

## Trainees Writing Diagnostic Assessment Reports for Specific Learning Difficulties

This policy is to clarify the circumstances in which trainees on accredited courses can gain experience within their training environment in writing diagnostic assessments for those with possible specific learning difficulties (SpLDs). Individuals are recognised as trainees only when they are on a formal accredited course leading to either HCPC registration or a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate\*.

Graduates, e.g. individuals with a level 5 psychology degree or SpLD teaching qualification, must not carry out diagnostic assessments for students with possible specific learning difficulties unless they are currently undergoing formal accredited training leading to either HCPC registration or a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate.

- A trainee carrying out an assessment while on a training course, where the report produced could later be submitted for application for the DSA, must be supervised by the course or workplace supervising tutor. Psychologists undergoing formal accredited training leading to HCPC registration can conduct assessments without direct observation, provided their HCPC registered supervisor is able to take responsibility for the quality of the assessment process, the accuracy of the diagnostic conclusions and the written report.
- **Under no circumstances** must assessment reports written for application for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) or other application be **signed solely as the work of trainee assessors or graduates** prior to their achievement of HCPC registration or SpLD assessment practising certificate (APC) unless it is written within the accredited training course and signed by the supervisor taking responsibility for the report, as in the wording below.
- Reports must never be signed by a trainee assessor with 'registration pending' or 'APC pending', nor can reports written before the assessor has been awarded the HCPC registration or APC number have this registration or award information added to the report after the event.

A trainee assessor's full diagnostic assessment report can ONLY be accepted if the following conditions have been met:

1. The qualified supervising tutor or work placement supervisor has reviewed the report and ensured that the report meets the appropriate standards set by SASC.

2. The qualified supervising tutor or placement supervisor signs the report, giving their APC number or HCPC registration and contact details. The trainee assessor's name is required on the report but **the qualified supervising tutor/ placement supervisor takes full responsibility for the report and its diagnostic outcome.**
3. The details are provided of the course on which the trainee is enrolled, including title, start date and duration at the time the assessment was conducted.

The supervisor will be registered with the HCPC and takes legal responsibility for the quality of the assessment, report and conclusions.

Both psychologist trainee and supervisor are responsible for adhering to the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct which expects psychologists to practice within their own area of competence. In terms of delivering SpLD assessments, both must have undertaken relevant training and research to acquire this skill.

### Where a trainee has contributed to or produced a report:

For the avoidance of doubt, SASC is now requiring the specific wording to be used to confirm trainees' reports are used only where the trainee is actively enrolled on an authorised course leading to an Assessment Practising Certificate or HCPC certification.

### **The following statement is required on the front sheet of reports which have involved an assistant / trainee psychologist:**

The report was produced by a psychologist-in-training, under supervision from an HCPC registered psychologist.

Name of Trainee:

RQTU number:

Trainee signature:

Name of Supervisor:

HCPC number:

Programme of training and duration<sup>1</sup>:

The supervising psychologist certifies that:

- This assessment has been conducted and the report written in accordance with the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) current guidelines. *(For all)*

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Level 8 Qualification Psychology, Professional Doctorate in Psychology; two, three or four years.  
Trainees writing reports Jan 2020      SASC Guidance      2 of 5

- This assessment has been conducted and the report written in accordance with the British Psychological Society current guidelines for the assessment of adults (BPS, 2017) *(optional)*
- Appropriate supervision has been provided of the administration, scoring and interpretation of the assessments used. *(For all)*
- The tests were administered in a confidential, face-to-face setting. *(For all)*
- The supervising psychologist takes full responsibility for the quality of the assessment process, the report and its diagnostic outcome. *(For all)*

Supervising psychologist's signature *(For all)*:

Any concerns or difficulties with the content of this report must be sent initially to the supervisor and, failing resolution individuals can:

1. Follow the complaints procedure within the organisation where applicable
2. Contact SASC or the HCPC directly for advice.

## For Specialist Teacher/Assessors in Training

The report was produced by a specialist teacher assessor-in-training, under supervision from a qualified supervisor in the context of a formal accredited training course leading to a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate.

Name of Trainee:

Trainee signature:

Programme of training and duration:

Name of Supervisor:

Supervisor's APC or HCPC number:

**The supervising tutor** certifies that

- this assessment has been conducted and the report written in accordance with the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) current guidelines for diagnostic assessment and report writing. *(For all)*
- this assessment has been conducted and the report written in accordance with the British Psychological Society current guidelines for assessment of adults with specific cognitive difficulties (BPS 2017). *(For BPS psychologists)*
- appropriate supervision has been provided of the administration, scoring and interpretation of all the assessments used in this assessment report.
- the tests were administered in a confidential face-to-face setting.

- The supervising tutor takes full responsibility for the quality of the assessment process, the written report and its diagnostic outcome.

### **Tutor's Signature:**

Any concerns or difficulties with the content of this report must be sent initially to the supervisor and, failing resolution individuals can:

1. Follow the complaints procedure within the organisation where applicable
2. Contact SASC or the HCPC directly for advice

\* Acceptable accredited courses for psychologists are those listed on the HCPC Register of Approved Education and Training Programmes [e.g. Level 8 Qualification Psychology, Professional Doctorate in Psychology; two, three or four years.], and for specialist teacher assessors are courses accredited by SASC or for AMBDA. It is highly recommended that psychologists carrying out diagnostic assessments for the purposes of identifying a SpLD will also have followed a training course on SpLD.

### **Unsupervised trainee produced reports**

There may be circumstances in specialist teacher assessor training where a trainee assessor's assessment has not been observed nor the report fully supervised or officially signed off by the supervising tutor. In these circumstances the report **cannot** be used for DSA purposes. The trainee statements should be clear. An example of statements to use is below:

This report is a training report, for academic purposes. Whilst useful in informing teaching and learning, the report is not admissible for DSA purposes now or in future.

SASC advise that an informed consent pro forma for parents/guardians/schools/ also include information to this effect to avoid any confusion about the purpose to reports produced in training.

### **Trainees carrying out assessments.**

A trainee carrying out an assessment while on a training course, where the report produced could later be submitted for application for the DSA, must be supervised in full by the course or workplace supervising tutor.

Under no circumstances must assessment reports written for application for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) or other application outside their training course be signed as the work of trainee assessors or graduates prior to their achievement of a SpLD assessment practising certificate (APC) or HCPC registration.

Reports must never be signed by a trainee assessor with 'APC pending' or 'registration pending,' nor can reports written before the assessor has been awarded the APC number or HCPC registration have this registration or award information added to the report after the event.

For the avoidance of doubt, SASC is requiring specific wording to be used to confirm trainees' reports are used only where the trainee is actively enrolled on an authorised course leading to an Assessment Practising Certificate or HCPC certification. This wording also includes details of the course on which the trainee is enrolled at the time the assessment was conducted as specified above.