



Pontifical North American College

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Information for Directors of Vocations and Evaluating Psychologists

(Assessments for application must have been completed within one year of application.)

Overview: It is critical that the psychological evaluation and subsequent report submitted for the candidate provide thorough histories (family, clinical, psychosocial, psychosexual, etc.), integrated data analysis, and detailed recommendations. Please include a copy of any other psychological evaluations that have been completed for this candidate prior to their entrance into college seminary or pre-theology studies. Our goal is for the scope of the report to provide an in-depth history of the man and helpful analysis and recommendations that will highlight specific strengths and areas for growth to be targeted in their upcoming years in formation.

*Simply identifying whether or not a candidate shows the presence or absence of clinical disorders is insufficient. Results and recommendations should be informed by the required benchmarks that should be met by the time a candidate has completed the Discipleship Stage of formation (cf. *The Program for Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition*) and make the case for an openness or lack thereof to formation.*

Guidelines:

I. Evaluation Process and Testing Instruments

A. Behavioral Observations/Clinical Interview

1. Mental Status Evaluation.
2. Any pertinent behavioral characteristics or abnormalities that are suggestive of emotional, behavioral, or cognitive challenges.
3. Clinical Interview regarding Family of Origin, psychosocial development, self-perceived strengths and weaknesses, psychosexual development, etc.
 - a. Interview(s) should provide a *thorough history* (i.e., should include key details and elements of family dynamics and childhood experiences that would be sufficient to make hypothesis about early attachment style of candidate).
 - b. Reporting of psychosexual history should include details regarding sexual orientation, sexual behaviors, as well as frequency, duration, and content of sexual fantasies and behaviors.

B. Projective Personality Measures

1. *Rorschach Ink Blot Test* preferred (administered and scored via the *R-PAS* or *Exner Comprehensive* systems).
2. Other techniques such as the *TAT*, *Kinetic Family Drawings*, *Rotter's Incomplete Sentences*, etc., may be added at the discretion of the evaluating psychologist.

C. Intelligence Testing

1. Report of at least one intelligence test is required. If completed in an earlier evaluation, documentation of the administration, results and interpretation of

scores needs to be submitted with application.

2. *WAIS-IV* preferred. Administration of a brief intelligence measure such as the *WASI* is acceptable but considered minimum standard.

D. Objective Personality Measures

1. MMPI-2, MMPI-3, PAI or the NEO are acceptable.
2. Sexual Addiction Screening.
 1. Use of the Sexual Addiction Screening Test-Revised (SAST-R) is preferred along with any of the following: Hypersexual Behavior Inventory (HBI-19), Pornography Consumption Inventory (PCI), the Internet Sexual Screening Test (ISST), or the Diana Screen.
3. Other instruments may be used at the discretion of the evaluating psychologist.

II. Content Areas of the Psychological Report

A. Overall Assessment of Level of Psychological Functioning

1. Identification of presence of any clinical disorders or any sub-clinical issues that are approaching significance or that could become more prominent as stressors in candidate's life increases (as is inherent in demands of seminary schedule and subsequent demands of diocesan life and responsibilities).
2. Level/presence of tendencies or elements of symptoms of depression, anxiety, personality disorders, etc.
3. Personality traits, predominate needs or drives, strengths and weaknesses of personality, areas of conflict, addictive tendencies, etc.

B. Assessment of Psychosocial Maturity

1. Assessment of residual conflicts from family of origin and social history.
2. Any significant aspects of the candidate's social history that may affect his current functioning: family history, early life, school and work history, family and personal health.
 - a. Assess capacity to enter into and maintain intimate relationships that go beyond a superficial level or that of simply shared interests in others.
 - b. Assessment of candidate's ability to approach and address interpersonal conflicts with peers and superiors.

C. Assessment of Psychosexual Maturity

1. Assessment of psychosexual development and sense of sexual identity.
 - a. Examining psychologist should attempt to make distinction between "deep-seated" and "transitory" same-sex attraction if present.
2. Identification of degree of attachment to specific behaviors such as pornography and masturbation.
 - a. Details about specific type(s) of pornography, frequency of behaviors, last occurrence, specific content of pornography and fantasies, how it is accessed (paid or free), etc.
 - b. Discuss degree of attachment to behaviors and hypotheses about underlying issues driving attachment to sexual behaviors.
3. Assessment of affectivity and capacity for intimacy and empathy.
4. Assessment to live the "charism of celibacy" (i.e., evidence of abstaining from sexual activity for a period of at least two years)

D. Assessment of Personal Autonomy and Attitude towards Authority Figures

- E. Assessment of Flexibility and Emotional Resilience
 - 1. Consideration of issues of impulsivity, tolerance for frustration, coping patterns and skills.
 - 2. Capacity for personal insight and growth and level of motivation for growth.
- F. Assessment of Authenticity of Motivations for Priesthood and Any Contraindications to Applicant being suited for Priesthood or International Graduate Studies
- G. Psychologist's Satisfaction that Applicant Responded in all Significant Areas Honestly and Thoroughly
- H. Overall:
 - 1. Addressing the areas of functioning noted in letters A-G of this section will help the evaluating psychologist to address the question as to whether or not the applicant has met the benchmarks for development that each seminarian is expected to have reached by the time they enter the first year of theological studies, or the "configuration stage" of priestly formation. (cf. #192 through #197 in the most recent *Program for Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition (2022)*).

III. Recommendations of the Final Report

- A. Specific Recommendations for the Applicant's Continued Growth and Development when in Seminary Formation is a vital component of the psychological report.
 - 1. Identification not only of potential clinical disorders (per the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders-Fifth Edition* or the *Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual-Second Edition*), **but also of issues that are at a sub-threshold level which have potential to become more prominent if increased stress is applied or resources not utilized to address issues.**
 - 2. Recommendations sections **should provide guidance as to what areas of formation should be addressed moving forward that may serve as particular challenges for the applicant in accomplishing the benchmarks that applicants will be expected to have achieved prior to being approved for Holy Orders and entering the Synthesis stage of formation according to the Program for Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition (cf. #199 of the PPF):**
 - 1. The targeted benchmarks to be achieved prior to Holy Orders are that the man can...
 - a. Be described as a man who cares for, respects, and has vigilance over his body
 - b. Exhibits continued growth in addressing any health concerns, and he demonstrates balanced habits of exercise and rest
 - c. Has developed a workable strategy for handling psychological issues in his life.
 - d. As part of his overall health and well-being, he has well-established habits regarding the proper use of technology (meaning that he limits the entertainment uses of technology and demonstrates appropriate accountability with peers and formators regarding his use of technology).
 - e. Through evaluations, apostolic work, and community living, the seminarian demonstrates an awareness of and capacity to manage appropriate boundaries

IV. Submitting Results of Evaluation

- A. The full report of the psychological evaluation should be provided by the psychologist as soon as possible after the evaluation. The report may be submitted in two ways. It can be sent via post to the following:

Reverend Monsignor Thomas W. Powers, Rector
Pontifical North American College
00120 Vatican City State, Europe

Alternatively, the report may be submitted as a PDF via secure email (encrypted or password-protected) to the Coordinator of Admissions, Reverend Michael Romano (mromano@pnac.org).

- B. The psychologist's report will be used in making decisions about admissions AND, upon admission, in guiding the seminarian toward further growth counseling that he might decide to undertake during his graduate seminary studies. In writing your report, please be as thorough as possible. ***Failure to meet the above guidelines may result in a request for another assessment be completed prior to considering the candidate for acceptance.***
- C. Seminarians of the Pontifical North American College come from dioceses throughout the United States. Consequently, we review psychological reports from professionals throughout the United States. In an effort to standardize the method of the psychological reports, please make every attempt to address all the focus issues identified in the above Section II (with special consideration to Recommendations for Further Growth and Development).
- D. We will treat your report with professional confidentiality. Only the Rector, the Coordinator of Counseling Services and the Coordinator of Admissions will have access to the report.
- E. The report will be in the locked care of the Coordinator of Counseling Services.
- F. **Final Note:** Evaluating Psychologists must be familiar with the *Guidelines for the use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood (2008)*, the requirements outlined with the *Program for Priestly Formation-Sixth Edition (2022)*, and paragraphs (188-210) of *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (The Gift of Priestly Vocation) (2016)*, prior to conducting psychological evaluations for candidates being considered for application to the Pontifical North American College.

V. Finding a qualified psychologist to complete the psychological assessment.

- A. If you are having difficulty finding a qualified psychologist who can complete a thorough assessment informed by a Catholic anthropology, please feel free to contact Dr. Mark Glafke, Coordinator of Counseling Services at the North American College at mglafke@pnac.org or via cell phone at +1 (765) 268-0709 or his office 011.39.06684935641.
1. Dr. Glafke will be happy to help locate a psychologist in your area (as close as possible geographically) that can serve the admission goal of the diocese and the seminary.