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Joint position stand of the ISSP, FEPSAC, ASPASP, and AASP on professional accreditation

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1 Running Head: International Accreditation Position Stand

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5 **Joint Position Stand of the ISSP, FEPSAC, ASPASP, and AASP on Professional**
6 **Accreditation**

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25 **Keywords:** Cultural Sport Psychology, Europe, Historical Perspectives

26

27 Highlights for Review

28

29 1. The historical backdrop of ASPASP, FEPSAC, AASP, and ISSP has contributed to
30 their quest for improved accreditation standards.

31 2. Accreditation continues to unfold in international societies and is influenced by the
32 societal mission.

33 3. Suggestions are made for how these societies might work together to augment global
34 standards in applied sport/exercise psychology and mental training.

35

36 Abstract

37 Objectives

38 To situate the current status of accreditation in four key international societies, ASPASP,
39 FEPSAC, AASP, and ISSP, in a historical backdrop and then to draw on these approaches to
40 propose future directions and developments relating to practical standards.

41 Design

42 A review of the origins and current status of accreditation in four international sport
43 psychology societies is utilized to situate the recent prominence of professional standards and
44 the importance of these in our global professional community. This review is written
45 temporally from past, to present, to future prospects.

46 Method

47 A presentation of societal accreditation foci is situated temporally using the following
48 structure: (a) emergence and historical backdrop from each society, (b) emergence and
49 reasoning for accreditation, (c) current societal standards/status of accreditation, (d) future
50 developments in the society's accreditation system, and (e) reflections and recommendations
51 for global standards, with suggestions of how this might be accomplished.

52 Results

53 The presentation of scholarship is intended to serve as a form of advocacy for improved
54 accreditation standards within the global professional community. The societal perspectives
55 call for a balance between localized cultural infusion and proposed global guidelines upon
56 which professionals might meet a converged reasonable practice threshold.

57 Conclusions

58 Sport psychology accreditation is increasingly important as the applied realm of this
59 profession spans community physical activity/recreation, and developmental and
60 elite/professional sport. Accredited practices must integrate universal and local approaches.

61 Explorations into sport psychology (also comprised of exercise) credentialing are not
62 recent. There exist rich histories in multinational societies and geographic regions, spanning
63 over 30 years (e.g., <http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/about/our-history/>). Recognizing the
64 importance of accreditation has been necessary in fostering understanding about the
65 competencies needed to practice effectively in this field (see Silva, 1984). Epstein and
66 Hundert (2002) have defined competency in medical education and adopted in psychology
67 and allied professions (see Fouad et al., 2009) as “habitual and judicious use of
68 communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and
69 reflections in daily practice” (p. 226). These competences are in terms of processes and
70 outcomes meeting these standards, and vary by region and country (Tenenbaum, Lidor,
71 Papaioanno, & Samulski, 2003). Lately, there has been increased focus on international and
72 national credentialing of individual practitioners (e.g., Hutter, van der Zande, Rosier, &
73 Wylleman, 2016). The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) has aligned with
74 national certification standards, and shifted to a written examination as part of its assessment
75 (<http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/certification/become-certified/>). The European Federation
76 of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC) is underway in developing its own continental accreditation
77 (<http://www.fepsac.com/certification/>), whilst the Asian-South Pacific Association of Sport
78 Psychology (ASPASP) has implemented a free online professional course
79 (<http://www.aspasp.org/professional-development>) as a first step towards accrediting
80 practitioners in the region. Entering into this movement, the International Society of Sport
81 Psychology (<https://www.issponline.org/issp-r>) is now well underway in launching an
82 international registry of qualified professionals, based on global baseline standards. By no
83 means do the international societies reflect all of the global credentialing developments. There
84 are continental societies in Africa and South America engaged in dialog with our authors,
85 seeking minimum acceptable standards in the regions where they practice. The focus in this

86 paper is delimited to ASPASP, FEPSAC, AASP, and the ISSP, as these four societies have
87 formally undertaken forms of credentialing in the broad field of sport psychology,
88 encompassing both psychologists and sport scientists. Moreover, these four societies operate
89 at the very least at the continental level, as opposed to credentialing in a single country,
90 focusing particularly on sport psychology rather than the broader field of psychology. Sport
91 psychology is now well represented across the world, and with this expansion, formally
92 accredited practitioners have become an international focus.

93 This manuscript has been developed to spur further dialog regarding accreditation
94 standards in the domain largely defined as sport and exercise psychology, including its two
95 approaches of psychology and sport science orientations to the field. Within this manuscript,
96 the aforementioned four societies have partnered, with three societal presidents (ASPASP,
97 FEPSAC, ISSP), one society's past president (AASP) appointed by its society and two
98 colleagues centrally involved in the design of their society's educational courses engaged,
99 utilizing the following structure. Each society has discussed (a) the origins and historical
100 backdrop of its society, (b) the emergence and evolution of discussions relating to
101 accreditation, and (c) the current status of the society's actions in terms of developing or
102 revisiting its professional standards. Thereafter, the authors have engaged collaboratively in
103 the development of a synthesis, in the form of postulates. The intention is to identify the
104 convergences and divergences within and across these societies, to explore pathways to
105 augment international professional standards through credentialing.

106 **Working Terminology**

107 To better understand the diverse perspectives that have informed this international
108 discussion necessitates clarification of three key concepts: accreditation, certification, and
109 registry. These three terms have been employed in the formation of credentialing, as societies
110 have reflected upon how best to achieve suitable standards in their regions, whilst supporting

111 professional members and protecting these members' prospective clients. The most general
112 among these is accreditation; an umbrella term spanning types of professional designations.
113 The term accreditation refers to a professional benchmark to be achieved and maintained by a
114 regulatory group, such as a society, one that is usually a non-government organization
115 (Rooney & van Ostenberg, 1999). All forms of accreditation are voluntary and designed to
116 meet a reasonable standard of theoretical and practical competence (e.g., psychology, sport
117 psychology, exercise science, measurement, assessment and interpretation, ethics, see
118 Tenenbaum et al., 2003), and thereafter to further oneself in conformance with the dynamic
119 nature of an affiliated accreditation system, so as to remain current. This step is taken to
120 strengthen the public's confidence in the standards and the potency of the specific credential.
121 According to Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996), accreditation might apply to educational
122 standards within learning institutions or as discussed herein, to standards for individuals.

123 There are distinctions in sport psychology accreditation that have, or are presently
124 being chosen by associations and societies, based upon their members' nationalities. These
125 distinctions ought not to be judged as of higher or lower level standard, such as whether one
126 type might be more exacting than a second (Tenenbaum et al., 2003). There are reasons why
127 an accreditation is chosen as best suited to a society, in a given region or country.

128 Considerations might include varied qualities of formal education, access to knowledge, and
129 also the availability of professional training and mentoring, among further reasons in each
130 locale (see Hutter et al., 2016). The types of accreditation our societies focus on are non-
131 statutory, unprotected by law (i.e., certification or registry) as compared to licensure.

132 Certification has often been used interchangeably with accreditation, as both terms
133 originate from an authorized body, be it governmental or a non-governmental agency, where
134 one meets pre-established standards or criteria. However, in the case of certification, the focus
135 is narrowed to individuals as opposed to organizations. Universities might become accredited

136 by a society or association as meeting curriculum standards, whereas individuals can become
137 certified members (see Rooney & van Ostenberg, 1999). Discussions within AASP have been
138 undertaken to credential programs meeting specific standards and course content. However,
139 herein we have focused on the accreditation of individuals, given that this is where
140 developmentally the global community is presently placing its emphasis. The term registry is
141 somewhat different, referring to “the identification of individuals who have completed both
142 training and experience requirements for membership in their professional group” (Adams,
143 2006, p. 62). With these nuances, we turn to approaches within the named societies. Table 1
144 includes credentialing details developed in relation to ASPASP, FEPSAC, AASP, and ISSP.

145 **Asian-South Pacific Association of Sport Psychology (ASPASP)**

146 In 1988, at the Olympic Scientific Congress in Korea, Robert Singer, then President of
147 the ISSP, encouraged Atsushi Fujita from Japan to lead the development of an international
148 body of sport psychology in the Asian-South Pacific region. Fujita called a meeting at the
149 1988 Olympic Congress to discuss the possibility of establishing the Asian-South Pacific
150 Association of Sport Psychology (ASPASP). Atsushi Fujita, M. L. Kamlesh (India), and Miki
151 Bar-Eli (Israel) were among the delegates who attended that meeting. Then in 1989 during
152 the 7th ISSP World Congress in Singapore, ASPASP was formally established (T. Morris,
153 personal communication, March 23, 2017). Fujita was elected as the society’s first president.

154 Since its inception, ASPASP has grown steadily while remaining affiliated with the
155 world body, the ISSP. The ASPASP Managing Council is comprised of 14 members:
156 President, Past-President, three Vice-Presidents Secretary General, Treasurer, and seven
157 National Representatives. ASPASP currently has a membership with representation from 24
158 countries. ASPASP has held its official international congress every three to four years since
159 1991, with the most recent being held in Daegu, Korea in 2018.

160 The development of a robust yet workable accreditation process has progressively
161 become a central focus within ASPASP, stemming from the variability in national
162 accreditations. To date, accreditation systems across the Asian-South Pacific region have
163 ranged from highly structured and rigorous systems in some countries to completely non-
164 existent processes in others. In Australia, the accreditation system was developed by the
165 Psychology Board of Australia and approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial
166 Council. Sport and exercise psychologists must first gain general registration as a
167 psychologist and then complete the requirements for their specialist area of practice
168 endorsement. To be eligible for endorsement, a registered psychologist must have: (1) an
169 accredited doctorate in one of the approved practice areas and a minimum one year of
170 approved, supervised, full-time equivalent practice with a board approved supervisor; or (2)
171 an accredited master's degree in one of the approved practice areas, and at least two years of
172 approved, supervised, full-time practice with a board approved supervisor; or (3) another
173 qualification that in the board's opinion, is equivalent to (1) or (2).

174 The Korean Society of Sport Psychology (KSSP) developed a three-level accreditation
175 system for sport psychology consultants in 2004 and will deliver its 24th Sports Psychological
176 Counselor Qualification Training in 2018. Currently, there are more than 800 certified sport
177 psychology consultants in Korea. A Level 1 sport psychology consultant reflects accreditation
178 at the highest level, and is required to have (1) gained a doctoral degree in sport psychology
179 or a related field, or Level 2 certification; (2) completed a specific educational curriculum; (3)
180 passed the Level 1 exam; (4) completed a practicum under a certified supervisor of 200 hours,
181 delivered two oral case presentations in academic conferences; and (5) completed 50 hours of
182 workshops, seminars, and/or training courses recognized by KSSP. A Level 3 sport
183 psychology consultant needs to have (1) gained certification associated with physical
184 education or health/sport disciplines, or work experience in the sport and exercise-related field

185 for two years; or (2) be a current college student majoring in physical education and/or a
186 sport-related discipline; and (3) completed a specific educational curriculum, and (4) passed
187 the Level 3 exam.

188 The China Sport Psychology Association (CSPA), a third example, started its
189 accreditation program in 2007 when 20 sport psychologists were accredited as Level 1 sport
190 psychologists. The CSPA accreditation system also has three levels. The accreditation
191 standard for Level 1 (the highest) requires applicants to have (1) a Ph.D. degree closely
192 related to sport psychology or be in an academic position at associate professor or above; (2)
193 at least 400 hours of supervised practice; (3) at least five years of consulting experience; (4)
194 two peer-reviewed papers as first author at international level in the past three years; and (5)
195 passed an oral examination. Level 2 requires applicants to have (1) a master's degree related
196 to sport psychology or be in an academic position in this field as a lecturer; (2) more than 200
197 hours supervised practice; (3) at least two years of consulting experience; (4) two peer-
198 reviewed papers as first author at national level in the past three years ; and (5) passed an oral
199 examination. Level 3 requires (1) a bachelor degree in psychology or physical education; (2)
200 one peer reviewed paper as first author at national level; and (3) pass an oral examination.

201 **ASPASP online course.** Following from the national accreditations exemplified above,
202 discussions have been ongoing to develop more standardized criteria across Asian and South
203 Pacific countries to address discrepancies between accreditation systems across the region
204 and, in particular, to develop some form of accreditation where none current exists. ASPASP
205 has two possibilities to improve accreditation. The first option is to encourage national sport
206 psychology associations to align their accreditation system with that of their national
207 psychology association. The practice of Australian sport psychologists aligns with this model.
208 The second possibility is to set up an international accreditation system within ASPASP or
209 ISSP. ASPASP has developed an open online course in sport psychology as the first step

210 towards a more standardized accreditation. Following its release in 2015, the online course
211 *Elite Sport Performance: Psychological Perspectives* (Terry & Martin, 2015) has received
212 over 128,000 page views from 125 countries. Within the ASPASP region, the greatest
213 engagement has come from Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, and the Philippines.

214 In a 145-day period in 2015-2016, following the release of the course, 20% of the 1,007
215 enrollees received a certificate of completion having finished nine learning modules and
216 submitting a mental training program designed for one of eight hypothetical elite athletes,
217 each presenting with different performance issues. A total of 27% of learners completed all
218 modules, and 51% completed some modules. These engagement statistics exceed the mean
219 for massive open online courses (MOOCs), which typically have about a 12% completion rate
220 (Jordan, 2015). Despite minimal promotion of the course since 2016, a further 400
221 participants have enrolled. The course design (see Martin, Kelly, & Terry, 2018) promotes
222 self-paced and autonomous learning and takes a recommended 40-80 hours to complete.
223 There are opportunities for genuine choice and deeper exploration of learning concepts of
224 particular interest. Learning tasks, deadlines, and assessment requirements are kept to a
225 minimum, in recognition of the MOOC context in which attrition is never more than one click
226 away. The course and accompanying e-book, *Secrets of Asian Sport Psychology* (Terry,
227 Zhang, Kim, Morris, & Hanrahan 2014) , are both linked from the ASPASP website
228 (www.aspasp.org) and represent tangible examples of the organisation's commitment to
229 raising the standard of sport psychology services in the Asia-South Pacific region.
230 Furthermore, both *Secrets of Asian Sport Psychology* (Terry et al., 2014) and *Elite Sport*
231 *Performance: Psychological Perspectives* (Terry & Martin, 2015) are free open educational
232 resources, allowing others to use and repurpose them in line with the Creative Commons
233 licence (CC-BY; see <http://creativecommons.org.au/>) applied to both resources.

234 **Eastern and western influences on accreditation.** Cultural differences are a long-
235 standing topic of interest in psychology, which Hofstede (1980) unpacked into four
236 dimensions: individualism-collectivism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, and
237 uncertainty avoidance. Given the global nature and dynamics of cultural diversity within the
238 sporting arena, exemplified by the various sport systems and cultural characteristics in
239 training and competition, it is important to consider the contribution of diverse cultures to the
240 knowledge and understanding of sport psychology. An ongoing thrust within ASPASP has
241 been to promote culturally-specific systems of mental training implemented in the form of
242 psychological services offered to athletes participating in the Olympic Games.

243 In China, for example, the base for athlete mental skills development is a technique-
244 oriented level of psychological training, including goal-setting, relaxation, imagery,
245 biofeedback, and various other mental skills, originally from western sport psychology. At the
246 top of the system is a vision-oriented level, including calligraphy, education of Buddhism for
247 self-control, and using a dialectic approach as a way to understand the true meaning of
248 winning and losing. Multiple accounts of psychological training and consultation experiences
249 (Ding et al., 2014; Si, Yue-Li, & Chen, 2016; Zhang, 2017) have confirmed that Chinese
250 athletes benefit from both western and eastern methods in their Olympic psychological
251 preparation. The integration of diverse psychological approaches and techniques has allowed
252 practitioners throughout the ASPASP region to assist athletes with culturally diverse
253 competencies.

254 **Federation of European Sport Psychologists (FEPSAC)**

255 The European origins of sport psychology date back to people such as Wilhelm Wundt
256 (Leipzig), who published on the relationship between physical strain and mental performance
257 at the end of the 19th century (Terry, 2011). Researchers in France, Italy and Hungary were
258 interested in similar topics during that time (e.g., Bäumler, 2002; Kunath, 2003). These

259 positive developments in the field were dampened by World War I. After the end of WWI the
260 first sport psychology labs were established by Robert Werner Schulte in Berlin and P. A.
261 Rudik in Moscow. Avksenty Puni's work conducted at the lab in Leningrad in the 1930s also
262 became famous (Ryba, Stambulova & Wrisberg, 2005). However, once again, these positive
263 developments came to a halt due to World War II which nearly destroyed the continent,
264 including its research infrastructure. The development of sport psychological research was
265 further impacted after WWII when Europe was separated into two political blocks and,
266 consequently, Olympic sport was used to demonstrate superiority of political systems.

267 The European Federation of Sport Psychology was founded in 1969. One of
268 FEPSAC's goals was also to encourage networking of sport psychologists from the two
269 different political systems. The establishment of FEPSAC also allowed for an exchange
270 between the two political systems with FEPSAC presidents originating from Eastern and
271 Western systems in the first 16 years of its existence. Nevertheless, Europe's political divide
272 and language diversity made it difficult for European sport psychologists to read each other's
273 work, travel freely to attend conferences and discuss ideas about their profession. Even if the
274 language diversity and the economic imbalance within Europe remain challenging for the
275 promotion of sport psychology today, the unification of Europe has contributed with many
276 positive aspects that have enhanced the development of our field. The establishment of the
277 European Master's Program in Sport and Exercise Psychology in 1996-1997 (Vanden
278 Auweele, 2003) and later, the prestigious Erasmus Mundus Program in Sport and Exercise
279 Psychology as well as the open labor market in Europe and the unification of the study system
280 (Bologna), have all contributed to mobility within Europe. The unification of Europe and the
281 fall of the Iron Curtain have also led to the spread of English. Also, the establishment of
282 ENYSSP (European Network of Young Specialists in Sport Psychology) has contributed to
283 the international exchange of young scholars in research, practice and education. ENYSPP

284 has been much more successful than FEPSAC in recruiting MC members from Eastern
285 Europe and hosting their annual conferences in countries with a Soviet past.

286 There remains a lot to be achieved to better balance access to resources, skills and
287 knowledge exchange. This imbalance is in part caused by economic inequality, which impacts
288 access to journals, books and conferences, but it is also caused by the diversity in languages
289 spoken in Europe. Furthermore, there is an imbalance in educational opportunities for
290 practitioners. While some parts of Western Europe have sophisticated and longstanding
291 educational programs, there are still regions of Europe without educational opportunities in
292 sport psychology at their universities, and without postgraduate educational programs for
293 practitioners. Although there has been an increased focus on ensuring the quality of sport
294 psychological services, for example, in German speaking countries (Kellmann, Gröpel &
295 Beckmann, 2011), and formalized supervision has become an integral part of the education of
296 applied practitioners in many European regions (e.g., Stambulova, Johnson & Linner, 2014),
297 there are no European-wide guidelines for practitioners' formation and continuing education.

298 EFPA, the European Federation of Psychologists, established a Task Force in Sport
299 Psychology in 2011 with the goal to create a specialization in sport psychology for
300 practitioners who have a EuroPSY qualification – a European standard of education and
301 professional training in psychology that includes a 5-year university education and one year
302 of supervised practice. The FEPSAC Managing Council (MC) elected in 2015 also
303 formulated the goal to outline minimum European-wide criteria for specialists in applied sport
304 psychology. These criteria were aimed at giving guidance to colleagues from countries
305 without adequate educational opportunities and a national certification system.

306 EFPA's Task Force, however, did not manage to submit a proposal to the General
307 Assembly at the European Congress of Psychology in Amsterdam in 2017 and the Task Force
308 was subsequently terminated. Since it is currently unclear how this work under the guidance

309 of EFPA will continue, it has become even more important for FEPSAC to establish its own
310 guidelines. Since this EFPA certification/specialization would not allow practitioners with a
311 background in sport science to become certified practitioners in applied sport psychology,
312 FEPSAC embarked on establishing its own European-wide criteria for specialists in applied
313 sport psychology. This endeavor was supported by EASY (Educators in Applied Sport
314 Psychology; Hutter, 2014) who supplied information on the European educational systems in
315 sport psychology and provided extensive feedback on FEPSAC's first drafts of these criteria.

316 **FEPSAC certification.** Professional certification is a crucial element in the
317 establishment, legitimization, and reputation of a profession. The FEPSAC MC developed
318 certification guidelines for specialists in applied sport psychology, establishing a certification
319 process to distinguish these professionals from others in the marketplace (e.g., performance
320 enhancement consultants, mental skills trainers, mental coaches). The goal of this initiative is
321 to define the minimum standards that should be met by individuals in order to qualify for
322 independent practice. The certification process focuses on the standards for practitioners who
323 have an initial qualification background in sport science, psychology, or both. FEPSAC
324 believes that practitioners should have high standards of training and delivery using and
325 complementing the expertise specific to their initial training. It is also important for FEPSAC
326 that the path to certification is not only open for psychologists but also for sport scientists, as
327 is common practice in several European countries, such as Germany, France and Finland.

328 FEPSAC carefully examined several certification systems across Europe, meeting with
329 individuals and international organizations involved in certification, continuous professional
330 development, education and training, as well as legal aspects of certification, in order to
331 guarantee that best practices across Europe were upheld. The difficulties encountered during
332 this process related to the diversity of certification criteria and the varying educational
333 opportunities across Europe. Countries such as the United Kingdom offer master's degrees in

334 applied sport psychology, whereas in other countries there is no possibility to attend
335 university courses in sport psychology no certification systems exist. FEPSAC's rationale was
336 to set criteria that could be met by a large number of member countries, that would ensure a
337 minimum quality, and that would also allow members from such regions as Eastern European
338 countries to meet the certification criteria. The decision was made to focus on a minimum
339 quality level rather than the highest level so that the certification could be applied Europe-
340 wide and be inclusive of members from countries with few educational opportunities.
341 Furthermore, the decision was made to keep the costs for becoming certified as low as
342 possible and to offer reduced fees to applicants from economically disadvantaged areas.

343 ***Eligibility criteria for FEPSAC Certification.*** The eligibility criteria for FEPSAC
344 certification are based on an intensive analysis of the postgraduate certification systems in
345 European countries (Hutter et al., 2016; Wylleman, Harwood, Elbe, Reints, & Caluwé, 2009)
346 plus discussions with AASP and ISSP. Applicants for the European-wide certification are to
347 document a higher education qualification, a specialization in sport psychology, supervised
348 applied practice, a commitment to culturally-competent practice in sport and exercise
349 psychology and a commitment to ethical practice.

350 A higher education degree provides the specialist with a broad science-based
351 background knowledge, upon which to build the specialization in applied sport and exercise
352 psychology. A bachelor and master's degree or equivalent, with a minimum of a total of 240
353 ECTS (1 ECTS corresponds to 28 hours of work) is expected. The training background as a
354 whole must involve the following areas: sport science, sport psychology, or psychology. At
355 least 60 ECTS shall be in any of the three areas mentioned above as part of a master's degree.

356 The sport psychology specialization provides practitioners with science-based
357 knowledge in sport psychology and complements the initial higher education qualification
358 with knowledge of subject areas not otherwise sufficiently covered. Therefore, applicants

359 with a background in psychology and sport science need to document further education,
360 postgraduate study, or continuous professional development (CPD) totaling 30 ECTS in areas
361 of sport psychology complementary to their qualification.

362 Furthermore, applicants need to document 250 hours of practice. This should include
363 individual, group or team consultation, and educational activities in the form of applied sport
364 psychology presentations to athletes, coaches, referees, or athletes' parents. Within the above
365 documented group and individual consultations, at least 10 hours should be training and
366 competition experience, as interventions at a competition, on-site exposure, and/or
367 observation. The documented practice should be part of the supervised experience, consisting
368 of at least 50 hours. Supervision and intervention provides practitioners with the guidance of
369 other practitioners and peers who offer feedback and secures competence in the applied
370 practice of the applicant. It is encouraged to focus supervision practices on indirect
371 supervision with case management (see Watson et al., 2004). These hours should include at
372 least 50 of the 250 hours of documented practice with supervision and intervention, including
373 at least 20 hours of individual supervision with an approved supervisor, 20 hours of group
374 supervision with an approved supervisor, and a maximum of 10 hours of peer intervention of
375 documented meetings with experienced colleagues/peers in sport psychology counseling.

376 Given that FEPSAC is a European organization and this is a European-wide
377 accreditation it is important to ensure that applicants can document a European component in
378 their education and their commitment to culturally-competent practice. Hence, applicants
379 need to document international elements in their education and applied practice and to read
380 and sign their commitment to FEPSAC's position stand on culturally-competent practice in
381 sport and exercise psychology. Examples of international elements are: participation in
382 European-facing activities (e.g., active participation in European workshops, events, or
383 forums, and/or membership of a Europe-based international sport psychology society;

384 language skills other than one's native language; a period of residency abroad for at least four
385 months, or professional activity with stakeholders from different countries).

386 Additionally, applicants need to read and sign their commitment to FEPSAC's
387 position stand on ethical principles. These criteria were approved at the FEPSAC's members
388 meeting on November 28, 2017 and after that a testing phase in which candidates can submit
389 their documentation to FEPSAC will be initiated. Subsequent to a successful testing phase
390 certification shall begin in 2019.

391 **Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP)**

392 Sport psychology in North America traces to a few key contributors. Norman Triplett
393 is credited with publishing the first sport psychology (and social psychology) research article
394 in 1898 when he investigated the impact of performing a task either alone or in the presence
395 of others (i.e., social facilitation effect). Coleman Griffith is often cited as "America's First
396 Sport Psychologist" (Green, 2012). Griffith started the "Research in Athletics Laboratory" at
397 the University of Illinois in 1925, where he studied the psychology of performance within
398 athletics. In 1937, Griffith was hired by Phillip K. Wrigley to work with the Chicago Cubs,
399 with the goal of giving the team an advantage to help them win games during the 1938
400 season. Griffith also authored several books and articles that helped to advance the
401 importance of psychology within athletic performance. Following in the applied footsteps of
402 Coleman Griffith, Bruce Ogilvie is often considered the "Father of North American Applied
403 Sport Psychology" based upon his role conducting research on athletics and consulting with
404 Olympic and professional teams during the 1960s-2003 (Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

405 In the early years of sport psychology, the focus of many professionals was on
406 laboratory research, rather than applied practice with athletes (Silva, Metzler, & Lerner,
407 2011). This laboratory focus was especially evident within members of the North American
408 Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA), which was the only

409 major sport psychology professional organization in North America until 1986. In 1986, the
410 Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP; now Association
411 for Applied Sport Psychology, AASP) was formed, followed closely by Division 47 of the
412 American Psychological Association, also founded in 1986. A large impetus for the formation
413 of AAASP occurred in 1984, when NASPSPA voted not to address issues related to the
414 practice of applied sport psychology (Silva et al., 2011).

415 AAASP was formed to promote science and ethical practice in the field of sport and
416 exercise psychology, while providing an opportunity for individuals to share information
417 related to theory development, research, and the provision of psychological services to
418 consumers. AASP has dedicated a great deal of effort and assumed a great deal of
419 accountability towards the goal of advancing the work of practitioners with the goal of
420 improving the performances of individuals across a broad array of performance settings.
421 Certification of applied practitioners and accreditation of graduate programs to effectively
422 train future professionals were goals of the organization from its inception (Weinberg, 1989).
423 The process of codifying the standards of professional preparation and practice in sport
424 psychology has been met with attention and controversy. Within AAASP, the development of
425 a certification program was made difficult by the need to serve those who were working and
426 those who wished to enter the profession (Zizzi, Zaichkowsky & Perna, 2002).

427 **AASP certification.** AASP's certification program was approved in 1989 during its
428 annual conference in Seattle, Washington. However, the certification program officially began
429 in 1992. The credential mark was set as "Certified Consultant – Association for the
430 Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology" (CC-AAASP). While the preferred title was
431 "sport psychologist" or "sport psychology consultant", there was concern about violating state
432 or provincial laws (Zizzi et al., 2002), which led the organization to use CC-AAASP. AAASP
433 wanted to create a certification to identify professionals who possessed the minimal

434 competencies and experiences necessary to practice (Silva et al., 2011). This initial program
435 involved compromise between sport science and psychology professionals to develop a
436 system that satisfied both groups. Then, the program committee certified an initial group of
437 members using a grand parenting system, and developed a process for certifying practitioners.

438 The initial certification utilized a portfolio review process. To be certified, individuals
439 needed only to provide portfolio evidence of having met the certification requirements. These
440 certification requirements included the completion of a doctoral degree from an accredited
441 institution, 400 hours of supervised experience providing sport psychology services under the
442 supervision of a qualified person, completion of 13 specific courses from 11 identified content
443 areas, and have sport experience (skills, techniques and analysis through sport participation or
444 coaching). In 2002 provisional certification was approved, allowing individuals with master's
445 degrees to be provisionally certified, but requiring them to receive an additional 300 hours of
446 supervised experience before they were fully certified (Silva et al., 2011). This certification
447 program served the organization and profession extremely well for 25 years with little change.

448 In 2011, then President Jack Lesyk created the Future of Certification Ad Hoc
449 Committee (FCAHC) to evaluate the certification program and make suggestions to meet the
450 strategic plan and strengthen the certification program to enhance credibility of the industry
451 and promote members to the general public (Watson & Castillo, 2014). The FCAHC
452 reviewed the certification with the purpose of proposing changes to strengthen the program
453 and make it more valuable to members and those seeking the services of sport and exercise
454 psychology consultants. The primary recommendations of the FCAHC were: (1) certification
455 should meet National Commission for Certifying Agencies (this is the primary agency for
456 accrediting certifications in the United States, with a long history of promoting certification
457 development) standards, meaning that an exam-based certification was necessary, (2)
458 Continuing education units (CEUs or CPD) should be used to help maintain practitioners'

459 competencies, (3) portfolio review should remain part of the certification process, (4)
460 graduate education and other alternative means of demonstrating knowledge should be used,
461 (5) the certification should focus on north American based practitioners to start, but later
462 expand to include international certification, and (6) it would be best to carry out two Job
463 Task Analyses to determine whether sport/performance consultation utilizes the same as
464 processes as exercise/health consultation (Watson & Castillo, 2014).

465 These issues led to debate among Past-Presidents, Fellows and the membership.
466 However, in time, a Job Task Analysis was approved and completed in June 2015 as a
467 preliminary step to exam creation (Rosen & Lipkin, 2016). Following the 2015 annual
468 conference, a motion was passed and approved by the Fellows to allow for the creation of an
469 autonomous Interim Certification Council charged with creating policies and procedures that
470 would be used to develop an autonomous permanent certification council, certification
471 program, and the creation of a certification exam. Based upon the recommendations of this
472 interim certification council, a constitutional amendment was passed at the 2016 annual
473 conference in Phoenix, Arizona, that would allow for the creation of an autonomous
474 certification council, create a governance charter that would guide the new certification
475 council, and create a timeline for the transition to the new certification council and
476 development of a policies and procedures document to govern the updated certification
477 program. Following the approval of this amendment, the interim certification council
478 finalized the creation of the initial exam. It was during this time that the certification
479 credential and mark was modified to Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC). The
480 permanent Certification Council was chosen in 2017 to implement the accreditation standards.

481 ***Eligibility criteria for CC-AASP.*** In the year between the 2016 and 2017 annual
482 conferences, many decisions were made by the Interim Certification Council and later
483 Certification Council to meet the criteria for the NCCA accreditation standards (see Table 1

484 for summary). The CMPC program requires applicants to first prove that they have met all
485 eligibility requirements before they are allowed to take the certification exam. The
486 Certification Council's intention is to apply for accreditation from the National Commission
487 for Certifying Agencies in 2019 after the updated certification has been in place for a year.

488 **International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP)**

489 The International Society of Sport Psychology has long been interested in
490 accreditation. The ISSP was first launched in 1965, led by Italian sport psychologist Ferruccio
491 Antonelli, concurrent to an international conference, held in Rome. Nearly 450 delegates
492 attended this event, titled "The First World Congress of Sport Psychology" (Morris, Hackfort,
493 Lidor, 2003). During this conference a business meeting was held, which in turn led to the
494 formalization of the ISSP. Five years later, in 1970, the *International Journal of Sport*
495 *Psychology* was launched, and it became the society's flagship journal, remaining as such
496 until 2003 when the *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* assumed this
497 designation. Hence, within the first 20 years of ISSP existence, the society's focus was on the
498 congress and its peer reviewed journal, to advance the field, worldwide (Morris et al., 2003).

499 Though we find little evidence regarding a focus beyond scientific advancement
500 within the ISSP for the first 30 years of its existence, the society's mandate has slowly begun
501 to broaden (see Lidor, Morris, Bardaxoglou, Becker, 2001). This shift was expedited when the
502 1997 ISSP Managing Council struck a committee to examine the development of the field
503 from the vantage of professional practice services (Tenenbaum, Lidor, Papaioannou, &
504 Samulski, 2003). Four years later, in 2001, Tony Morris chaired a special session devoted to
505 the topic of professionalization, and there it was decided that the ISSP would provide
506 recommendations that further societies might consider in relation to their accreditation
507 systems. Since 2001, the ISSP has been on a slow and steady course that has brought the
508 society to its current identity that now more actively bridges science and practice. Within the

509 *World Sport Psychology Sourcebook* that many mid-career professionals can recall from their
510 graduate studies, sport psychology programs were identified for their strengths, which
511 included practical applications. Two years afterward, Morris, Alfermann, Lintunen, and Hall
512 (2003) authored *Training and Selection of Sport Psychologists: An International Review*.
513 During this initial sojourn in the applied realm, it at least appears that the ISSP was
514 positioning itself at arm's length from accreditation, rather proposing conceptual suggestions
515 for regional and national accrediting bodies to consider: Morris et al. wrote:

516 The Managing Council of the International Society of Sport Psychology ... has a
517 responsibility to examine the development of sport and exercise psychology around
518 the world and to state its position with regard to the way that sport psychologists are
519 trained and selected to work in service provision in a range of contexts (p. 139).

520 The authors proceeded to explain that “The conviction of the ISSP is that by trying to
521 understand the ways by which sport psychology is emerging internationally, groups like ISSP
522 will be in a stronger position to provide appropriate advice and support” (p. 140). The authors
523 found that a divide existed when the knowledge base, capacities, and types of competencies
524 utilized of developed countries were compared with developing, or what the ISSP has recently
525 recast as, emerging countries (Schinke, Papaioannou, Schack, 2016). Competencies and
526 standards were then proposed in a concurrent paper, in relation to sport and exercise
527 psychology practice (see Tenenbaum et al., 2003). These competencies included knowledge
528 base standards garnered through formal education (i.e., theories, scientific/research tools,
529 measurement, assessment, and/or interpretation) and practice standards (i.e., interventions and
530 communication skills).

531 The arm's length conceptual course remained the ISSP's approach until 2013, when
532 then ISSP President Gangyan Si proposed that it needed to enter into formal accreditation
533 development. President Si's reasoning aligned with the initial mandate of the ISSP to grow

534 sport psychology on a world scale, beyond the regional developments that were then rapidly
535 developing. He and the 2013-2017 Managing Council then began to discuss and develop
536 accreditation, where Artur Poczwadowski was appointed as the Society's inaugural
537 accreditation chair. The accreditation committee began to consider global standards and
538 explore what might be an appropriate threshold, or standard, across the world, spanning
539 developed and developing countries. Chris Harwood assumed the role of accreditation chair
540 in 2017. Below, the ISSP provides five years of work, with the progress in this work
541 increasing steadily. The intention now is to launch the ISSP Registry in 2018.

542 **ISSP registry (ISSP-R).** As part of the focus on globalization and collaboration on
543 matters associated with high quality professional practice, the ISSP Accreditation Committee
544 is presently establishing an internationally recognized consultant registry. It is envisioned
545 that the ISSP-R will respond to the high international mobility of both sporting clients and
546 consultants as well as increase the visibility and credibility of the profession internationally.
547 Importantly, there is recognition that many countries possess no formalized program for
548 quality assuring the ethical and professional provision of sport and exercise psychology
549 services to athletes, coaches, parents and organisations. A particular focus is on supporting
550 those countries in which applied sport psychology is in a developing phase and augmenting
551 professional standards in sport psychology practice to a minimum, satisfactory level.

552 ***Eligibility criteria for ISSP-R.*** Academic qualifications, underpinning knowledge,
553 practical delivery and service-based experiences form the core criteria of eligibility to apply
554 for ISSP-R status. Applicants will be required to submit evidence, as part of their application,
555 in the following areas denoted in Table 1. Beyond appropriate academic qualifications at BSc
556 and MSc level with substantive coverage of sport and exercise psychology, applicants will be
557 asked to submit evidence of supervised practice hours with individuals and teams. This will
558 also include a concise portfolio of applied practice that illustrates examples of client case

559 work, their philosophical approach and reflections on self-development. Aligned with the
560 specific interests of ISSP, a number of short ISSP-specific modules are envisaged that will
561 require applicants to engage with learning resources on cultural competence, ethical
562 competence in line with the ISSP ethics code, and knowledge related to mental health.

563 As quality of supervision is a key factor in professional accreditations, ISSP is
564 focusing on the development of supervisor training processes in order to build a registry of
565 ISSP-R approved supervisors. Applicants seeking ISSP-R status will require supervision from
566 an ISSP-R approved supervisor to assist with the quality control of supervised practice.
567 Supervisors will be required to confirm the practice hours completed by their supervisee(s),
568 verify the supervised hours (minimum 40 hours), and endorse their supervisee's competence
569 to practice independently.

570 ***Accreditation of national associations.*** Although many sport psychologists may apply
571 to the Registry from countries without a national accreditation program, the ISSP aims to
572 accredit national organisations whose existing sport psychology accreditation programs meet
573 the knowledge, practice and supervision standards outlined above. Such organisations will be
574 required to apply to ISSP and submit evidence to this effect. An organization that is
575 successfully endorsed and quality assured by ISSP will then be able to pass this benefit onto
576 its accredited members. In this case, subject to ISSP membership and reduced application
577 fees, ISSP-R status will be automatically conferred to the nationally accredited member. Such
578 practitioners will still be required to complete the short ISSP-specific modules but extended
579 time will be allocated for completion (i.e., within 12 months of ISSP-R).

580 Finally, the ISSP envisages that renewal of registry status will be applicable every six
581 years and an ISSP Continuing Education Program (CEP) will be designed to help facilitate
582 this requirement. Specific criteria are likely to reflect: (1) evidence of continuing practice and

583 (2) engagement with a certain number of ISSP Accreditation Committee approved CEP
584 workshops or webinars and national/international conference attendance.

585 **Synthesized Postulates**

586 The co-authors from four international societies have considered their approaches to
587 accreditation. The societies enlisted were the ASPASP, FEPSAC, ISSP, and AASP. These
588 societies entered into this discussion for distinct reasons. First, the societies are actively
589 engaged in the development of accreditation systems. Second, these societies are well
590 established, having extensive histories from which to understand and compare approaches to
591 accreditation from the lens of where they are located and how their engagement in
592 accreditation began. With these points in mind, we propose postulates to guide further
593 discussions about the present status and future directions of sport psychology accreditation.

594 1. Accreditation systems develop over time, and so are dynamic, not static. Dependent
595 on a society's identity, it might transition immediately or gradually into having an
596 accreditation system. Societies that prioritize science and knowledge generation might
597 be slow in this journey, or they might not enter into accreditation at all. There are also
598 societies that initially or eventually identify themselves as science based, though
599 practically minded. Societies that incline toward practice become candidates for
600 accreditation. Despite inclinations, there appears to be a societal pathway followed in
601 our field beginning with conferences and peer-reviewed outlets. Such societies then
602 tend to embark on accreditation, having built their scientific credibility.

603 2. Educational opportunities in international sport and exercise psychology societies can
604 (and must) take on several different formats, partly explained by temporally-situated
605 organizational developments. These developments have included online courses,
606 certification, or registry status. The latter two options appear to be preferred as
607 eventual outputs, with all four societies focusing on certification or registry systems.

- 608 3. There ought not to be judgement regarding a certification or registry status approach
609 being of better or worse quality when accreditation systems are compared. Each
610 societal accreditation, and for that matter, any national approach to accreditation, will
611 reflect a specific historical backdrop and a current/local status in terms of professional
612 development. Several countries or regions will have more access to educational and
613 supervision/mentoring, and some have less. Across the four societies and the regions
614 they are seeking to assist, however, there is a commitment to the provision of ethical
615 training and supervision, though in the case of the latter, requirements will vary by
616 society dependent on its mission.
- 617 4. The importance of cultural nuances within any form of accreditation must be carefully
618 considered and embedded within skill formation. All four societies agree that a form
619 of cultural sport psychology training is necessary for their accreditation. In some
620 cases, the argument has been made that cultural training should blend eastern and
621 western approaches (i.e., ASPASP), or a multicultural approach (i.e., AASP,
622 FEPSAC), or a localized approach that is dependent on the country where the
623 practitioner resides (i.e., ISSP). These three derivatives advocate inclusiveness, whilst
624 also reflecting the regions and candidates they have respectively targeted.
- 625 5. Key competencies remain the core of accreditation systems in sport and exercise
626 psychology, regarded herein to be inclusive of professionals with psychology and
627 sport science backgrounds. These competencies must tie to theoretical knowledge,
628 sound scientific approaches, assessment skills, intervention techniques, personal skills,
629 and a deep knowledge of professional ethics and suitable cultural sport
630 psychology/diversity skills training. Added to these competencies could be socio-
631 political and economic considerations that recognize the idiosyncratic locations where
632 the accredited work. To achieve this purpose, we propose that accreditation

633 committees be inclusive of perspectives from the profession's stakeholders, such as
634 national sport organizations and Olympic committees in order to consider the
635 perspectives of potential consumers.

636 6. Though only AASP has considered the role of universities and graduate programs in
637 the augmentation of such competencies, this tie in with academic institutions must
638 become a necessity. The responsibility in sport psychology training must extend
639 beyond societies and aspiring professionals to formal educational institutions, so as to
640 further professionalize our field, beyond its strengths in theories and scientific
641 knowledge.

642

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774

775 Table 1

776 *Accreditation requirements of ASPASP, FEPSAC, AASP, and ISSP*

Qualifications and knowledge base	Service experiences and supervision
ASPASP	
Requirements vary across the region	
Australia requires registration as a psychologist and practice endorsement in sport and exercise psychology, requiring an accredited doctorate and 1 year internship; or an accredited masters and 2 year internship, or equivalent (Psychology Board of Australia)	At least 1,360 hrs of supervised practice, 80 hrs supervision from an approved supervisor, and 60 hrs professional development (1-year internship). At least 2,720 hrs of supervised practice, 160 hrs supervision, and 120 hrs professional development (2-year internship)
In Korea, Level 1 accreditation requires a doctoral degree closely related to sport psychology (intentionally flexible and inclusive of sport science), completion of a prescribed educational curriculum, and passing a written examination (Korean Society of Sport Psychology)	At least 200 hours of supervised experience, two case presentations at academic conferences, and 50 hours of professional development
In China, Level 1 accreditation requires a doctoral degree closely related to sport psychology (intentionally flexible and inclusive of sport science) or position at associate professor or above; two international peer-reviewed papers as first author; and passing an oral examination (China Sport Psychology Association)	At least 400 hours of supervised practice and 5 years consulting experience
For countries without a national accreditation system, free online professional development resources are provided by ASPASP (open access book, open access course in sport psychology, flexibly defined to include psychology and sport science) as a step towards regional accreditation	Development of a mental training program for one of eight hypothetical athletes, presenting with specific psychological issues
FEPSAC	
BSc and MSc degree in psychology, sport science or sport psychology (240 ECTS)	250 documented hours of practice in diverse settings
Postgraduate courses, workshops or legally established programs in sport psychology (30 ECTS)	50 hours of supervised practice including 20 hours of individual supervision with an approved supervisor, 20 hours of group supervision with an approved supervisor, and a maximum of 10 hours of peer intervention of documented meetings with experienced colleagues/peers in sport psychology consulting
Read and sign commitment to FEPSAC's position stand on culturally-competent practice in sport and exercise psychology	
Read and sign commitment to FEPSAC's position stand on ethical principles	Documentation of international elements in one's applied practice

Documentation of international elements in one's education	For all applicants, membership of FEPSAC is required, an application fee will be levied and CPD credits will be required for re-certification
AASP	
Master's or doctoral degree from a regionally-accredited institution in an area clearly related to sport science or psychology	Documentation of completion of a 400-hour mentored experience (Minimum of 200 hrs of experience with sport population): Minimum 200 hrs of direct client contact; Maximum of 150 hrs of time spent in support activities; Minimum of 50 hrs of mentorship, with minimum of 40 hrs of face-to-face (minimum of 30 hrs) and/or electronic mentorship, and a minimum of 10 hrs of live/video session observation
Completion of eight specific courses covering content related to specific knowledge areas: K1) Professional Ethics and Standards; K2) Sport Psychology; K3) Sport Science; K4) Psychopathology; K5) Helping Relationships; K6) Research Methods and Statistics; K7) Psychological Foundations of Behavior; and K8) Diversity and Culture	Recertification Processes (Every 5 years): Completion of 75 continuing education units (CEUs) within the 5-year certification period. At least 6 CEUs in each of the following required continuing education areas: professional ethics, diversity, and mentorship/supervision (required for mentors only)
Successfully pass a 100-item exam designed to assess knowledge of the practice of applied sport psychology, as developed from the previous job task analysis	
Agreement to adhere to the principles and standards of the AASP Ethics Code	
<p>Experienced Practitioner Pathway: Allows those who have master's or doctoral degree from a regionally-accredited institution in an area clearly related to sport science or psychology and have worked for 10+ years post-graduation in applied sport psychology to apply for certification. Must show significant knowledge of the field through engagement in professional development and be able to show evidence of having received mentorship, supervision, consultation. Must pass the 100-item certification exam. Must agree to adhere to the principles and standards of the AASP Ethics Code</p>	
ISSP	
BSc degree in psychology, sport science or a related field	A minimum of 250 hours of direct delivery while under the guidance of a supervisor /mentor (i.e., supervision): Minimum of 150 hrs of one to one work; Minimum 25hrs of team/group-based work. This will be counted Post-MSc qualification
MSc degree in an area directly related to psychology or sport science (This programme will require evidence of substantial credits in sport and exercise psychology)	Reflective portfolio of case work: Concise portfolio with case study summaries, developmental self-reflections and espoused philosophy and model of practice
ISSP cultural competence module (Prerequisite readings/webinar and learning-based reflections)	

<p>ISSP ethical competence module (Prerequisite readings/webinar and learning-based reflections)</p> <p>ISSP mental health module (Prerequisite readings/webinar and learning-based reflections)</p>	<p>Evidence of Supervision Meetings and Observation: A minimum of 40 hours of supervision (i.e., one session per six hours of client consultation; monthly supervision over 1-2 years; observation of supervisee in practice (in vivo, via video, etc.)</p> <p>Supervisory endorsement of professional competence (i.e., Supervisor letter providing satisfactory evaluation of professional competence)</p> <p>For all applicants, membership of ISSP is required, an application fee will be levied and CPD credits will be required for re-registration after 6 years</p>
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