

## Examination regulations

for

### Counsellor with Advanced Federal Diploma in Professional Education and Training

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in compliance with article 28 paragraph 2 of the Swiss Federal Law on VET/PET of 13. December 2002 the authority in charge issues the following examination regulations in accordance with paragraph 1.2:

#### 1 GENERAL REGULATIONS

##### 1.1 Purpose of the examination

1.11 Purpose of the examination shall be to establish whether candidates with appropriate life or professional experience possess the competencies of counsellors of professional education and training mentioned in the professional profile under number 1.12

##### 1.12 Professional profile

###### Field of activity

Counsellors with Advanced Swiss Federal Diploma of Professional Education and Training work with clients at any age who find themselves in stressful life situations, in crises and conflicts and contact them with a concrete problem to focus on it and find a solution for it. In cases in which not substantial distress, but the wish to find meaning and more quality in life motivate people to seek help, the general wish to develop one's own resources as well as the optimization of social integration may also provide the occasion to seek the help of a counsellor.

##### Key professional competencies

Counsellors with Advanced Swiss Federal Diploma of Professional Education and Training possess extensive counselling competencies in dealing with psychosocial and problematic situations. They

- analyze complex counselling situations
  - produce a comprehensive analysis of the situation, the problem and the available resources
  - prioritize the problem areas and focus on a main problem
  - choose appropriate procedures for the counselling process
  - deal with possibilities and limits of the counselling process as required by the situation
- plan interventions
  - produce a counselling plan aimed at the agreed objectives and structured in terms of time and content

- consider the social and cultural context
- creatively shape the counselling process adapted to the prevailing circumstances in an individual
- plan tried, tested and effective strategies, methods and interventions in a situation-specific manner
- shape the counselling process
  - build up and maintain a counselling relationship of trust
  - show appreciation towards the clients and respond appropriately to their offer of a relationship, their feelings, thoughts and behavior
  - deal appropriately with the processes of transference and counter-transference
  - apply the planned interventions in a creative manner and promote the clients' autonomy
  - agree to a responsible behavior in accordance with ethical principles (such as the SGfB's Code of Ethics)
  - continuously evaluate the counselling process
- recognize situations of crisis and respond to them
  - possess appropriate instruments for dealing with crises and conflicts
  - see to the protection of the individual in situations of risk
  - stabilize situations of crisis with appropriate interventions and observe the limits of their own competencies
  - refer clients to specialist professionals when needed
- ensure quality and professional development
  - reflect planning, realization and evaluation of their professional behavior in connection with their approach to counselling
  - respect the obligation of diligence in record keeping and documentation
  - further develop their counselling competencies by means of supervision, intervision, self-experience, counselling and therapy and permanent continuous education
  - inform their clients about their right of appeal
  - judiciously deal with their own and external resources
  - represent and protect their professional interests
  - contribute to the further development of counselling in the psychosocial field

### **Professional practice**

Counsellors with Advanced Swiss Federal Diploma of Professional Education and Training demonstrate professionalism in psychosocial counselling by combining scientific expertise with a proper understanding of individual problems and by a clear and well-grounded approach to counselling. They assume responsibility for the counselling process and operate autonomously. They are committed to ethical behavior and regular further professional development.

Counsellors with Advanced Swiss Federal Diploma of Professional Education and Training practice in diverse institutions, either self-employed in their own practice or in teams of specialist from various disciplines, as employees in advisory centers, hospitals, relief organizations, non-profit and profit organizations. They have full-time or part-time jobs.

### **Contribution of the profession to society, nature and culture**

Counsellors with Advanced Swiss Federal Diploma of Professional Education and Training make a valuable contribution to the good of society, while supporting individuals in preserving or improving their quality of life and social integration as far as possible, and in meeting the complex demands of society.

In their work, they also respect basic aspects of sustainability and environmental protection.

Further specifications of Counselling in the psychosocial field and the SGfB's Code of Ethics are described in the annex to the guidelines.

## **1.2 Authority in charge**

1.21 The authority in charge is the following organization in the world of work:

The Swiss Association for Counselling, SGfB

1.22 This authority bears responsibility for the whole of Switzerland.

## **2 ORGANIZATION**

### **2.1 Composition of the examination commission**

2.11 All functions in connection with the issuing of diplomas are transferred to the examination commission. The commission consists of at least 6 members and is elected by the authority in charge for a period of 4 years. Members may be re-elected. They are bound by the rules of secrecy.

2.12 The examination commission constitutes itself. It has a quorum when the majority of its members is present. Decisions require a simple majority of the votes of the members present. If the votes are equal, the chair is decisive.

### **2.2 Functions of the examination commission**

2.21 The examination commission

- a) specifies the instructions for the current examination regulations and periodically updates them
- b) lays down the examination fees
- c) decides on the place and time of the examination
- d) decides on the examination schedule including the submission date for the written parts of the examination
- e) makes the test tasks available and carries out the examination
- f) selects the experts, trains them for their tasks and deploys them
- g) Keeps the list of accredited supervisors
- h) decides on admission to and possible exclusion from the examination
- i) decides on the issuing of the diploma
- j) handles requests and complaints
- k) is in charge of correspondence and accounting
- l) decides on recognizing and crediting other certifications and performances
- m) reports to higher level authorities and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) about its activities
- n) is in charge of quality development and assurance, and in particular of the regular updating of the qualification profile in accordance with the needs of the labor market.

2.22 The examination commission can transfer administrative tasks and the management to an examination secretariat.

## **2.3 Publicity and Supervision**

- 2.31 The examination is supervised by the Federal Government. It is not disclosed to the public. In individual cases, the examination commission can grant exemption. Members of the examination commission can be present during the examinations.
- 2.32 The SERI is timely invited to the examination and provided with the examination files.

## **3 ANNOUNCEMENT, REGISTRATION, ADMISSION, FEES**

### **3.1 Announcement**

- 3.11 The examination shall be announced at least 5 months prior to the start of the examination in all three official languages.
- 3.12 The announcement will provide orientation with respect to at least:
- examination dates
  - examination fees
  - registration office
  - registration deadline
  - test procedures

### **3.2 Registration**

The following should be enclosed with the registration

- a) a survey of previous professional training and practice
- b) copies of the ID cards, certificates, recommendations and references required for admission
- c) information with respect to the approach to counselling
- d) information with respect to the language of the examination
- e) copy of an official identification document with photo

### **3.3 Admission**

- 3.31 Admission to the examination is possible for anyone who
- a) possesses a higher education degree
  - b) has a professional experience of at least six years
  - c) can prove to have carried out a counselling practice in the psychosocial field with at least 15 counselling processes with a total of at least 80 sessions
  - d) can prove to have had 30 hours of supervision
  - e) has taken part in at least eight sessions of a professionally oriented intervention group during a period of at least two years
  - f) can prove to have had 30 hours of psychosocial counselling as a client
  - g) has been tutored by an accredited teacher/supervisor for at least one year during at least 10 sessions and this teacher/supervisor recommends the candidate for the examination applying the criteria of the examination commission.

Anyone able to prove that s/he has practiced for 8 years and meets the conditions specified under c-g is also admitted to the examination.

Prerequisites are the timely transfer of the examination fee in compliance with number 3.41 and the comprehensive and timely submission of the diploma thesis and the approach to counselling.

- 3.32 Decisions with respect to the equivalence of identity cards and diplomas obtained abroad are taken by the SERI.
- 3.33 The decision about admission to the examination will be communicated in writing to the applicant at least three months prior to the start of the examination. The reasons for the negative assessment are provided together with information on the right of appeal.

### **3.4 Fees**

- 3.41 The candidate pays the examination fee after admission has been officially confirmed. The fees for issuing the diploma and the entry in the registry of holders of the diploma, as well as fees for materials will be charged separately. These fees have to be borne by the candidates.
- 3.42 Candidates who withdraw from the examination within the permitted time limit or on valid grounds in accordance with Art. 4.2 will be reimbursed for the examination fee paid less a handling fee.
- 3.43 Anyone who fails the examination, is not entitled to any reimbursement of the fee.
- 3.44 The examination fee for applicants who repeat the examination will be decided upon by the examination commission in each individual case. The commission will thereby consider the scope and size of the examination.
- 3.45 Travel and hotel expenses as well as meals and insurance during the examination are to be borne by the applicants.

## **4 CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATION**

### **4.1 Notification**

- 4.11 An examination will take place when, after the announcement has been made, at least 6 individuals meet the admission requirements.
- 4.12 The candidate can choose in which of the three official languages, German, French or Italian s/he wishes to be examined.
- 4.13 The candidate will be notified at least 4 weeks prior to the start of the examination. The notification contains:
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- a) the examination schedule with indications about time and place of the examination as well as the aids permitted to the examination and those candidates are expected to bring to it
  - b) the list of experts
  - c) the assessment criteria of all parts of the examination.
- 4.14 Applications challenging experts must be presented with arguments to the examination commission at least 3 weeks prior to the start of the examination. The commission makes the necessary arrangements.

### **4.2 Withdrawal**

- 4.21 candidates can withdraw their application not later than 8 weeks prior to the start of the examination

4.22 Later withdrawal is only possible when the candidate has a valid excuse. In case the candidate withdraws after single parts of the examination have already been taken, the examination is considered to have been interrupted.

In particular shall be considered valid excuses:

- a) maternity
- b) illness and accident
- c) death in the immediate environment
- d) unforeseen military service, civil defense or civil service

4.23 The withdrawal must be communicated immediately in writing to the examination commission and evidence must be provided.

### **4.3 Non-admission and exclusion**

4.31 Candidates who knowingly provide untrue information with respect to admission requirements or who try to mislead the examination commission in any other way, will not be admitted to the examination.

4.32 Anyone will be excluded from the examination who

- a) uses aids that are not permitted
- b) grossly violates the examination discipline
- c) tries to mislead the experts

4.33 The examination commission must take the decision to exclude a person from the examination. The candidate is entitled to conclude the examination under reserve until a legally valid decision has been taken.

### **4.4 Supervision, experts**

4.41 At least two experts assess the written examination papers and take a joint decision with respect to the evaluation.

4.42 At least two experts conduct the oral examinations, take notes about the examination interview and the test procedures, assess the performances and take a joint decision with respect to the evaluation.

4.43 At least one expert trained in the candidate's approach to counselling must be present during all parts of the examination.

4.44 Senior lecturers of the preparatory courses, as well as relatives and past and present superiors and colleagues of the candidate must withdraw as experts during the examination.

### **4.5 Conclusion and evaluation sessions**

4.51 Following the examination, the examination commission takes a decision during a session with respect to the passing of the examination. A representative of the SERI is timely invited to this session.

4.52 Senior lecturers of the preparatory courses, as well as relatives and past and present superiors and colleagues of the candidate must withdraw as experts during the examination.

## 5 Examination

### 5.1 Parts of the examination

5.11 The examination contains the following parts and lasts:

Part of the examination	type of examination	Time
1 Diploma thesis	written	handed-in previously
2 Approach to counselling	written	handed-in previously
3 Counselling practice Audio- or video recording	oral	75 minutes including audio- or video recording
4 Final colloquium	oral	90 minutes
Total examination time		2 hours 45 minutes

5.12 Each part of the examination may be further subdivided. This subdivision is laid down by the examination commission.

### 5.2 Examination requirements

5.21 The detailed regulations concerning the final examination are described in the guide for the examination regulations in compliance with article 2.21 under letter a.

5.22 The examination commission takes decisions with respect to the equivalence of completed parts of the examination or modules of other examinations of a tertiary level as well as with respect to possible dispensation from the corresponding parts of the current examination regulations. Part 3 of the examination (counselling practice) must be taken.

## 6 Evaluation and assessment

### 6.1 General principles

The various parts of the examination are evaluated with the following terms:

- passed
- failed

### 6.2 Evaluation

6.21 The evaluation of the various parts of the examination is based on a point system.

6.22 The terms used in the evaluation are defined as follows:

- passed at least 60% of the maximum score has been achieved
- failed less than 60% of the maximum score has been achieved.

### **6.3 Conditions to be met for passing the examination and receiving the diploma**

- 6.31 The candidate passes the examination when s/he has a „pass score“ for each part of the examination.
- 6.32 The examination is regarded as not passed, when the candidate:
- a) does not timely withdraw from the examination
  - b) does not appear without a valid excuse
  - c) withdraws from the examination after having started it without valid excuse
  - d) has to be excluded from the examination
- 6.33 The examination commission takes the decision with respect to the passing of the examination exclusively on the basis of an assessment of the candidate's performances. Candidates passing the examination are awarded the federal diploma.
- 6.34 The examination commission issues an examination certificate for each candidate. This contains at least the following:
- a) the evaluations of each part of the examination (scores)
  - b) whether the candidate has passed or failed the examination
  - c) when the diploma is not awarded the means of appeal available to the candidate

### **6.4 Repeating the examination**

- 6.41 A candidate wishing to repeat the examination can do so twice.
- 6.42 Repeat examinations only apply to those parts of the examination for which the candidate's performance has been insufficient
- 6.43 For application and admission the same rules as for the first examination apply

## **DIPLOMA, TITLE AND PROCEDURES**

### **7.1 Title and Publication**

- 7.11 The federal diploma is issued by the SERI on application of the examination commission and signed by its directorate and the president of the SGfB.
- 7.12 Holders of the diploma are entitled to use the following protected title:
- **Counsellor with Advanced Federal Diploma of Professional Education and Training**
  - **Beraterin im psychosozialen Bereich mit eidgenössischem Diplom oder Berater im psychosozialen Bereich mit eidgenössischem Diplom**
  - **Conseillère dans le domaine psychosocial avec diplôme fédéral ou conseiller dans le domaine psychosocial avec diplôme fédéral**
  - **Consulente in ambito psicosociale con diploma federale**
- 7.13 The names of the holders of the diploma are included in an SERI-operated registry.

## **7.2 Withdrawal of the diploma**

- 7.21 The SERI can withdraw a diploma that has been illegally acquired. The right to prosecute remains reserved.
- 7.22 The decision taken by the SERI can be submitted to the Federal Administrative Court within 30 days after notification.

## **7.3 Right of appeal**

- 7.31 Against decisions of the examination commission to refuse to admit a candidate to the examination or to issue the diploma, an appeal can be filed at the SERI within 30 days after notification. The appeal must contain the complainant's requests and their justification.
- 7.32 The SERI takes a decision with respect to the complaint in the first instance. Its decision can be submitted to the Federal Administrative Court within 30 days after notification.

## **8 COVERAGE OF THE EXAMINATION COSTS**

- 8.1 The authority in charge, at the request of the examination commission, lays down the criteria according to which the members of the examination commission as well as the experts are compensated for their services.
- 8.2 The authority in charge bears the costs of the examination in as far as they are not covered by the examination fees, federal subsidies and other contributions.
- 8.3 After completion of the examination, the examination commission presents, in compliance with the regulations, a detailed income statement to the SERI. This forms the basis for the decision by the SERI with respect to the federal subsidies for the conduct of the examination.

## **9 FINAL PROVISIONS**

### **9.1 Transitional provisions**

- 9.11 Anyone who has acquired the professional title «Counsellor SGfB» will be dispensed from parts 1, 2 and 4 of the examination until 3 years after the first examination has taken place.
- 9.12 Anyone wishing to obtain the Swiss federal diploma in compliance with article 9.11 should submit a relevant application to the examination commission.

### **9.2 Coming into force**

These examination regulations will come into force upon approval by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and apply until 1. January 2017.

**The versions in the federal languages German, French, Italian of this document take precedence over the English version.**

**10 DECREE**

Lucerne, 05 May 2013

Swiss Association for Counselling SGfB

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These examination regulations have been approved in German, French and Italian.

**The approval of the English examination is in process.**

Bern, 28 June 2013