

Case HKPS-CC-20220103

A former member (“**That former HKPS member**”) was found, after full investigation by Discipline Board (“DB”) in 2022 (Case No. HKPS-CC-20220103) conducted in accordance with the 2021 By-Laws of the Hong Kong Psychological Society (“HKPS”), to have contravened the following sections of the Code of Professional Conduct (2012) (“the Code”) of HKPS from 3 February 2021 through 15 August 2021 while being a Registered Psychologist:

Breach	Statement of the breach and particulars	Sections of the Code referred
1st	<p>Failing to represent her professional qualifications and affiliations accurately and claiming false professional qualifications:</p> <p>In her curriculum vitae (“CV”) and personal website, that former HKPS member claimed to be a Member, Registered Member, Registered Play Therapist, and/or Qualified Clinical Supervisor of the British Association of Play Therapists (“BAPT”) covering the period from 3 February 2021 through 15 August 2021. On 4 July 2022, the DB invited that former HKPS member to submit documentation to support such claim, but she failed to do so. According to the record of BAPT submitted by the Complainant, the membership status and qualifications were not consistent with her claims. The DB further sought to verify the claimed qualification of that former HKPS member by searching her name on BAPT’s Register of Play Therapist and found that she was not a registrant thereof.</p>	11.1, 11.2(a) & 11.5
2nd	<p>Failing to represent her professional qualifications and affiliations accurately and claiming false professional qualifications:</p> <p>In her CV, personal website and advertisement through her employers’ websites, that former HKPS member claimed to be a Nationally Certified Custody Evaluator (“NCCE”) or Custody Evaluator of the Professional Academy of Custody Evaluators (“PACE”) covering the period from 3 February 2021 through 25 August 2021, and by implication certified to practise as an NCCE in the United States of America. On 4 July 2022, the DB invited that former HKPS member to submit documentation to support such claim, but she again failed to do so. According to the record submitted by the Complainant, PACE, which is an organization that certifies qualified custody evaluators in the United States of America, acknowledged that that former HKPS member had not been a member of, and had never been formally certified by PACE as at 17 August 2021.</p>	11.1, 11.2(a) & 11.5
3rd	<p>Failing to represent her professional qualifications and affiliations accurately and claiming false professional qualifications:</p> <p>In her personal website and correspondence with the Society, that former HKPS member used the credential “Registered Child Psychologist” without specifying the affiliated body for a period including 15 August 2021 and on 21 April 2022 respectively. On 4 July 2022, the DB invited that former HKPS member to clarify with which professional body the title “Registered Child Psychologist” was affiliated, and submit documentation to support such claim, but she failed to do so. There is no such register kept in relation to “Child Psychologist” by the Society. To the Society’s knowledge, there is no professional body in Hong Kong that keeps a register in relation to “Child Psychologist”.</p>	11.1, 11.2(a) & 11.5

4th	<p>Failing to represent her professional qualifications and affiliations accurately:</p> <p>That former HKPS member’s representation that she was a “Registered Child Psychologist with Hong Kong Psychological Society” through her employer’s website for a period including 25 August 2021 is a false and inappropriate statement. There is no such register kept in relation to “Child Psychologist” by the Society.</p>	11.1 & 11.5
5th	<p>Making public statements which is false, misleading or likely to deceive:</p> <p>That former HKPS member claimed that she was a keynote speaker at the 2016 International Congress of Psychology (“ICP”) in her CV provided to the Complainant dated 3 February 2021. With reference to the Code, public statements include communications by means of testimonial. In early July 2022, the DB invited that former HKPS member to submit documentation to support such claim, but she failed to do so. Based on the DB’s review of the official programme published on the website of ICP, it was found that such claim is false, misleading or likely to deceive.</p>	11.2(a)
6th	<p>Ethical Principle D: Integrity – Standard of Honesty and Accuracy: Members should be honest and accurate in representing their professional qualifications and affiliations. They should take reasonable steps to ensure that their qualifications and competences are not misrepresented by others and to correct any misrepresentations identified.</p> <p>In addition to the codes specified in the previous sections, it was further noted that that former HKPS member had not taken the necessary steps to ensure that her professional qualifications and affiliations are honestly and accurately represented.</p>	2.5

Sanction

The Discipline Board recommended that that former HKPS member’s membership be suspended for seven years after taking into account all relevant considerations including:

- The need to uphold professionalism and compliance with the Code by all members;
- The need to protect the interests of the public in the engagement of psychological services; and
- The option for that former HKPS member to pursue the relevant qualifications and titles during the suspension period.

The DB’s findings and recommendations were endorsed by the Council of HKPS on 19 March 2023.