

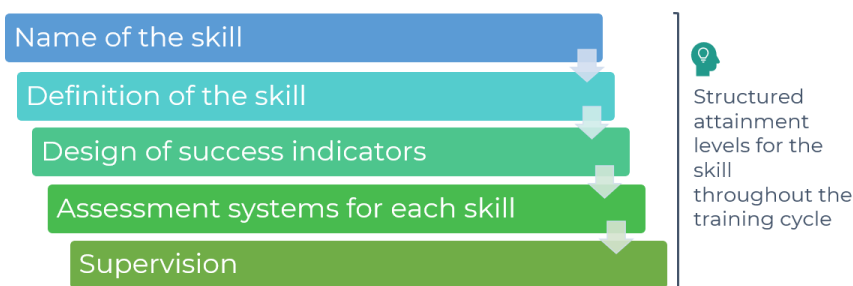
CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE WEBINAR “EMPLOYABILITY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY”

The webinar “Employability and university education in the field of Psychology” held on 17 October 2022 offered a space in which to reflect on the employability of Psychology graduates. It focused on three main points: 1) the expert perspective on how to strengthen competency-based training in Psychology bachelor’s degrees; 2) basic data on the degree programmes, alumni’s opinion of the education received and data on their employment outcomes; and 3) employers’ perspective on the adequacy of university education¹. The webinar allowed representatives of the academic world to generate a series of conclusions and proposals on how to improve the degree programmes in accordance with the information presented, based on these three main points and the experience and expertise of the participants. Below we present a summary of these conclusions and proposals for improvement.

The expert perspective. *Professional skills training in Psychology*

The webinar kicked off with a presentation by Professor Francisco J. Medina, dean of the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Seville and president of the Conference of Spanish University Deans of Psychology, who offered a diagnosis of the level of skills training in Spain’s Psychology degree programmes along with a set of proposals to strengthen this from an international perspective.

According to Professor Medina, a standardised competency- and skill-based training cycle with clear protocols should include the following elements:



¹An analysis of the basic data on the degree programmes as well as of the satisfaction, employment outcomes and employer surveys can be found in the 2022 report [*Employability and university education in the field of Psychology*](#).

In the case of Psychology, he proposed two international models as inspiration for the design of competency-based training plans: the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations **EuroPsy** certificate and the British Psychological Society **qualifications**.

Regarding the EuroPsy certificate, Professor Medina highlighted the emphasis on supervised practice, skill-based assessment and its **competency model**, developed by Professor Robert Roe in 2014.

In relation to the British Psychological Society, mention was made of the high level of standardisation of the training process of the postgraduate specialist qualifications offered by the Society, based on the supervision of professional practice.

Finally, Professor Medina made a proposal for areas of improvement to enhance competency-based training in Psychology – which is also applicable to other degree programmes:

External training placements	Planning of subjects	European Diploma Supplement	Rethinking the organisation of degree programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by competency-based processes • Training in skills for supervisors • Increase in the number of credits • Competency-based assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methodology aimed at skills acquisition • Strengthening the role of skills in subject study plans • Competency-based assessment • Introduce OSCEs across the board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a set of activities from a competency-based perspective: • Service-learning programmes • Extracurricular work placement • Volunteering (national and international) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidisciplinary approach • Teaching staff from different areas of knowledge • Integrated bachelor's degrees with gradual skill-acquisition systems

¹ Including experiential methodologies such as simulations or role-playing, case studies or problem-based learning (PBL)

² Objective and structured competency-based examinations

Proposals for the improvement of degree programmes in the field of Psychology

Following Professor Medina's presentation, AQU Catalunya presented an analysis of the available sources of information (basic data on degree programmes and satisfaction,



employment outcomes and employer surveys) with the aim of providing a diagnosis of the state of employability of Psychology graduates in Catalonia².

Subsequently, and based on the content of the presentations by Professor Medina and AQU Catalunya, a round table made up of representatives from the academic and professional worlds and alumni identified a series of diagnoses and made proposals for improvement.

² You can find the analysis in the 2022 report [Employability and university education in the field of Psychology](#)

DIAGNOSIS

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

<p>Despite being generally satisfied overall with the programme, Psychology graduates tend to be less satisfied with external placements as an activity that allows them to apply the knowledge acquired during their studies.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of external work placement hours to allow for better skills development. 2. Address the mismatch between the placement itself and students' expectations during the work placement tutoring process. The attitude with which a student approaches an experience can determine whether they perceive it as a learning opportunity or a pointless task. 3. Strengthen the professional and university worlds' ability to work in synch, making visible the learning content's applicability and relevance in the professional world in all subjects and whenever possible. 4. Increase training in the monitoring and assessment of skills for the people in charge of the work placement centres.
<p>The employer community stresses the need to improve communication and interpersonal skills, intervention with people, the detection of people's needs and the assessment of these needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design the degree programme in such a way as to ensure the gradual acquisition of the skills most in demand in the labour market throughout the degree programme. 2. Conduct seminars where certain soft skills, such as communication skills or self-reflection and self-criticism, are worked on with a small group of students. 3. Use methodologies that simulate the workplace environment in the classroom. 4. Design optional subjects that focus more on the professional angle, and increase employers' participation in these subjects. 5. Start work placement programmes as soon as possible.
<p>Despite strong demand, Psychology graduates are more likely to be unemployed and have worse employment conditions in terms of salary and contractual stability than the rest of the graduates of the Catalan Higher Education System.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To better visualise during the studies the possible professional fields in psychology apart from the clinical field. 2. Encourage entrepreneurship and training in cross-disciplinary skills, new technologies and data science, in order to improve Psychology graduates' positioning in the world of work beyond the clinical field. 3. Generate spaces where alumni with different professional backgrounds can share their experiences, where networks are generated and curiosity is encouraged.