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The Australian Society for Psychological Medicine

Applying for Fellowship

This document contains information for applicants for Fellowship of the Australian Society for Psychological Medicine.

The contents of this document may be modified by the Committee of the Australian Society for Psychological Medicine at its discretion. Applicants should ensure that they consult the most recent version of the Handbook.

Fellowship of the Society has been established as a method of recognising the qualifications and experience of members who have achieved a high level of expertise in the field of psychological medicine. Fellowship is open to registered medical practitioners who are current financial members of the Australian Society for Psychological Medicine and who spend a substantial amount of their time in the clinical practice of psychological medicine.

Society Members may apply to the Fellowship Committee for assistance to determine their eligibility for Fellowship. Members need to provide the Fellowship Committee with details of their qualifications and experience and an account of their current clinical practice, offering appropriate documentary evidence.

Qualifying for Fellowship

A. Fellowship Requirements

A applicant for Fellowship is required to:

be a medical practitioner registered in Australia

work in psychological medicine

hold comprehensive tertiary qualifications in psychological medicine, psychiatry, or psychology,

be a financial member of the Society.

B. Current Practice Requirements

The Society requires that an applicant for Fellowship be working in an area of psychological medicine and have at least five years' experience in this discipline. This claim needs to be substantiated by colleagues familiar with the applicant's work.

C. Documentation Required with Fellowship Applications

An application to the Fellowship Committee must include:

1. A completed Fellowship Application Form;
2. Evidence of current medical registration for practise in Australia;
3. A letter from two colleagues supporting the applicant's claim that s/he is currently working in the area of Psychological Medicine. A colleague would usually be a general practitioner, clinical psychologist, social worker or psychiatrist. A referee's letter must state clearly the qualifications of the referee as well as his or her personal and professional relationship to the applicant. The letter should also contain a clear statement of the referee's knowledge of the type of clinical practice undertaken by the applicant, as well as information about the proportion of the applicant's current practice which is dedicated to psychological medicine.
4. Photocopies of relevant postgraduate and undergraduate qualifications

Referees will be contacted personally by a member of the Fellowship Committee. Photocopies should be certified as true copies of the original documents by a medical practitioner who is not a relative of the applicant. The certification should be signed with the person's professional qualification, name and contact details.

How to Apply

Applications should be made in writing with all appropriate documentation and fees to:

**The Secretary
Australian Society for Psychological Medicine
PO Box 4098
Homebush South NSW 2140**

What to Expect

The secretariat processes applications and forwards them to the Fellowship Committee for review. IF you are not successful, you will be notified of the Committee's reasons for deciding not to approve the application and advised on an appropriate course of action should you wish your application to be reconsidered.

This advice will be based on your certified prior learning and experience.

Overall Requirements for Society Assessment

Core Curriculum

Applicants are expected to display skill and knowledge in the diagnosis and management of common problems met in the practice of psychological medicine which include the following:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Suicide
- Self harming behaviour
- Psychoses
- Bipolar disorder
- Personality disorders
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Sleep disturbance
- Relationship and interpersonal difficulties
- Child behaviour problems
- Grief and loss
- Acute and chronic stress disorders
- Adjustment disorders
- Somatisation
- Eating disorders and obesity
- Issues of adolescence, midlife and old age
- Dementia
- Organic brain syndromes
- Psychological effects of physical illness and disability.

Core Expectations for Society Assessment

The course requirements for any training undertaken by applicants for Fellowship should have included:

1. Knowledge of and willingness to consider a range of evidence-based therapeutic options
2. skill in diagnostic formulation
3. a high level of skill in at least one evidence-based therapeutic modality
4. good communication skills (with patients colleagues and family, both verbal and written)
5. knowledge of pharmacological treatments
6. an understanding of the relationship between physical and psychological problems including the impact of treatment across both domains
7. knowledge of the psychological implications of physical problems and the somatic aspects of psychological problems
8. an understanding of transference and counter-transference issues
9. an understanding of the impact of the special needs of the disabled
10. an understanding of the ethics of professional practice in relation to a broad range of professional experience including professional, family and community liaison, maintenance of appropriate doctor-patient boundaries, refusal of treatment by the practitioner, patient threats to self and others, patient non-compliance and dealing with impaired practitioners
11. an understanding of legal responsibilities
12. awareness of role and influence of pharmaceutical companies in the practice of psychological medicine
13. an understanding of the role of supervision in the practice of psychological medicine
14. evidence of participation in quality assurance and continuing professional development
15. skills in reflection and self appraisal
16. insight into the way the practitioner's own health and well-being impact on his/her professional practice and skills in self care
17. knowledge of personal limitations in a professional, personal, moral, social and cultural sense
18. an understanding of the epidemiology and social implications of psychological/psychiatric problems
19. evidence of ability to involve and liaise with other professionals in relation to patient care
20. skills in patient advocacy
21. knowledge of services available in the wider community which can be used as an adjunct to psychological/medical care
22. awareness of the impact of culture
23. willingness ability to explore the problem within the patient's context, including an understanding of the impact of family dynamics
24. competence in the management of psychological emergencies.

Fellowship requirements

In order to qualify for Fellowship of the Australian Society for Psychological Medicine (FASPM) you are required to show evidence of completion of postgraduate studies which focus on the practice of psychological medicine. Although most applicants are general practitioners, other doctors, notably those who provide mental health care in hospitals and community clinics, are also eligible.

Acceptable qualifications include a graduate certificate, graduate diplomas or master's degree in psychological medicine, clinical psychology, general practice psychiatry or psychotherapy from an accredited academic institution, normally a university or recognised institute such as the NSW Institute of Psychiatry.

Courses are usually a minimum of one year full time or three years' part time study, but length and quality of each applicant's clinical experience are also taken into consideration.

You need to provide details of course content and structure to ensure that the course you have undertaken meets the criteria outlined below. The onus is on you to demonstrate the suitability of your qualification.

Training Standards

Overall Requirements

1. The course you have completed provides a clear statement of the philosophy behind the program of training
2. The course outline includes a description of the skills and competencies to be achieved.
3. The course provides sound grounding both in the relevant theoretical basis of psychological medicine and in the acquisition of clinical skills.

Course Content

Theory

- The course provides a broad theoretical base in psychological medicine and models of psychological assessment and intervention;
- Ethical issues and competencies are addressed within the course.

Clinical Practice

- The course provides for training for, and assessment of, interpersonal communication;
- There is a substantial experiential component that includes modeling by trainers, supervised practice with clients (by direct observation, audio recording or video recording, including the use of role-play.)

Assessment

- The course includes the assessment of skills by live or recorded clinical sessions.
- The course ensures that students are provided with appropriate feedback.
- The course includes the formal assessment of knowledge and clinical skills in the form of class participation, workplace-based assessment, written or oral examinations and/or written assignments,.

3. Interview

Although the requirements outlined above are usually sufficient for assessing applications for Fellowship, the Committee reserves the right to request a formal interview with an applicant if evidence in support of the application is not clear cut. Interviews are of approximately 30 minutes duration and focus on the areas outlined as core curriculum.

(The Society endeavours as far as possible to accommodate the needs of the applicants with regard to timing and location of the interviews but the final onus is on the applicant to make him/herself available for interview before the Annual General Meeting of the in the year after an Invitation for interview has been accepted.)

Applications for consideration for Fellowship can be made at any time.

Costs

Application fee is \$250.00.

Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal the committee's decision by writing to the Society's Assessment Committee.

Continuing Professional Development

Fellows of the Australian Society for Psychological Medicine must participate in quality assurance and continuing professional development relevant to the practice of psychological medicine. This will normally be done via the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine. You will be asked to provide evidence of participation in QI/CPD when you renew your membership each year.

The address for all correspondence is:

The Secretariat
Australian Society for Psychological Medicine
PO Box 4098
Homebush South NSW 2140