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The BASES-Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route (SEPAR) Postgraduate Endorsement Scheme

Drs Adam Gledhill and Denise Hill, and Professors Zoe Knowles and Richard Thelwell report on the progress of SEPAR and developments around SEPAR endorsed courses

The BASES SEPAR programme was launched in February 2020, having previously spent two years in development. The SEPAR is the latest Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approved training route for Sport and Exercise Psychologists and facilitates professional skills development underpinned by supervised practice. Throughout their training, Sport and Exercise Psychologists in Training (SEPiTs) will acquire knowledge, skills, and experience relating to competencies that confers eligibility for registration with the HCPC as a Practitioner Psychologist. Since its inception, 65 candidates have registered as SEPiTs and May 2021 will see the first cohort of individuals registered via the 1-year Accreditation of Prior Experiential Competence (APEC) graduate.

Owing to the early success of the SEPAR programme, the BASES Division of Psychology and SPEAR Committee entered discussions regarding how we could continue to support individuals to become eligible for entry in to the SEPAR programme. This article provides the headline information about further developments within SEPAR, including the formation of a postgraduate endorsement scheme for Masters programmes.

SEPAR Entry requirements

In addition to holding graduate membership of BASES as a minimum, registrants must be able to evidence “underpinning psychology” and an “MSc Sport and/or Exercise Psychology” at the point of entry. The ways in which registrants can evidence underpinning psychology knowledge are: successful completion of an accredited Psychology course (undergraduate or conversion); completion of the 60-credit Open University (OU) module offered exclusively to potential SEPAR candidates; prior recognition of underpinning “core” psychology knowledge from a Learned Society/professional body. There is also now an option for individuals who have completed core psychology programmes at an international organisation to have their equivalence mapped to the OU module. For the M-level qualification, candidates must provide evidence of a successfully completed MSc Sport and/or Exercise Psychology course. Should the MSc title deviate from a single-subject focus (e.g., Coaching Science, Sport and Exercise Science: Psychology), irrespective of whether completed in the UK or internationally, applicants are able to complete a mapping template, assessed by members of the SEPAR reviewer team, to evidence equivalence.

When launching SEPAR, and during the time since, we have fielded several questions regarding the M-level qualifications and entry routes to SEPAR. This prompted us to design, pilot, and now officially launch the BASES Postgraduate SEPAR Endorsement Scheme (BPSES). This scheme is aimed at supporting future Sport and Exercise Psychologists in choosing M-level courses that are BPSES Endorsed, and so will appropriately position them for application to SEPAR upon completion of their programme.

BASES Postgraduate SEPAR Endorsement Scheme

BPSES is a process of endorsement whereby MSc Sport and/or Exercise Psychology providers can apply to have their course independently reviewed by members of the SEPAR workforce as having sufficient coverage of the knowledge requirements, to allow graduates from their course to apply for entry on to the SEPAR programme. The BPSES allows Course Leaders (or equivalent) to specifically map their programme against the knowledge section of the SEPAR profile and provide a justification (with evidence) for how they believe the programme meets the requirements. The course will need to be deemed as demonstrating sufficient coverage of knowledge competencies to achieve BPSES.

As part of the endorsement process, it is expected that the course includes at least two staff with relevant professional accreditations. For the purposes of BPSES, appropriate accreditation and/or registration would include those who are HCPC registered Sport and Exercise Psychologists and/or BASES Accredited Sport and Exercise Scientists (with a psychology domain focus and support/research). Applicants will be requested to indicate the staffing profiles of those primarily responsible for delivering the programme and provide evidence of appropriate professional accreditation/registration.

A course will be SEPAR endorsed for a five-year period, unless there are significant curriculum amendments (e.g., changes to the modular structure or content). If successful in the endorsement application, endorsed courses will be placed on the BASES course finder, and the provider will be able to use the BASES SEPAR endorsed logo in relevant marketing materials. Consistent with existing BASES endorsement schemes, applications for BPSES will be possible at three points during the year: January 6th, May 6th, and September 6th.

Thank you to everybody who has supported the development of this next exciting stage of SEPAR!

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