

## Work Plan 2012/13

(October 2012)

The Board of Educational Affairs met for the first time in January 2012. Due to this late date and changes in the membership during the first half of this year the development of the first work plan took more time than expected. Therefore, the present plan comprises goals that will direct our work in 2012 and 2013.

### 1. Foundations

#### 1.1 Task definition

In 2011 the General Assembly of the EFPA decided to found a Board of Educational Affairs (BEA). The EFPA president Robert Roe described the assignment in his presentation at the Board's first meeting as follows:

- "EFPA needs a permanent body ('Board') that will monitor and assess developments in the teaching of psychology, develop standards, and give advice on issues of concern to students and teachers.
- The focus shall be on the academic education of psychology at all levels (BA, MA, PhD, post-graduate), but the teaching of psychology to other professions and the general public shall also be included."

#### 1.2 Work plan description

The BEA is to present annual work plans. The first (2012) should include:

- "an inventory of issues related to the implementation of the Bologna system in the field of psychology;
- an inventory of issues related to the teaching of psychology to other professions"

#### 1.3 Reference model

The BEA members discussed the EFPA reference model (Figure 1) and chose this model as a starting point for their work. The reference model is a representation of possibilities where and in which form psychology is taught in the educational system.

## 2. Framework

Consistent with the Board's assignment the members interpret "educational affairs" in two perspectives. In the *internal perspective* educational affairs refer to where, what, and how psychology is taught to students who want to become psychologists ("education in psychology"). This perspective is also taken by the EFPA reference model. The *external perspective* refers to how psychological knowledge becomes available in society ("psychology in education"). This perspective is not restricted to fully educated psychologists and their psychological services. There are multiple other ways how psychological knowledge and skills may influence society and everyday life. This perspective is only implicitly covered by the reference model.

The Board's superordinate criterion for identifying topics to be discussed and elaborated is the efficiency with which psychological knowledge can be transferred to societal processes. We are convinced that (a) increased visibility of psychology as science and scientifically based practice can lead to more realistic expectations toward psychology and psychological services and (b) increased usage and appreciation of psychological knowledge would be beneficial for several domains of human behavior – from the implementation of political decisions to the modification of parental behavior, to name just two examples.

## 3. Current and planned activities

### 3.1 Re-interpreting the reference model

The EFPA reference model will be elaborated so that it represents possible pathways on which psychological knowledge and expertise enters society and everyday life. These paths will be described and evaluated with regard to their efficiency that is the degree to which psychology can influence society. Based on this evaluation we will select critical topics of the most efficient paths for closer analysis. In this selection process we will continue distinguishing between the education-in-psychology perspective and the psychology-in-education perspective.

Currently, seven different paths on which psychology may influence society are discussed (Figure 2). This list is neither complete nor exhaustive:

- EuroPsy path (EP): Standard track for students who want to work as professional psychologists; bachelor and master degree in psychology with subsequent professional practice.
- Research path (R): Standard track for students who want to work in a psychology-related research environment; bachelor and master degree in psychology with subsequent PhD-studies.
- Professional services path (PS): Professional psychologists, mainly from the EP path supply individuals or organizations with psychological services.
- Teaching path (T): Psychologist mainly from the EP and R path contribute to educating students in secondary schools, bachelor and master studies in psychology. Psychologists from the R path contribute with their research results to future psychology curricula.

- Psychological literacy path (PL): Students in secondary schools and bachelor studies are educated in psychology. Irrespective of their further professional development psychological knowledge may influence their professional and private lives.
- Other professions path I (OP I): Students who earned a bachelor degree in psychology may continue in non-psychology master studies and supply individuals or organizations with professional services that are not genuinely psychological although they have substantial psychological background knowledge and skills.
- Other professions path II (OP II): Students who earned a bachelor or a bachelor and master degree in other disciplines than psychology may attend selected psychology courses and carry out their professional activities with a modest degree of psychological background knowledge.

#### **Delivery to be expected (1):**

Modified and annotated reference model

### **3.2 Topics related to paths of “education in psychology”**

In most European countries, the Bologna reform caused fundamental changes in the education in psychology. To what extent these changes were beneficial or detrimental is still being debated. We are aware of the fact that what is evaluated as an advantage or disadvantage may differ from country to country, even from university to university. Moreover, the reiteration of problems resulting from the Bologna reform is not always productive. Therefore, the BEA decided not to provide such an evaluation but to initiate a discussion about what *criteria* could be used to decide whether or not (and in which respects) Bologna has caused advantages or disadvantages for education in psychology.

#### **Delivery to be expected (2):**

Set of criteria for evaluating in which respects education in psychology benefited from the Bologna reform or may benefit in the future

Based on these criteria education in psychology in the European countries can be investigated in order to isolate positive perspectives and potentials of the Bologna reform. Such a list can be used as a guideline for what to aspire or what to prevent in the further development of education in psychology.

#### **Delivery to be expected (3):**

Concept for a survey among EFPA’s member associations to explore the positive perspectives and potentials of the Bologna reform for psychology

Based on the results of this survey, general recommendations of how to optimize education in psychology may be discussed. As a first step in this process, the BEA is preparing a round table discussion at the European Congress of Psychology in Stockholm 2013.

One of the criteria already discussed relates to the extent the bachelor and the master degree and the EuroPsy are “clearly described, delineated and publicly accepted” (minutes of the BEA meeting April 27, 2012). Based on selective evidence the BEA agrees that the qualifications of psychology bachelors are undervalued “when it is solely perceived as the foundation training for professional psychologists” (minutes of the BEA meeting April 27, 2012). A bachelor degree in psychology may also be seen as substantially fostering psychological literacy of those who are going continue with other master studies or work in other professional fields (see paths PL and OP I). Psychological

bachelors not following the PS or R path may nevertheless profoundly contribute to using and disseminating psychological knowledge and skills in everyday live contexts. Based on these considerations the BEA decided to contribute to a more positive positioning of psychology bachelors by emphasizing their qualifications and their possible influence in not genuinely psychological contexts of work or private life. Therefore, this project relates also to point 3.3.

**Delivery to be expected (4):**

A description of the knowledge and skills of psychology bachelors relevant to various aspects of life

### **3.3 Topics related to paths of “psychology in education”**

The discussion has concentrated on the question to which professions / scientific disciplines psychology can and should contribute (OP II). First, the BEA has been discussing criteria according to which a priority list can be created showing to which professions / studies psychological contributions are evaluated as most important.

**Delivery to be expected (5):**

A set of criteria which can be used to decide to which professions / scientific disciplines psychological contributions in education are most important

Based on the currently discussed criteria the BEA is opting for a priority list including teacher education, law and medicine. Because the situation in teaching psychology in these contexts is even more unclear than in teaching psychology as a main subject, the BEA decided, as a first step, to sample practice examples. Currently, the BEA is preparing a short survey to get an impression of the varieties in teaching psychology to other professions.

**Delivery to be expected (6):**

A sample of interesting practice descriptions of how psychology can contribute to the education of prospective or experienced teachers and the study of law and medicine

Stephan Dutke  
(Convenor)

Figure 1: Reference Model (EFPA)

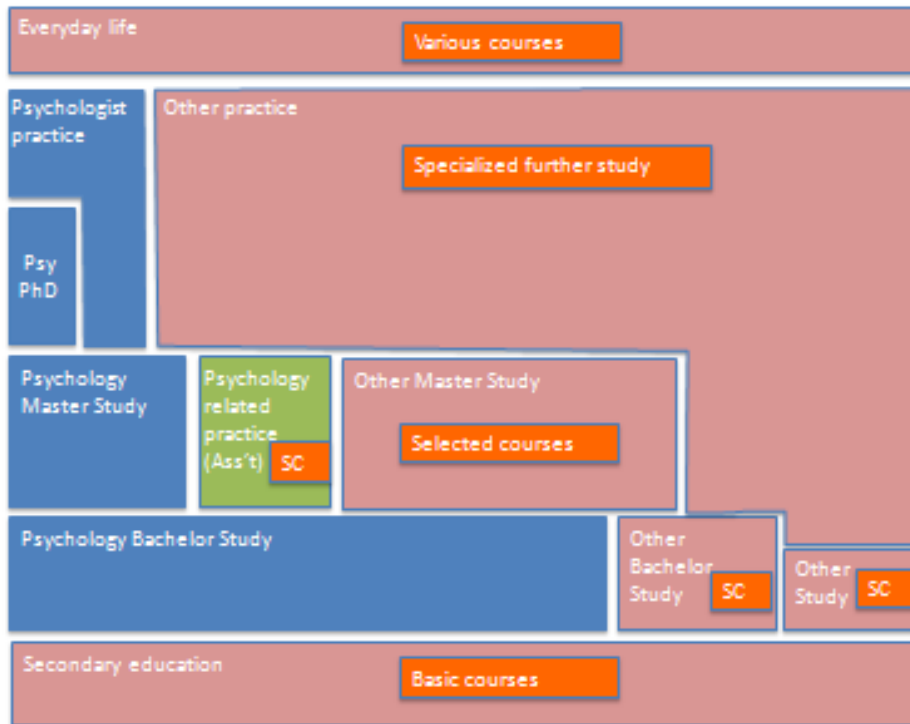


Figure 2: How psychology can affect society and everyday life

