and implementing an intervention, to evaluating its outcomes. Core competences describe the way in which a psychologist carries out their work; they focus on ethics, communication, professional relationships and continuous professional development.

In his presentation, he referred to the cubic model developed by Rodolf and colleagues, which describes a three-dimensional structure of competences, taking into account the functional sphere, stages of professional development and the context of practice, including the specific nature of the field of practice. This model defines two key stages in a psychologist's professional development: readiness for supervised practice, achieved upon completion of a master's degree, and readiness for independent practice, attained after completing a professional placement. Emphasis has been placed on the role of supporting competences, which are essential for providing safe support to others: looking after one's own mental wellbeing and ensuring a healthy work environment.

The introduction of a uniform competency model in line with EFPA serves to standardise the psychology profession across European countries. It enables an objective assessment of readiness to practise the profession, facilitates professional mobility through the EuroPsy register, and, above all, guarantees the high quality of services provided to clients by closely linking psychological practice with scientific evidence (Evidence-Based Practice).

Supervised Placement Under the EuroPsy Model

Dr hab. Adam Tarnowski, Professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK) and member of the Polish Psychological Association (PTP), also outlined the

principles of the supervised placement, which is an essential part of the process of obtaining the European Certificate of Psychology (EuroPsy). The placement is intended for individuals holding a Master's degree in psychology obtained through a five-year course of study and comprises 1,500 hours of work, including 50 hours of direct supervision. A psychologist with at least five years' professional experience and training in supervision may act as a supervisor. They fulfil the role of 'guardian of the profession', whilst also acting as a facilitator, expert and coach supporting the trainee's development.

The internship programme focuses on the development of functional competencies, including the identification of needs, the planning and implementation of interventions, and evaluation, as well as core competencies, which include ethics, communication, professional development, self-reflection and self-care. The evaluation process comprises a formative assessment, carried out halfway through the placement, and a summative assessment, carried out at the end of the placement. Competences are assessed in terms of the trainee's ability to solve professional problems independently. The collaboration between the trainee and the supervisor is governed by a formal contract, which sets out the objectives, the terms of meetings and the mutual obligations of the parties, including compliance with the PTP and EFPA Codes of Ethics. The placement concludes with the supervisor issuing a report, which enables the trainee to apply for a certificate.

The speaker emphasised that **the supervised internship under the EuroPsy model is a structured programme based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle**. Its aim is to shape the professional identity of the psychologist, ensure the high quality of services provided and the safety of clients, as well as to promote continuous professional development.

Social Perception of the Psychology Profession in Poland

The findings of the research team comprising: Prof. Eleonora Bielawska-Batorowicz, Dr hab. Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz, Professor at the University of Warmia and Mazury (UWM), Polish Psychological Association (PTP), Dr hab. Katarzyna Nowakowska-Domagala, Professor at the University of Lodz (UŁ), Dr Marta Znajmiecka (UŁ) and Dr Tomasz Baran (Ariadna Research Panel), were presented by Dr Marta Znajmiecka, Institute of Psychology, University of Lodz (UŁ), Polish Psychological Association (PTP). The presentation focused on the social perception of the profession of psychologist in Poland, the level of trust in this profession, and expectations regarding its formal regulation, considered in the context of educational standards and ethical responsibility.

The survey was conducted in June 2025 by the Ariadna Research Panel on a representative sample of Poles ($N = 1,146$). It took the form of a holistic social assessment, combining socio-demographic representativeness with an analysis of attitudes, knowledge and willingness to use innovative forms of support.

The presentation emphasised that psychology is a profession of public trust, the effectiveness of which depends not only on the specialist's knowledge and skills, but also on how they are perceived by society. Attention was drawn to the

phenomenon of the ‘clinicalisation of the profession’, which involves equating psychologists exclusively with specialists dealing with mental health issues, whilst there is little awareness of the broader areas of application of psychology, such as occupational, sports or organisational psychology. The results indicate that only 27% of the adults surveyed stated that they had ever sought the help of a psychologist, whilst for 73% of respondents, seeking professional psychological help had not yet been a personal experience. Despite the high popularity of psychology as a discipline, the survey revealed limited motivation to use psychological services – 26% of respondents stated that they would never consider such help under any circumstances.

An analysis of respondents’ knowledge regarding remote forms of psychological support was also presented. 41% of those surveyed had heard of e-therapy, whilst 59% were not aware of this form of support. When assessing the effectiveness of online consultations, cognitive uncertainty predominates: 49% of respondents have no opinion on the matter, 34% consider them less effective than face-to-face meetings, 12% consider them equally effective, and only 5% consider them more effective. Assuming both forms cost the same, 64% of respondents prefer face-to-face contact, 10% prefer the online form, whilst 26% remain undecided, which indicates limited trust in remote forms of support. Awareness of and acceptance towards artificial intelligence-based tools were also analysed. Only 16% of respondents had heard of therapeutic chatbots. 16% of respondents declared a willingness to use an AI-based therapeutic programme, 60% expressed a negative attitude, and 23% remained undecided.

The report also discussed the importance of the profession of psychologist in various areas of public and private life, public perceptions regarding the prestige of the profession and the attractiveness of this career path, as well as expectations regarding clearly defined educational standards and qualification requirements.

Summary

The seminar contributed to the ongoing debate on the future of psychology education in Poland. The papers presented enabled a comparison of national approaches with the EuroPsy standards, highlighting both current challenges and potential directions for systemic change. What was particularly valuable was the combination of regulatory (training standards), professional (supervised practice, the EFPA competency model) and societal (empirical research on the perception of the psychology profession) perspectives, which enabled a multifaceted view of the issue of the profession’s professionalisation. The conclusions drawn from the seminar point to the need for further cooperation between the academic community, professional organisations and regulatory bodies in order to develop a coherent model for the training of psychologists, combining high-quality academic education with systematic preparation for independent professional practice.